**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday 21 September 2022 – Fall Semester**

**Queens Chapel UMC \* 7410 Muirkirk Road \* Beltsville, MD 20705**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler**

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**The Gospel of Luke**

**Luke 6:6-11 (NIV)**

 **6 On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching,** **and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled.**

 **7 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.**

 **8 But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Get up and stand in front of everyone.” So he got up and stood there.**

 **9 Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?”**

 **10 He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was completely restored.**

 **11 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.**

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**Luke 6:6**

 On another Sabbath, he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled.

1. Jesus was always in the church: “On another Sabbath, he went into the synagogue”

**Note:**

 **Since before the pandemic, The Barna Research Group has been tracking “**[**worship shifting**](https://www.barna.com/research/worship-shifting/)**” and**[**the uncertain digital and physical realities of churches**](https://www.barna.com/research/uncertain-digital-physical-realities/)**in America.**

 **As the pandemic era accelerated the reality of a “**[**New Sunday Morning**](https://www.barna.com/research/new-sunday-morning/)**,” many pastors have been asking “what is going on with church attendance?”**

 Patterns of attendance among younger generations can be especially important—and perplexing—for pastors to understand, in their own church and at large. Barna Group has studied the intersection of faith and culture for nearly four decades, with an emphasis on generational trends. This article explores recent data to help church leaders ground themselves in the present reality of church attendance across generations—especially Millennials—in 2022.

 **How Millennial Church Attendance Has Shifted During the Pandemic**Aggregate data for 2019 through 2022 highlights some of the fluctuations that have surrounded church attendance through the pandemic, affecting all generations in a similar fashion. In 2021, there was less than a 10-percentage point difference between the church attendance of Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers (taken together, today’s 23–75-year-olds). **Although Millennials (and,**[**emerging behind them, Gen Z**](https://www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/)**) are known for declines in religiosity, data show that, since 2019, the percentage of Millennials reporting weekly church attendance has increased from 21 percent to 39 percent.** Among Gen X, attendance has increased 8 percentage points (24% to 32%). While Boomers show an increase in their attendance during the pandemic in 2020 (31% weekly), recent numbers show a decrease in attendance (25% in 2022).

 It may seem counterintuitive that attendance could have climbed in 2020, but this engagement may also include online forms. “In 2020 and 2021, our data represents churchgoers either settling into or opting out of online attendance,” Daniel Copeland, Associate Vice President of Research at Barna Group, explains. “Despite all of the disruptions of 2020, the opportunity of online worship actually helped to boost attendance across all generations. However, in 2021, the novelty seemed to have worn off and people’s church attendance declined significantly. **Now, in 2022, younger generations especially are re-engaging in church, a shift that might potentially mark a new chapter in church attendance.”**

 **https://www.barna.com/research/church-attendance-2022/**

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What do you get out of coming to church?

Why is Church attendance so important to you?

**Hebrews 10.24-25**

 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

1. *We need community*—avoidance invites discouragement

1. *We need to be stirred up by each other*—to incite: to encourage, to urge on, to stimulate or prompt one another into good works
2. *We need to love one another*—“agape” love that involves faithfulness, and commitment to one another. It’s an act of the will.
3. Love needs to be stimulated by one another
4. *We need the assembly of the saints*—Each person brings the Spirit of Christ with them in order to dispel the negative forces of discouragement
5. *We need to exhort one another*—Exhort is defined as “an urging done by someone close beside.
6. The word most often translated as “exhort” or “exhortation” comes from the Greek word paraklésis, which means to call to one’s side; to summon, encourage, admonish.
7. To exhort is to develop relationships with other believers in your assembly for the purpose of encouraging them in their spiritual growth.
8. Some of us go to church if we feel we need to at the time. But our motivation for the fellowship must be to obey God’s Word and give to others.

 “and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

1. The second coming of Jesus Christ

1. We gather in church for the following reasons:
2. We gather to receive something from God.
3. We gather to give something to God.
4. We gather to encourage each other.
5. We gather to bless one another.
6. We gather to work together.
7. “and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled”
8. The power of healing sicknesses/illnesses through God’s direction

**King Hezekiah’s Healing**

**2 Kings 20:1- (NLT)**

 1 About that time Hezekiah became deathly ill, and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to visit him. He gave the king this message: “This is what the Lord says: Set your affairs in order, for you are going to die. You will not recover from this illness.”

 2 When Hezekiah heard this, he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord,

 3 “Remember, O Lord, how I have always been faithful to you and have served you single-mindedly, always doing what pleases you.” Then he broke down and wept bitterly.

 4 But before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard, this message came to him from the Lord:

 5 “Go back to Hezekiah, the leader of my people. Tell him, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of your ancestor David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you, and three days from now you will get out of bed and go to the Temple of the Lord.

 6 I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will rescue you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my own honor and for the sake of my servant David.’”

 7 Then Isaiah said, “Make an ointment from figs.” So Hezekiah’s servants spread the ointment over the boil, and Hezekiah recovered

1. Jesus gave specific directions for this man’s healing

**Luke 6:7-11**

 7 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

 8 But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Get up and stand in front of everyone.” So he got up and stood there.

 9 Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?”

 **10 He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was completely restored.**

 11 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

1. The man was healed because an **effort is demanded before a blessing can be given.**
2. Water changed to wine—**John 2:1-10**

 1 The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there,

 2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3 The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus’ mother told him, “They have no more wine.”

 4 “Dear woman, that’s not our problem,” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.” 5 But his mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

 6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.

 7 Jesus told the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” When the jars had been filled,

 8 he said, “Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies.” So the servants followed his instructions.

 9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over.

 10 “A host always serves the best wine first,” he said. “Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!”

**Healing of the Man at the Pool**

**John 5:1-10** 1 Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days.

 2 Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches.

 3 Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. 5 One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years.

 6 When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

 7 “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

 8 Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!” 9 Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath,

 10 so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!”