



**Report for:  
Newburgh UMC  
4178 Old State Road 261  
Newburgh, IN 47630**

*2/25/2013*

**Melanie Smollen  
Faith Perceptions  
1729 William Street  
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63703  
573.335.1885  
melanie@faithperceptions.com**

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### **About the Mystery Guest Program:**

The Mystery Guest Program helps church leaders better understand what a first-time visitor thinks and feels when attending a church service. A person who returns is obviously available and usually willing to tell you why they returned. Visitors who do not return deny church leaders the opportunity to learn why they didn't come back and if by chance they are asked, they might not be as forthcoming with the answer for fear of offending.

A church participating in the Mystery Guest Program will have at least twelve of its services attended by our mystery guests with each service attended by a different individual. Our mystery guests are typically "unchurched" - a term we use to describe people who do not have a home church that they regularly attend. Each mystery guest rates their experience as a first time visitor in great detail with both numerical scores and written feedback. This study helps churches craft a better experience for future visitors resulting in growth and retention.

### **Findings for Newburgh UMC:**

Faith Perceptions was retained to conduct 12 mystery visits at Newburgh UMC to better understand the first-time guest experience. To date, 10 visits have been realized. Each unique visit was performed by a separate mystery guest from July 29, 2012 – January 27, 2013. Mystery guests were all pre-screened by Faith Perceptions; 8 stated that they were "unchurched", meaning that they do not attend church on a regular basis. There were 6 male mystery guests and 4 females who contributed to this report. The average age of mystery guests in this report is 30.

Faith Perceptions has been measuring the visitor experience since early 2008. As of May 1, 2012, we have measured 1,152 worship services using identical questions and criteria, allowing us to create the Faith Perceptions Church Index. We have incorporated the relevant data from the Index in this report so that you can benchmark your numbers against the Consolidated Index (all churches measured to date) and against churches of similar size. You will likely find that the numbers in this report compare favorably in some categories and unfavorably in others. All numbers are on a 10-point scale with 10 being the most favorable score possible.

It is recommended that the church perform an additional survey if changes are made as a result of these findings to measure improvement or any unintended consequences of the changes made.

### Areas of Relative Strength (3):

In order for a category to be considered an area of relative strength in a church, it must *at least* be rated a 7.51 or above, which is considered to be “good” or “very good” on the Index Scale (see legend below).

| Category             | Newburgh UMC Rating | Index: Churches of Like Size - 2012 Large | Index: Consolidated – All Churches Included |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| Connect Resources    | 8.30                | 8.26                                      | 7.83  |
| Pre Service Greeting | 7.60                | 8.34                                      | 7.62  |
|                      |                     |   |   |

### Areas for Improvement (3)

For a category to be considered an area for improvement in a church it must be rated a 7.50 or below, which would be “fair” or below on the Index Scale (see legend below).

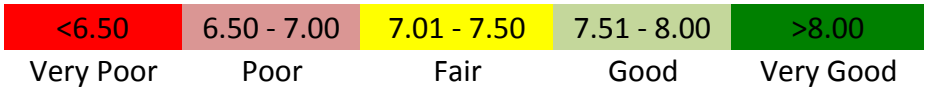
| Category  | Newburgh UMC Rating | Index: Churches of Like Size - 2012 Large | Index: Consolidated – All Churches Included |
|-----------|---------------------|---|---|
| Music     | 5.60                | 7.46                                      | 7.16  |
| Return    | 4.80                | 7.48                                      | 6.73  |
| Diversity | 4.40                | N/A                                       | N/A   |

Note: Faith Perceptions began measuring diversity in June 2012.

### Overall Rating By Service(s) (highest to lowest)

|          |        |       |    |              |
|----------|--------|-------|----|--------------|
| 8:15 AM  | Sunday | TRAD  | EM | Rating: 5.50 |
| 10:45 AM | Sunday | BLEND | EM | Rating: 5.17 |

### Legend



Newburgh UMC

Mystery Guest Raw Data

|  |   |                        |   |  |
|--|---|------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Guest Identifier</b>  | 22912   | 25474                  | 23811                                     | 23719  |
| <b>Age</b>   | 26  | 25                     | 23  | 24   |
| <b>Gender</b>  | M   | F                      | F   | F  |
| <b>Title of Service</b>  | Joy in the Harvest  | Third Sunday of Advent | A Simple Way: Plug In                     | Kingdomtide  |
| <b>Date of Visit</b>   | 1/27/2013   | 12/16/2012             | 8/26/2012                                 | 7/29/2012  |
| <b>Time of Visit</b>   | 8:15 AM   | 8:15 AM                | 8:15 AM                                   | 8:15 AM  |
| <b>Type of Service</b>   | Traditional   | Traditional            | Traditional                               | Traditional  |
| <b>First time visiting?</b>  | Yes   | Yes                    | Yes                                       | Yes  |
| <b>Are you actively participating in church somewhere else?</b>                        | No  | No                     | No  | Yes  |
| <b>Have you been to any church in the last 6 months?</b>                               | Yes   | No                     | Yes                                       | Yes  |
| <b>If yes, number of times you've been to church in the last 6 months</b>              | 5   | 0                      | 4   | 24   |
| <b>Do you believe in God or a higher power?</b>  | Yes   | Yes                    | Yes                                       | Yes  |
| <b>If yes, what denomination do you identify most with?</b>                            | United Methodist  | 0                      | 0   | Christian  |
| <b>Did you grow up in a family that was associated with a particular denomination?</b> | Yes   | No                     | Yes                                       | No   |
| <b>If yes, which denomination?</b>   | Southern Baptist  | 0                      | Pentecostal                               | 0  |
| <b>Did you have any pre-conceived ideas about the before you visited?</b>              | No, I hadn't heard anything about this church specifically, although I do have some general idea about how the United Methodist churches operate. | No.                    | I had never seen or heard of this church. | I had not heard anything about the church. This was my first visit and had not previously heard or seen anything about Newburgh UMC. |
| <b>Directions</b>  | 10  | 8                      | 1   | 8  |
| <b>Signage</b>   | 8   | 6                      | 4   | 7  |
| <b>Pre-Service Greeting</b>  | 7   | 10                     | 5   | 10   |
| <b>Pre-Service Atmosphere</b>  | 6   | 9                      | 2   | 8  |
| <b>Seating</b>   | 5   | 9                      | 5   | 8  |
| <b>Music</b>   | 2   | 5                      | 2   | 5  |
| <b>In-Service Greeting</b>   | 4   | 9                      | 6   | 10   |
| <b>Sermon</b>  | 4   | 10                     | 5   | 8  |
| <b>Speaker</b>   | 5   | 8                      | 6   | 8  |
| <b>Post-Service Atmosphere</b>   | 10  | 10                     | 1   | 9  |
| <b>Connect-Resources</b>   | 8   | 10                     | 7   | 9  |
| <b>Friendliness</b>  | 8   | 9                      | 2   | 10   |
| <b>Children's Ministries</b>   | 1   | 6                      | 1   | 6  |
| <b>Diversity</b>   | 1   | 5                      | 1   | 1  |
| <b>Return</b>  | 1   | 7                      | 3   | 6  |
| <b>Overall Experience</b>  | 4   | 8                      | 4   | 6  |
| <b>AVERAGE</b>   | <b>5.25</b>   | <b>8.06</b>            | <b>3.44</b>                               | <b>7.44</b>  |

Newburgh UMC

Mystery Guest Raw Data

|  |                  |   |   |   |
|--|------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Guest Identifier</b>  | 23885            | 23749                                   | 21073   | 23721   |
| <b>Age</b>   | 22               | 49                                      | 41  | 28  |
| <b>Gender</b>  | M                | M                                       | M   | F   |
| <b>Title of Service</b>  | Art of Gratitude | Time                                    | The Bread of Life   | Kingdom tide  |
| <b>Date of Visit</b>   | 11/18/2012       | 10/21/2012                              | 8/12/2012   | 8/26/2012   |
| <b>Time of Visit</b>   | 10:45 AM         | 10:45 AM                                | 10:45 AM  | 10:45 AM  |
| <b>Type of Service</b>   | Blended          | Blended                                 | Mixed   | Contemporary  |
| <b>First time visiting?</b>  | No               | Yes                                     | Yes   | No  |
| <b>Are you actively participating in church somewhere else?</b>                        | No               | Yes                                     | No  | No  |
| <b>Have you been to any church in the last 6 months?</b>                               | Yes              | Yes                                     | Yes   | Yes   |
| <b>If yes, number of times you've been to church in the last 6 months</b>              | 11               | 21                                      | 9   | 12  |
| <b>Do you believe in God or a higher power?</b>  | Yes              | Yes                                     | Yes   | Yes   |
| <b>If yes, what denomination do you identify most with?</b>                            | n/a              | Baptist                                 | Christian   | None  |
| <b>Did you grow up in a family that was associated with a particular denomination?</b> | Yes              | Yes                                     | Yes   | No  |
| <b>If yes, which denomination?</b>   | Evangelical      | Baptist                                 | Catholic  | 0   |
| <b>Did you have any pre-conceived ideas about the before you visited?</b>              | none             | I knew nothing at all about the church. | I had never heard of this church before but assumed all United Methodist churches were traditional. | I had attended a wedding at NUMC, but had never attended a service. |
| <b>Directions</b>  | 4                | 10                                      | 9   | 9   |
| <b>Signage</b>   | 9                | 10                                      | 8   | 6   |
| <b>Pre-Service Greeting</b>  | 5                | 10                                      | 9   | 8   |
| <b>Pre-Service Atmosphere</b>  | 4                | 10                                      | 7   | 7   |
| <b>Seating</b>   | 7                | 3                                       | 8   | 8   |
| <b>Music</b>   | 8                | 7                                       | 9   | 4   |
| <b>In-Service Greeting</b>   | 3                | 10                                      | 6   | 9   |
| <b>Sermon</b>  | 7                | 4                                       | 8   | 6   |
| <b>Speaker</b>   | 6                | 6                                       | 10  | 7   |
| <b>Post-Service Atmosphere</b>   | 4                | 10                                      | 6   | 10  |
| <b>Connect-Resources</b>   | 6                | 9                                       | 8   | 9   |
| <b>Friendliness</b>  | 4                | 10                                      | 5   | 10  |
| <b>Children's Ministries</b>   | 6                | 10                                      | 10  | 9   |
| <b>Diversity</b>   | 5                | 7                                       | 10  | 7   |
| <b>Return</b>  | 5                | 4                                       | 9   | 6   |
| <b>Overall Experience</b>  | 6                | 5                                       | 8   | 7   |
| <b>AVERAGE</b>   | <b>5.56</b>      | <b>7.81</b>                             | <b>8.13</b>   | <b>7.63</b>   |

Newburgh UMC

Mystery Guest Raw Data

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Guest Identifier  | 23753                                  | 23718   |
| Age   | 30                                     | 28  |
| Gender  | M                                      | M   |
| Title of Service  | The Simple Way: Serve                  | A Simple Way: Grow  |
| Date of Visit   | 9/2/2012                               | 8/19/2012   |
| Time of Visit   | 10:45 AM                               | 10:45 AM  |
| Type of Service   | Blended                                | Blended Worship Service   |
| First time visiting?  | Yes                                    | Yes   |
| Are you actively participating in church somewhere else?                        | No                                     | No  |
| Have you been to any church in the last 6 months?                               | Yes                                    | Yes   |
| If yes, number of times you've been to church in the last 6 months              | 2                                      | 5   |
| Do you believe in God or a higher power?  | Yes                                    | Yes   |
| If yes, what denomination do you identify most with?                            | 0                                      | Nondenominational   |
| Did you grow up in a family that was associated with a particular denomination? | Yes                                    | Yes   |
| If yes, which denomination?   | Lutheran                               | Baptist   |
| Did you have any pre-conceived ideas about the before you visited?              | I had heard nothing about this church. | No. I do not know anyone who attends this church. I have attended Methodist churches before, but not this particular one. |
| Directions  | 10                                     | 3   |
| Signage   | 10                                     | 3   |
| Pre-Service Greeting  | 5                                      | 7   |
| Pre-Service Atmosphere  | 7                                      | 5   |
| Seating   | 8                                      | 5   |
| Music   | 10                                     | 4   |
| In-Service Greeting   | 5                                      | 4   |
| Sermon  | 6                                      | 1   |
| Speaker   | 7                                      | 2   |
| Post-Service Atmosphere   | 6                                      | 3   |
| Connect-Resources   | 10                                     | 7   |
| Friendliness  | 6                                      | 7   |
| Children's Ministries   | 10                                     | 4   |
| Diversity   | 5                                      | 2   |
| Return  | 5                                      | 2   |
| Overall Experience  | 2                                      | 3   |
| <b>AVERAGE</b>  | <b>7.00</b>                            | <b>3.88</b>   |

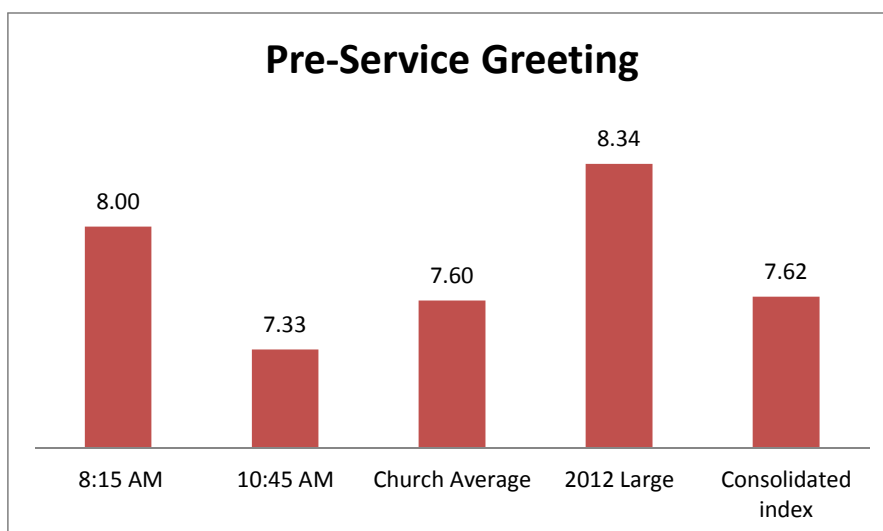
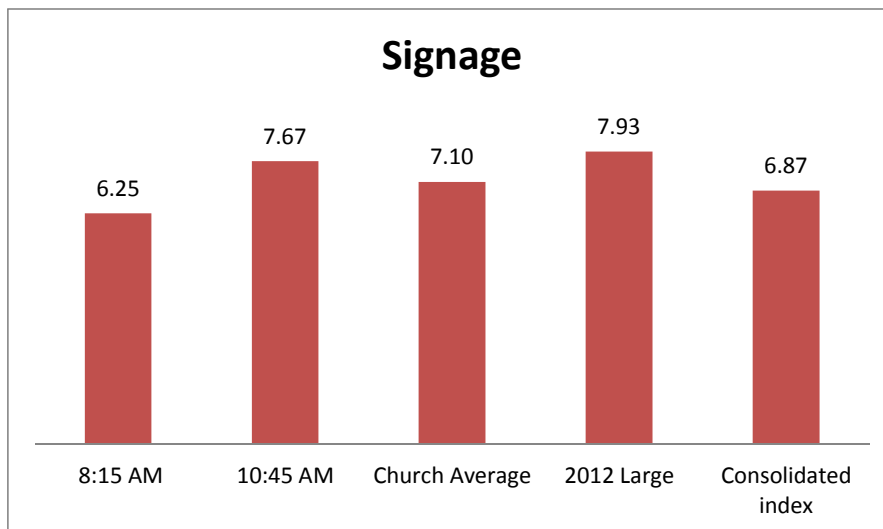
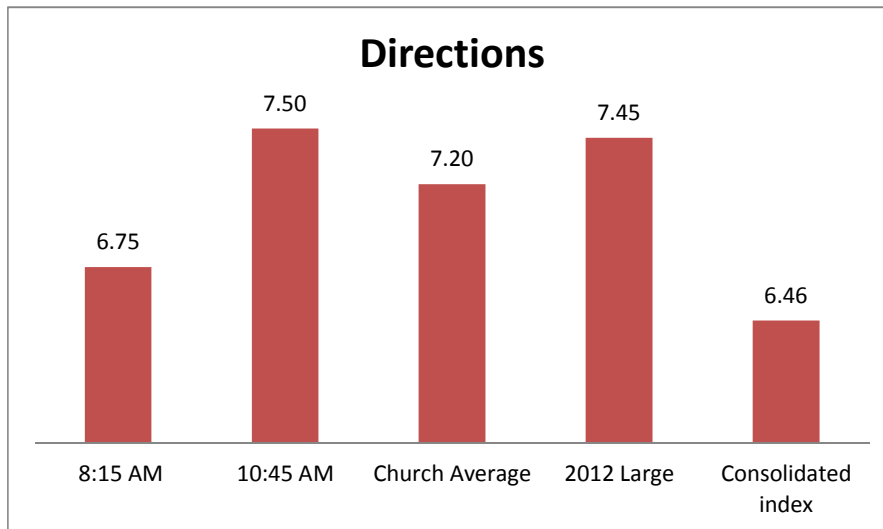
## Newburgh UMC

### Mystery Guest Average Data

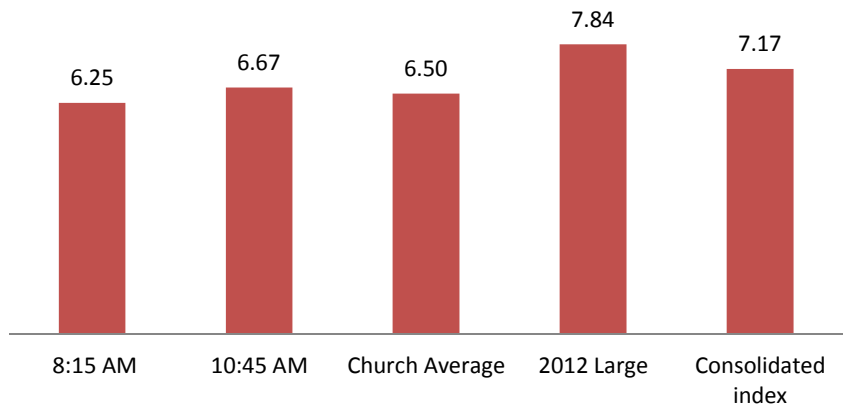
|                         | 8:15 AM | 10:45 AM | Church<br>Average | 2012 Large | Consolidated<br>index |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Directions              | 6.75    | 7.50     | 7.20              | 7.45       | 6.46                  |
| Signage                 | 6.25    | 7.67     | 7.10              | 7.93       | 6.87                  |
| Pre Service Greeting    | 8.00    | 7.33     | 7.60              | 8.34       | 7.62                  |
| Pre Service Atmosphere  | 6.25    | 6.67     | 6.50              | 7.84       | 7.17                  |
| Seating                 | 6.75    | 6.50     | 6.60              | 8.59       | 7.99                  |
| Music                   | 3.50    | 7.00     | 5.60              | 7.46       | 7.16                  |
| In Service Greeting     | 7.25    | 6.17     | 6.60              | 8.34       | 7.46                  |
| Sermon                  | 6.75    | 5.33     | 5.90              | 7.73       | 7.51                  |
| Speaker                 | 6.75    | 6.33     | 6.50              | 7.86       | 7.65                  |
| Post Service Atmosphere | 7.50    | 6.50     | 6.90              | 7.13       | 6.73                  |
| Connect Resources       | 8.50    | 8.17     | 8.30              | 8.26       | 7.83                  |
| Friendliness            | 7.25    | 7.00     | 7.10              | 8.30       | 7.45                  |
| Childrens Ministries    | 3.50    | 8.17     | 6.30              | 5.87       | 6.24                  |
| Diversity               | 2.00    | 6.00     | 4.40              | 0.00       | 0.00                  |
| Return                  | 4.25    | 5.17     | 4.80              | 7.48       | 6.73                  |
| Overall Experience      | 5.50    | 5.17     | 5.30              | 7.66       | 7.12                  |

|           |             |             |             |           |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| <6.50     | 6.50 - 7.00 | 7.01 - 7.50 | 7.51 - 8.00 | >8.00     |
| Very Poor | Poor        | Fair        | Good        | Very Good |

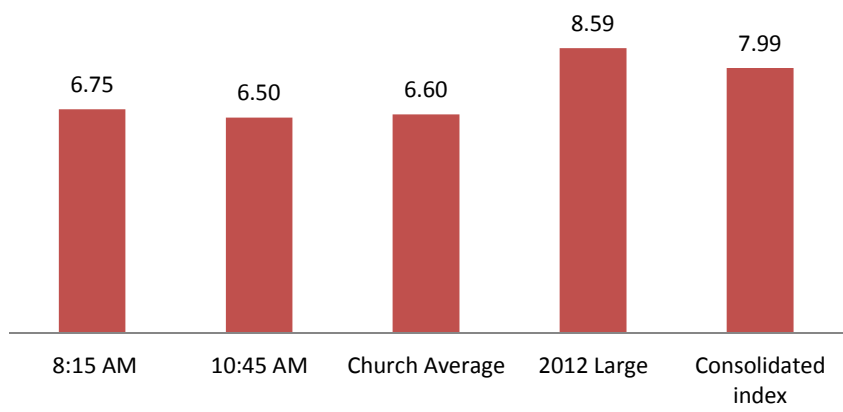
## Graphs/Averages



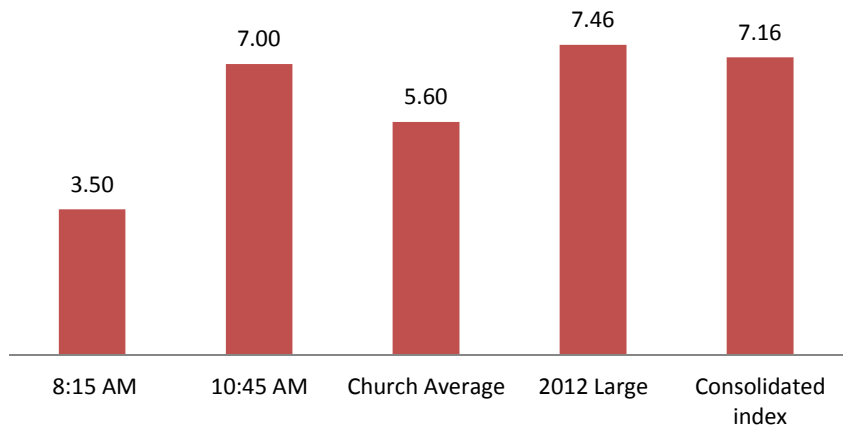
### Pre-Service Atmosphere

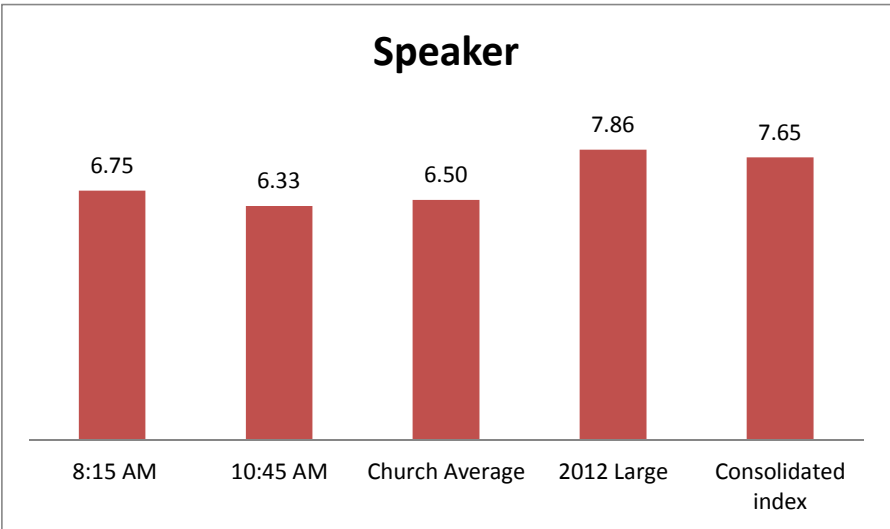
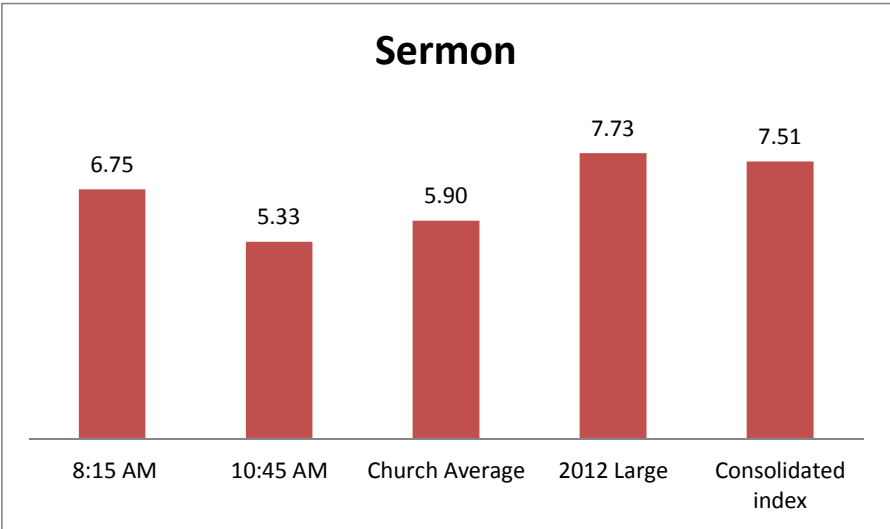
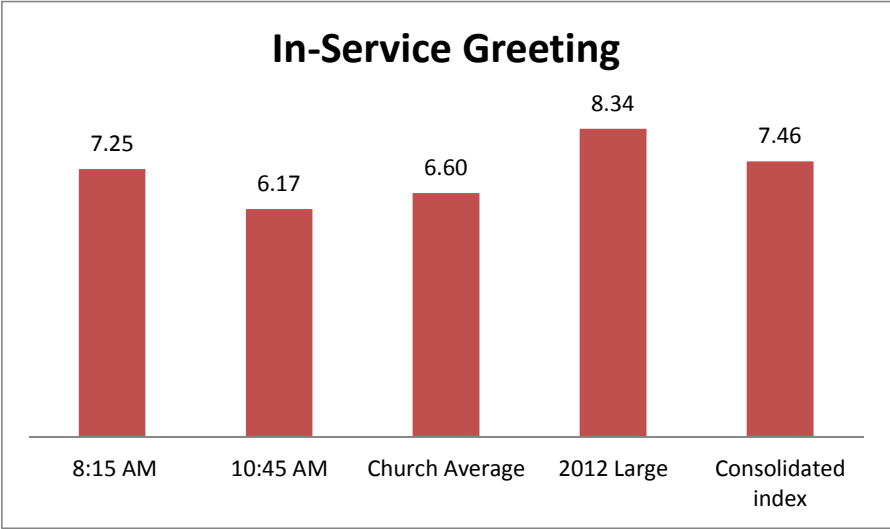


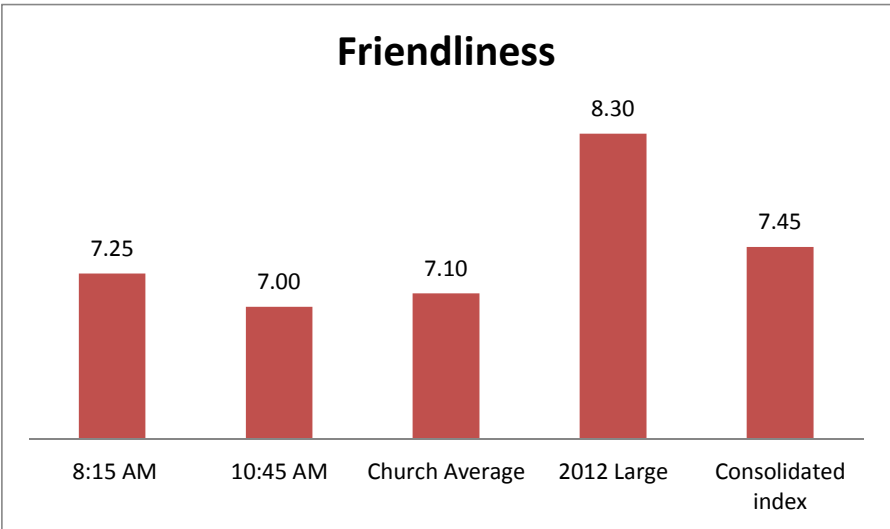
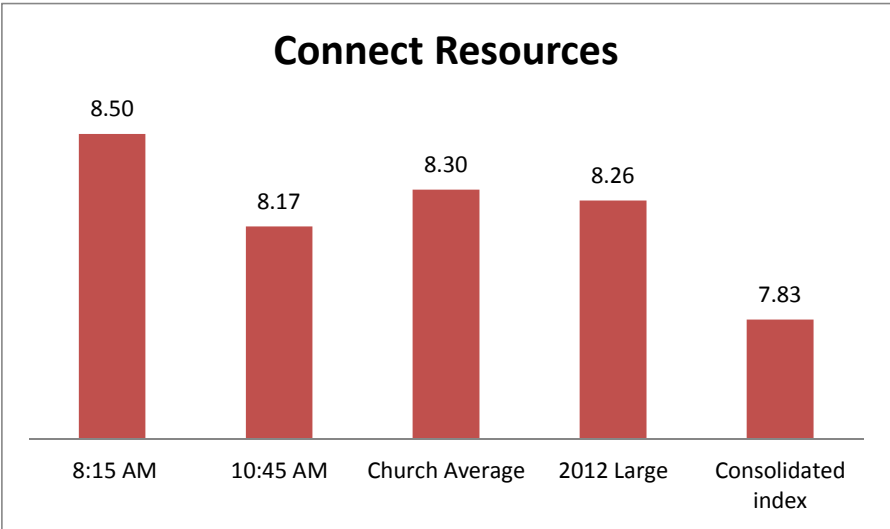
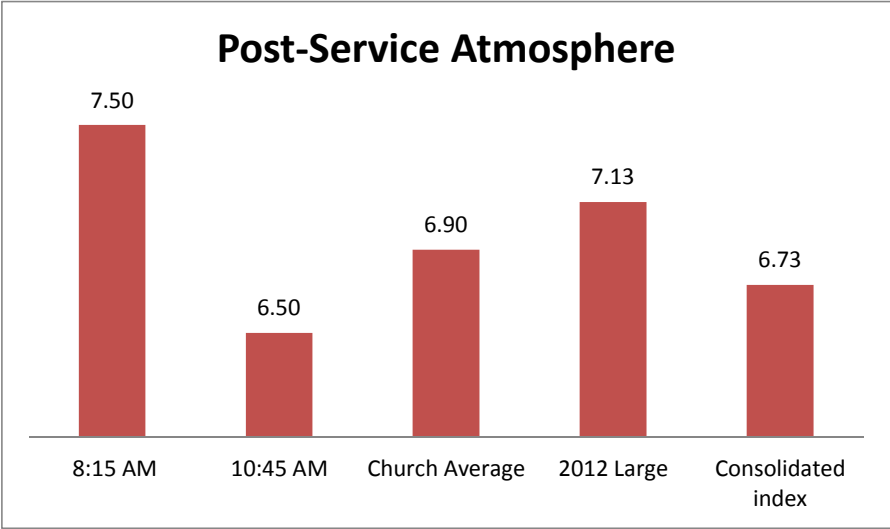
### Seating

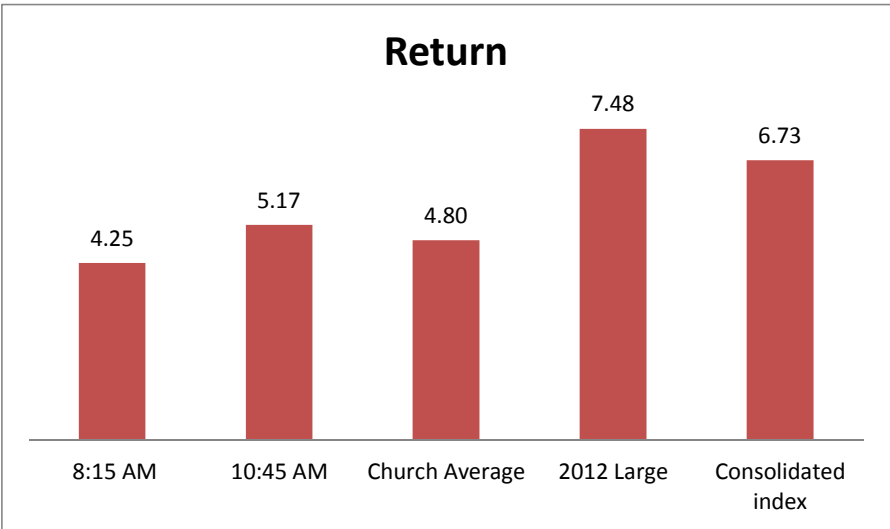
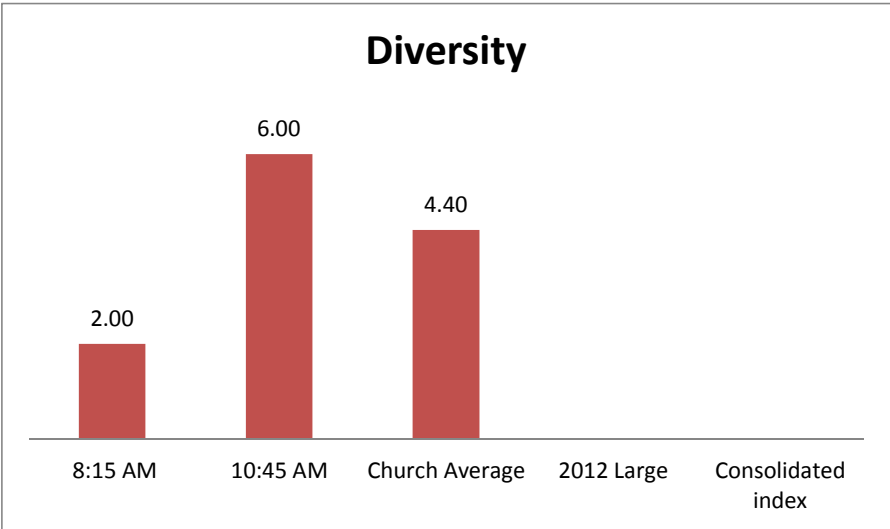
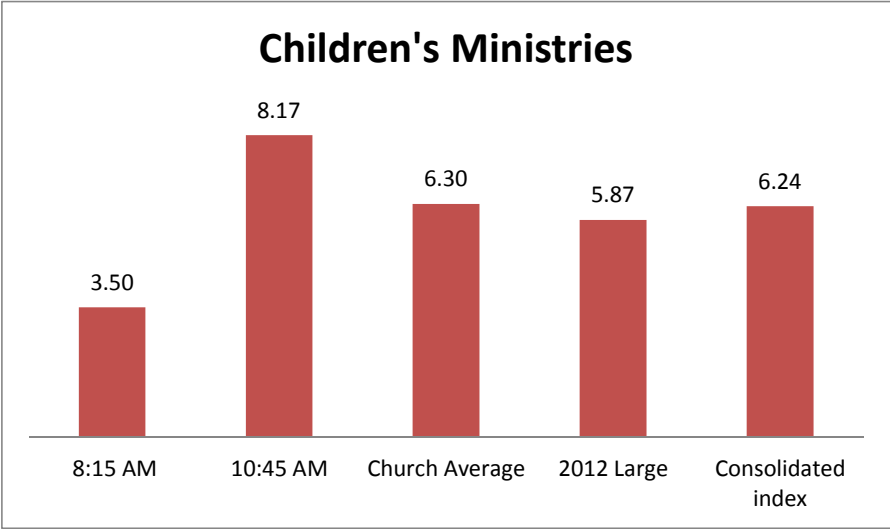


### Music

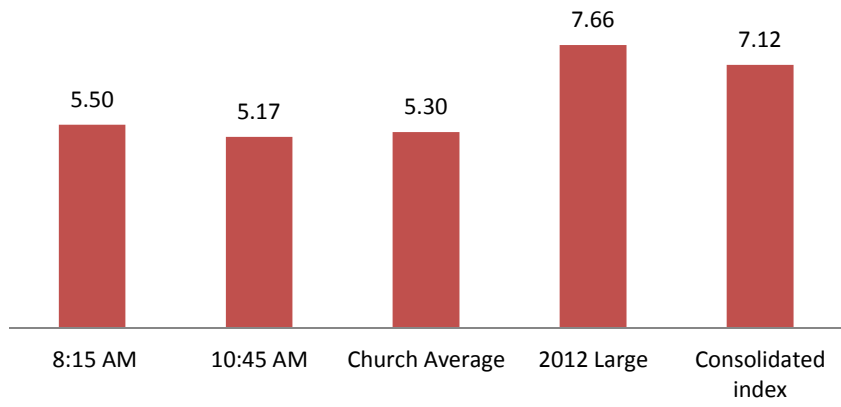








## Overall Experience



## Newburgh UMC

### Commentary by Question

This section of the report groups the comments by category and service. It allows you to review the collective feedback from each mystery guest by question.

#### Directions

**Question:** *When you stopped by a nearby gas station or local business were they able to tell you where the church you were planning to visit is located? Occasionally visitors think this question is optional; however, it is not. Churches want to know if they are known in the community they reside in so always stop either before OR after you visit the church regardless of how easy, it is to find.*

#### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 6.75 |
| 10:45 AM | 7.50 |
| Total    | 7.20 |

| Time of Visit | Directions Comments  |
|---------------|--|
| 8:15 AM       | Yes, I stopped at a grocery store just up the street and they were helpful. In fact, I needed help finding the church.   |
| 8:15 AM       | Those I asked stated the road the church was most likely on, as there were a few churches on the same road.  |
| 8:15 AM       | I stopped at a Marathon station right down the road from the church and the employee didn't know where the church was located. (I asked for Newburgh United Methodist.)                                    |
| 8:15 AM       | When we stopped at a gas station prior to the church service, the attendant told us exactly how to get there.  |
| 10:45 AM      | I actually stopped at 4 stores nearby, as Google maps did not lead me directly to the church. Associates in each establishment did not know of the church. I finally found an old couple familiar with it. |
| 10:45 AM      | The church was very easy to find and local businesses are familiar with it.  |
| 10:45 AM      | The guy at Swifty's gas station with a white T-shirt and black goatee knew exactly where the church was.   |
| 10:45 AM      | Yes, I stopped at the Huck's gas station on the corner near the church, and they were very helpful.  |

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10:45 AM I stopped at a gas station about a quarter of a mile away from the church. They knew exactly where Newburgh UMD was located. The church is located conveniently right off the Lloyd Expressway, so it really is easy to find.

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10:45 AM I stopped at the CVS on the corner across from the church. I asked where Newburgh UMC was located and was said, "I think it's down the highway (66)." It was actually on Highway 261, just down the street.

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## Signage

**Question:** *When you drove up to the church was there a sign clearly telling you that you had arrived at the correct place? Did the sign list worship times and were they easy to read? Were there signs indicating where to park and what door you should enter into? Upon entering the building, was signage available telling you where the service was being held?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 6.25 |
| 10:45 AM | 7.67 |
| Total    | 7.10 |

### Time of Visit      Signage Comments

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 8:15 AM  | Yes, there was a large sign in the front indicating that the service for the day would have guest speakers. It was welcoming a missionary couple who were coming to share their stories of African missions. They were a little light on signage for children's ministry and entrances.  |
| 8:15 AM  | There was outdoor signage with the name of the church. There were no service times listed, but upcoming events were listed. Indoors there was no signage, but it was easy to figure out where the service was held.  |
| 8:15 AM  | The signage when I arrived at the church was very good. There is a large sign outside with the service times listed very clearly. I thought the parking lot was organized well, but as it turned out, I somehow parked in the back of the church and, once inside, had to follow multiple signs and travel through a maze of hallways to get to the sanctuary. I think the fact that so many people were parked back there was what made me think that was the right place to park, and the entrance looked like a main entrance, so I didn't drive around to the other side of the church to check it out. Having said that, the signs inside the church leading to the sanctuary were pretty clear, which was helpful. |
| 8:15 AM  | There was a sign explaining that we had made it to Newburgh UMC but it did not direct us toward a door in which to enter. I had to follow other people in order to find the right place to enter. The sign did display times of worship.   |
| 10:45 AM | Yes, they had a big sign, very visible. The sanctuary was visible from the well marked entrance.   |
| 10:45 AM | There were adequate signs. There were plenty of signs inside directing anyone to whatever was of interest to them.   |
| 10:45 AM | There was a large white sign out front, but it listed the late service as 11 a.m. instead of 10:45 a.m. The parking lot and entry were clearly marked as well as special parking for visitors.   |

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 10:45 AM | I pulled into the first entrance, which led me to the back of the building. I wasn't sure where to go. The signs were easy to read, but not always clear. I entered under the door labeled "offices" and found the sanctuary. Once inside, it was very easy to find the location of the service. Greeters at the door were able to direct me to the service as well. |
| 10:45 AM | Like I mentioned before, it was exceptionally easy to find. The sign gave all the important information clearly - the name, service times, etc. Parking was clearly marked, as was the entrance to the building.   |
| 10:45 AM | There was a United Methodist symbol at the entrance; however, I originally parked on the wrong side of the church, then drove around and spent a few minutes watching other people to try to figure out which doors to enter through. The doors were not labeled in a way that made much sense as to which was the "main" entrance.                                  |

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## Pre-Service Greeting

**Question:** *Did the designated greeter welcome you as you entered the building or when you entered the sanctuary? How did they welcome you and did they make eye contact with you? Did it feel sincere?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 8.00 |
| 10:45 AM | 7.33 |
| Total    | 7.60 |

| Time of Visit | Pre Service Greeting Comments   |
|---------------|---|
| 8:15 AM       | I came in through a back door and there wasn't a greeter present. I did find my way to the sanctuary and closer to it I ran into a greeter. She apologized that no one was there to greet me and very politely and sincerely directed me to some helpful resources.   |
| 8:15 AM       | The pre-service greeting felt very sincere, but perhaps a bit too sincere. The greeter made direct eye contact and shook my hand and held onto it. It felt safe and welcoming, not aggressive or too short-lived.   |
| 8:15 AM       | I was greeted on my way in by a mentally handicapped man. He didn't make eye contact and his handshake was very weak. While it was nice that he was included, he probably shouldn't be the first person a visitor encounters on their way into the church. I was also greeted by someone stationed around the hallways. He was very nice and shook my hand. There were two people stationed with bulletins at the doors to the sanctuary. They were also very nice.   |
| 8:15 AM       | As I walked in, an older gentlemen held the door open for me, shook my hand and led me to the greeter. The greeter then gave me a brochure for the day and told me about the different kinds of ministries they were participating in as a church. She introduced herself to me, made eye contact, shook my hand. She also introduced me to a few different people and explained that there was another service at 10:45am for younger people if the music was too traditional for me. She said they have more contemporary music at the other service times. Everybody I met was very kind and sincere. They welcomed me back. I thought the whole exchange wonderful. |
| 10:45 AM      | There was a very brief greeting and very little eye-contact. People seemed to have deemed me suspicious.  |
| 10:45 AM      | The greeter was very friendly and made good eye contact as he shook my hand. His welcome felt quite sincere.  |

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10:45 AM      There were two greeters in the vestibule who warmly greeted me with a hello and a handshake. The lady handing out bulletins smiled and said hello. They all made good eye contact. While waiting for my wife to leave the restroom, an usher pointed at me and said hi. This made me feel very much at ease.

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10:45 AM      Yes! The greeters were wonderful! One was holding the door open and welcomed me with a handshake. Another was providing church bulletins and welcomed me into the service.

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10:45 AM      I did not see anyone that was a specified greeter. When I got to the sanctuary itself, I was greeted by someone briefly when I received my bulletin, but it seemed like more of an afterthought than anything else. The gentleman was polite though.

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10:45 AM      I was greeted by the main greeter and they smiled and said "Hello, welcome." I received a bulletin once I walked further in. I believe the greeting was sincere.

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## Pre-Service Atmosphere

**Question:** *What was it like when you entered the building? Was it quiet or was music being played? Did anyone other than the designated greeters acknowledge you? Did anyone greet you personally or did the congregation chat among themselves?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 6.25 |
| 10:45 AM | 6.67 |
| Total    | 6.50 |

| Time of Visit | Pre Service Atmosphere Comments  |
|---------------|--|
| 8:15 AM       | It was rather quiet and it had sort of a serious, solemn vibe to it. Some folks greeted me, but they pretty much jumped right into the service.  |
| 8:15 AM       | There was music playing and a lot of chatter. The noise level was surprisingly loud, but not aggressively so. I still felt welcome. The environment felt alive. I was greeted by at least three attendees, non-greeters, upon entering and finding a seat. |
| 8:15 AM       | The sanctuary was quiet. I was not acknowledged at all before the service started.   |
| 8:15 AM       | When I sat down in the pews, there was a greeting time and all the people around me shook my hand and introduced themselves to me. They all had on name tags. There was traditional music playing in the background.                                       |
| 10:45 AM      | Though the ambiance and church itself was lovely, people appeared stressed and kept to themselves. There was only a brief greeting upon entry.   |
| 10:45 AM      | The music used contemporary instruments, but the tempo of some familiar songs was too slow. Several members of the congregation greeted me and asked if I was new there, and they warmly welcomed me when I said this was my first visit.                  |
| 10:45 AM      | Upon entering there was music over the intercom for five minutes before the service. We were welcomed by the staff, but the congregation seemed to chat among themselves in small groups of about four or five.  |
| 10:45 AM      | The worship band was playing music and people were visiting with each other. People walking by often said hello, but then moved on to find their seats.  |

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10:45 AM      There was no music being played in the building when I entered. Since the second service is the one with the live band (from what I gathered), the band was tuning up and getting ready which explains the silence. I was only greeted by one person, but it was Pastor Chris Nunley, one of the two pastors. I appreciate that he noticed I was new and took a brief moment to get to know me and welcome me.

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10:45 AM      The worship band was warming up when I entered, they were playing some music and tuning the guitar. There were a few people scattered throughout the sanctuary. The congregation chatted among themselves.

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## Seating

**Question:** *Was the seating comfortable? Were there plenty of seats to choose from or did you feel crowded? Was the room 1/2 full or 1/2 empty and was the congregation sparsely dispersed around the room or huddled together?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 6.75 |
| 10:45 AM | 6.50 |
| Total    | 6.60 |

### Time of Visit      Seating Comments

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 8:15 AM  | The seating was comfortable. Oddly enough, it was a little stuffy in there. The people were sort of sitting on top of one another. The seats seemed so far away from the pulpit and all the activities toward the front.   |
| 8:15 AM  | The room was very evenly dispersed and I had an easy time of finding a seat. By the time the service began the entire room was more than 1/2 full and there was no huddling or awkward closeness.  |
| 8:15 AM  | The sanctuary was very empty when I arrived six or seven minutes early. It was awful because everyone was in the back half of the seats, so everyone who came later had to walk all the way up front. It's a long, narrow sanctuary, so it's quite a hike to the front of the aisle. When I sat down, I was at about the halfway point and there was nobody in front of me at all. |
| 8:15 AM  | The seating was fairly comfortable and there was plenty of room for me to pick a seat. The room was full but not too crowded.  |
| 10:45 AM | The sanctuary was designed long and narrow which requires a decent walk in front of people to find a seat. This could be troublesome for some, but there was plenty of seats.  |
| 10:45 AM | The seats are pews with thin padding on the seat, but not the back. They were not very comfortable. The service was well attended. People were fairly evenly dispersed. It did not quite feel crowded.   |
| 10:45 AM | The seating was OK. The pews seemed to fill up in the last couple minutes before the service. There were a few people per pew, but my wife and I had our own pew. The people appeared to be scattered equally.   |
| 10:45 AM | The room was mostly filled, but there were plenty of seats. I did not feel crowded at all. The pews were comfortable enough, but by the end of the service they were slightly uncomfortable. I noticed a lot of fidgeting from the congregation as the sermon went on.   |

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10:45 AM      The seating was comfortable. I arrived 10 minutes early and was able to easily find seating. The room filled in to where it was about 3/4 full, with everyone being pretty evenly spread out.

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10:45 AM      The seat was deceiving because I thought it would be padded (because there was cloth on it) but that was not the case. It was fine after the first time I sat down but I guess it caught me off guard. The sanctuary was about 1/3 full and the congregation was dispersed around the pews in little groups talking.

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## Music

**Question:** *What was the style of music - contemporary, traditional, blended? Did you enjoy the music or did it put you to sleep? Would the music you experienced appeal to a younger age demographic? Was the congregation engaged in the music?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 3.50 |
| 10:45 AM | 7.00 |
| Total    | 5.60 |

| Time of Visit | Music Comments  |
|---------------|---|
| 8:15 AM       | Traditional, once again. I didn't enjoy the music at all. It was typical choir music that dates back to the 1500s and really has no identity in this generation, or really any generation before it. I think they could really use some work in this area. But having said that, the people were at least slightly involved in the music.   |
| 8:15 AM       | The music was traditional. I did find it to encourage a sleep-like state at that early in the morning. The singing among the congregation was not very full. Those singing near me were doing so rather quietly. The choir was plenty loud enough and material was provided, so the music was available to everyone. The music definitely would not have appealed to a younger demographic.                               |
| 8:15 AM       | The music was very traditional and I didn't enjoy it at all. It was definitely geared more toward an older congregation, which made sense as it was the classic service. Neither the congregation nor the choir seemed engaged in the music at all.   |
| 8:15 AM       | The music was traditional. The music really could have put me to sleep. I believe, unfortunately, that the music was the worst part of the service. We sang along out of a book and it was not displayed on the big screen. The congregation was very traditional, holding their books in front of them and singing quietly to themselves. I do not believe the younger generation would be very intrigued by this music. |
| 10:45 AM      | The music was blended very nicely, with youths playing soft rock, then hymns that were generically pleasant. It seems they have a better chance of being attractive to a younger audience than usual.   |
| 10:45 AM      | The music was blended and there were only two hymns. The congregation participated well enough in singing, but while the music was contemporary, the tempo was way too slow, so the music was not uplifting.  |

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 10:45 AM | There was a mix of both contemporary and traditional music. The harpist and flutist seemed to be a nice duo. It was both relaxing and uplifting. The singer had a nice voice and the band seemed well rehearsed. The music appeared to be enjoyed by all, from senior citizens to youth. The congregation appeared not too personally involved in the music until instructed.  |
| 10:45 AM | Contemporary music was played, but it seemed exceptionally slow. I recognized some of the songs from other services at different churches, but the tempo was much slower. The congregation didn't seem very engaged. The slow pace of the music made it less exciting and harder to find the melody.   |
| 10:45 AM | The music was blended, leaning more toward contemporary. There was a live band, and the band was very good. They had lots of energy and were all very talented. The songs were easily accessible for the younger people. They even threw in some dubstep at one point, which I thought was a fun touch. If anything, it may be the older members of the congregation that would have problems, or feel disenfranchised with the music. |
| 10:45 AM | The music was relatively contemporary. It was played by younger individuals but was very slow (perhaps to appeal to the blended audience). The congregation was not engaged in the music. Two or three individuals tried to clap along but this died out immediately when no one else began to join in.  |

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## In-Service Greeting

**Question:** *Was there a greeting time during the service? Did people in the congregation greet you? Were visitors welcomed from the pulpit and how were they welcomed? Did the experience feel sincere or scripted? Were you overwhelmed by the greetings or was it just the right amount?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 7.25 |
| 10:45 AM | 6.17 |
| Total    | 6.60 |

### Time of Visit      In Service Greeting Comments

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|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 8:15 AM | Yes, there was a greeting time. Some folks talked to me, but it did seem like they were trained to operate in this manner. It had that air of over-politeness which can make a discerning mind feel as if they are being fake. In fact, many people in the service wore name tags. I feel like this only segregates the people. Like, what do I have to do to get a name tag? Join the club?   |
| 8:15 AM | I was greeted by around three or four congregation members. It felt appropriate and not overwhelming. I was surprised that the greetings didn't feel totally scripted. Most people seemed sincere, but a couple seemed to be introducing themselves out of feeling they must. The preacher welcomed everyone from the pulpit. He was sincere in doing so.  |
| 8:15 AM | There was a greeting time and I was greeted, but it was very awkward. People only said "good morning" and then looked away, so it was kind of like, do they notice I'm new and just not care? Then one woman said, "Oh, you look new! Are you new?" I said, "Yes, it's my first time here." She shook my hand and said, "Hi, I'm (name)," but then was talking to someone else as I said, "Nice to meet you, I'm (name)." So the whole thing was extremely awkward and felt very fake. Visitors were welcomed from the pulpit in a very sincere manner. It was pretty perfect and visitors and everyone else were encouraged to fill in the perforated part of the bulletin and put it in the offering plate. I really like churches that do that because then the visitors aren't the only ones filling something out. It also really helped that they instructed us what do with the card. |
| 8:15 AM | They greeted me with sincerity. They all shook my hand, smiled and made eye contact. I was not overwhelmed at all by the people, it was just the right amount of people trying to say hello. Very friendly and sincere.  |

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|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 10:45 AM | Again, there was little greeting extended to any visitors. Perhaps they never have them and have forgotten about them. There is little to say about something's absence.  |
| 10:45 AM | There was a greeting time during the service and visitors were warmly welcomed from the pulpit. I was greeted by 14 people, about half of whom recognized I was a visitor and made me feel very welcome.  |
| 10:45 AM | During the greeting time several people shook our hands and said hello, and that was the extent of greetings in this period of the service. Extra conversation did not appear to happen anywhere, and there were some uncomfortable silences. Visitors were not mentioned from the pulpit, but there was a card for members to put their contact information on and a place there for visitors information. |
| 10:45 AM | There was a greeting time and people from all around my seat turned to greet me. The greetings from everywhere (the pulpit and the pews) seemed sincere and were welcomed. I did not feel that the amount of welcomes was overwhelming.   |
| 10:45 AM | There was a greeting time, but it seemed more like a formality than anything. Like, "churches are supposed to have a greeting time, so, here it is." It felt a bit forced. The people were polite enough, but it did not exactly feel like a special part of the service either.  |
| 10:45 AM | There was a "turn around and greet your neighbors" time for about thirty seconds. I shook hands with the man in front of me, that was the only greeting I had.  |

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## Sermon

**Question:** *How long was the message and what was the sermon about? Was the message relevant and easy for you to understand? Did the service have any dead space (meaning a time when nothing was happening, music, speaking?) Overall, was the service stimulating or were you ready to take a nap?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 6.75 |
| 10:45 AM | 5.33 |
| Total    | 5.90 |

| Time of Visit | Sermon Comments |
|---------------|-----------------|
|---------------|-----------------|

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 8:15 AM | The sermon was OK as far as time was concerned. The message was in regard to missions in Africa. It seemed as if the whole thing was building up to the punch line: please donate a large sum of money so that we can live in Africa, which isn't so bad, by the way. The message was sort of detached from the true nature of Africa; rather, it focused on the speaker's life and ministry toward the end goal of raising money.   |
| 8:15 AM | There was never a moment of downtime. They have media screens all throughout with images or words to the prayers or songs. They also played a commercial. I felt alert and stimulated the entire time (with the exception of the style of music, which just isn't my taste, so it did make me feel a tad sleepy). The sermon itself was about truly loving one another. The preacher pointed out that human beings are the cause to our problems and we hold the power to fix our problems. He said ridding ourselves of hate speech is a major step. It was a very easily understood message. |

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8:15 AM      The sermon was about plugging in to groups in the church. The message felt a little long, and then the speaker made a joke about how long it was at the end, which I think is awkward. If you know you're going over on your time, you should cut yourself off, rather than make a joke about it. One thing I really didn't like about the message was that the speaker was using the leftovers from last week. They're in a three-part series right now called "A Simple Life." The first week was grow, this week was plug in, and next week is serve. But almost the first half of the sermon this week was about grow. I think this is probably why the sermon was so long and I didn't understand why he felt the need to tack that onto the beginning. There wasn't any dead space. I wasn't really able to focus on the sermon all that well, unfortunately. It was kind of all over the place, the speaker tripped over his words a lot of the time and it just wasn't that interesting of a message. Of course, it also wasn't a message that was aimed at visitors, so that's somewhat understandable. The message itself seemed a little stale. He used a lot of analogies that I've heard over and over again growing up in church (belonging to a church is like being on a team, wouldn't it be cool if people were as excited about church as they are about football games, etc.), and I didn't feel like he brought anything new to the table.

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8:15 AM      The actual message lasted about 25 minutes. The message was very relevant and understandable. The use of scripture was relevant to the subject. I was intrigued by the subject and I could make application to my life. The message was about the little details of life and how they do not matter to God. God does things beyond our expectations and HE wants us to write our own story without limitations. The only time when there was dead space was when he asked people to bow their heads and pray silently. Understandable silence. It was kind of strange though because the music was very traditional but the pastor was very contemporary. According to the music, I was expecting the sermon to be boring and I thought he was going to quote scriptures the whole time but he found a way to present scripture and a message in a modern way.

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10:45 AM      It was a lengthy service. As a precursor to Thanksgiving, the speaker covered the importance of remembering our common ancestry, also that gratitude is a spiritual discipline, not a denial of reality. It was stimulating, yet stretched out.

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10:45 AM      The message was about time and how it affects our daily lives. The service was not overlong. The minister is a very good speaker, but due to a combination of poor acoustics and a not-so-great sound system, I would recommend this church as a sleep aid.

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|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 10:45 AM | The message was divided into a brief children's message and the main message. The main message was about 20 minutes long, slightly longer than ideal, but acceptable. The sermon was very relevant and a good lesson to learn: to not to worry about tomorrow and to enjoy life.  |
| 10:45 AM | There was not a lot of dead space in the sermon, but I felt like it was too long. It seemed like there was a lot of repetition (teams) and the message could have been made more direct and timely. The children's message was also a stopping point for the service. It was a very simple message, but the whole service stopped while it took place.  |
| 10:45 AM | The sermon was about 20 minutes long. It was about teaching people how they could better serve the Lord in modern times and how it takes practice to try to live as Jesus did. No dead space, but Pastor Todd was not, in my opinion, the most engaging of speakers. Nice guy who seemed likeable, but I was not exactly jumping out of my seat listening to him.   |
| 10:45 AM | The message was about a number of topics and lasted just over thirty minutes by itself. The pastor spoke for the first twenty minutes then said "OK, let's get started..." and embarked on a three-point explanation of the sermon series (G.P.S.). The service was about the G (Grow) and had four points under it, as well. The pastor spoke about Hebrew books, India's belief in entities, and quoted John Wesley more than the Bible (I understand he founded the Methodist church, but the percentage was two to three John Wesley quotes per Bible verse). While there was a good intent behind the message, it was too long, somewhat hard to follow, and rarely tied back into the Word. |

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## Speaker

**Question:** *Who was leading the service and were the speaker's engaging and easy to listen to? Did they seem prepared and were visual aids such as videos, drama, scripture or props, used to support the message? (If there was more than one speaker please use a name and/or description.)*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 6.75 |
| 10:45 AM | 6.33 |
| Total    | 6.50 |

### Time of Visit      Speaker Comments

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|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 8:15 AM | The pastor led the service but then handed the sermon over to the guest speaker. There were no visual aids or anything to add to the stimulation, which is sad, because I'm sure photos of Africa may have encouraged the audience to be a little more engaged in the message.  |
| 8:15 AM | The primary speaker was Rev. Nunley. He was very sincere in his speeches and I did not actually feel like I was being preached to. It felt more like someone wanting the best from everyone in the room. Peggy Nunley was another speaker who spoke about what the children had been doing. She spoke to the children, encouraging them to share what they have been working on. Not many children seemed comfortable sharing and she also barely offered the microphone to them. The way she spoke to the children irked me a bit. Many people feel they must talk down to children, almost as though they were pets. It did not feel like she was actually interested in allowing the children to speak for themselves. She coaxed them into speaking and basically told them what to say. Such things as, "Have you been learning about Jesus?" instead of, "Tell us something you learned about Jesus." There were visual aides used throughout, as stated before. Words to songs that were not from the hymnals were on screens, as were the words to prayers. |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 8:15 AM  | <p>There was a woman who did all the call and responses and scripted prayers. She had a very good speaking voice. I was thrown off a little by the scripted prayers, though. I've only been to a Methodist church one other time, and they had call and responses, but no scripted prayers, so I didn't expect that here. It felt really forced and I didn't like it at all. Someone else did the formal prayer section of the service. It was really, really strange because first, instead of him praying out loud, we had a moment of silence. It was the most awkward thing I've ever experienced. I've never heard of having silent prayer time in church. But then he prayed out loud and it was fine and flowed well. During the sermon, the preacher had visual aids of T-shirts and stuff showing you were "part of a team" to go along with plugging in. It was relevant, but also a little cheesy.</p> |
| 8:15 AM  | <p>They were very prepared for the service and they used the projector and small t.v.'s for visual aids. The pastor also used a journal to represent the story of peoples' lives. Very relevant and understandable with the use of props.</p>   |
| 10:45 AM | <p>The speaker had high energy, jumped around quite a bit, and spoke with a fast rate of speech. In attempt to flesh out his message, the speaker just rambled off a list of quotes most likely retrieved from a Google search.</p>   |
| 10:45 AM | <p>Ray Tromley really did not stand out, good or bad. He's just an average speaker who fades into the woodwork. Rev. Nunley led the children's service up front. The children's message tied in with the sermon, giving the service a unified feel. The videos were shown on a main screen behind the altar and on TVs mounted halfway back on each side of the sanctuary, but unless you sit close to one, the words can be difficult to make out due to the small screen sizes. Using a larger font size would help a lot there.</p>  |
| 10:45 AM | <p>The lead pastor, Chris Nunley, was on vacation, so Dr. Todd A. Gile was there. It was a well-planned service, with the speaker rarely referring to his notes. There were videos as well as a large screen utilized as a liturgist read from the Bible.</p>   |
| 10:45 AM | <p>Visual aids were used (T-shirts, hats, etc.), but too many slowed the service down. The speaker was engaging, but by the end of the sermon, many people had lost interest and perhaps even missed the point.</p>   |
| 10:45 AM | <p>Pastor Todd was leading the service. As I mentioned before, nice guy, but did not set the world on fire with his presentation. They did make great use of music and visual projection to help aid the message though. It was very well done and added a lot to the service.</p>  |

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10:45 AM

Power Point was used (Mac's version) and the pastor referenced many different things; however, the sermon was very scattered and hard to follow. I found myself checking my watch numerous times because by the time the message was over I had a hard time remembering where it even began.

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## Post-Service Atmosphere

**Question:** *Following the service, take time to look around as though you are not sure what it is you might be looking for. Did anyone say "hello" to you or interact with you in any way?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 7.50 |
| 10:45 AM | 6.50 |
| Total    | 6.90 |

| Time of Visit | Post Service Atmosphere Comments  |
|---------------|---|
| 8:15 AM       | They were very friendly. I was invited by several people to enjoy refreshments and fellowship time and everyone was very inviting.  |
| 8:15 AM       | I felt excellent about the kindness among the congregation. I had a woman encourage me to attend the later service for younger people, where they have a band rather than a choir. She was very interested in why I was there and interested to hear of my recent move to the area. Another woman introduced herself and I got a sense that she sincerely cared for me. I was not feeling my best that day and she seemed to notice it and was able to make me feel like smiling just with her eye contact. I felt that from nearly everyone who looked at me. I felt a curiosity and a genuine appreciation. |
| 8:15 AM       | Not a single person talked to me on the way out of the sanctuary, in the lobby, or on my trek through the halls to find the entrance I parked near.   |
| 8:15 AM       | I was wandering around somewhat aimlessly and the same greeter whom I met at the beginning came up to me and asked if there was something she could help me with. I asked again about ministries, and she led me to a brochure stand with all the things within the community they are involved in as a church. She told me about many community organizations, mission work and how I could be involved. Very friendly and informative.  |
| 10:45 AM      | I wandered around lost after service for a bit which only increased the congregations suspensions of me. Maybe I was walking to close to their children.  |
| 10:45 AM      | I stood in the hallway looking around, and it did not take long before someone asked if I needed help.  |
| 10:45 AM      | At the conclusion of the service, most people appeared to be in a rush to go home. The usher said "Nice to see you," but that was about it. A few members of the church were talking in what seemed to be the same small groups.  |
| 10:45 AM      | Yes. People were very friendly and helpful.   |

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10:45 AM It took a little while before anyone really noticed me. It seemed like most people all knew each other so they did not have a lot of time for anyone new. Really, outside of Pastor Chris before the service, I did not feel extremely welcomed by many.

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10:45 AM I glanced around with my bulletin in my hand as though I were looking for someone and did so for about three minutes. No one spoke to me but a few people smiled or nodded politely at me as they walked by.

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## Connect Resources

**Question:** *Was it clear and obvious that the church had more information to offer such as; brochure, website, or contact information if you were interested in knowing more? Did you see an information table and was it located in a place that a visitor could easily find? When you visited the website was it easy to maneuver and could you easily find service times as well as additional information about the churches core values/beliefs? Was there any information regarding the children's programming? Did they have a calendar or current events section that explained how to become more involved in the church and was the information current? Did you find any inconsistencies in the information or dead links?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 8.50 |
| 10:45 AM | 8.17 |
| Total    | 8.30 |

| Time of Visit | Connect Resources Comments  |
|---------------|---|
| 8:15 AM       | I found various information about the church: bulletins, booklets, fliers, etc. The website was very nice and helpful in regards to information regarding programs, children's ministry, youth groups, etc.   |
| 8:15 AM       | The church had an abundance of information and programs to be a part of. There was a table just outside the doors to the congregation with information as well as a welcome center comprised of a large desk with very friendly old ladies interacting with everyone. The pamphlet handed out had a great deal of information, from what the sermon was about to what current events they have coming up to ways to get involved by volunteering, donating or otherwise. The website is very clean and professional. I was able to instantly find their mission and history. I also easily found service times, staff information, youth group schedules and info, children's service info, even specifics for ways men or women could get more involved. There were also several ways to keep connected with them via social media and smartphone/tablets with apps for download. I did not find any inconsistencies or dead links. It is honestly an excellent site - well organized and easily comprehended. |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 8:15 AM  | There was a welcome booth, but it was pretty crowded, which was weird because it didn't really seem like anyone was visiting. The website is set up very well. There was a clear navigation menu that was consistent throughout all the pages, which is fantastic, and the design is very clean. Their Twitter feed could use some work, though. It seems to be pretty new, so that's fine, but the second to last tweet is: "Last official day of my vacation. Yet looking forward to getting back to work." This is clearly posted from one of the pastors' points of view, and that's not how you use a company Twitter. You are representing the church, not yourself. |
| 8:15 AM  | See previous question. When I visited the web site, I could easily find times, how to get to the church and their core beliefs and values. Their web site is very modern and attractive. I easily found up coming events and how to contact them if I needed to. Very nice website!  |
| 10:45 AM | Opposite the entrance stood a clearly marked welcome desk with an almost overwhelming amount of literature. It was hard to tell what really applied to the local community itself. Website was consistent in overflowing information.  |
| 10:45 AM | It was very clear and obvious that the church had more information to offer. There was an information table between the entrance doors where it could not be missed. The website is easy to navigate and has lots of information about preschool, children's and youth ministries, announcements and an events calendar. The core beliefs and mission are clearly stated. The website is designed in Adobe Flash and is slow to load.  |
| 10:45 AM | There was a rack of brochures with information and projects the church was involved in, like prayer lists. This was nice, but reading them caused me to be in the way of traffic to the nursery and offices. Being in IT for 25 years, I thought the website was informative, user-friendly and an asset. I found lots of information and calendars in several locations, including the website and program. The only inconsistency was the time on the sign saying the service was at 11 a.m. instead of 10:45 a.m.   |
| 10:45 AM | Yes. The service focused on some of the other activities that the church could offer. I did see an information table and someone sitting there to direct and answer questions. The website was very helpful as well and I found all of the information that I needed. I did not find any problems while using the website.   |
| 10:45 AM | The information desk was right up front when you walked into the building, and had plenty of information available. The website was extremely easy to navigate and the important information was not difficult to find at all. It even had easy access to being able to e-mail people of the church, which I thought was a great touch. All of this was really top notch.  |

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10:45 AM

There were a few ways to get more information and the pastor encouraged both visitors and members to fill out the "Welcome Guest" slip in the bulletin. There was a calendar on the back of the bulletin that was well done. I did not find any dead links when I checked out the website.

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## Friendliness

**Question:** *Overall, how friendly would you say the church was to you during your visit? Did you feel welcomed?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 7.25 |
| 10:45 AM | 7.00 |
| Total    | 7.10 |

| Time of Visit | Friendliness Comments   |
|---------------|---|
| 8:15 AM       | I met several new people who initiated conversation, and they were very inviting and warm. Most of those who welcomed me were women. I've noticed that a lack of male leadership is an issue in these environments at times. But overall I did feel welcomed.   |
| 8:15 AM       | I felt extremely welcomed. There were, of course, the kind of attendees who may turn their nose up at a slightly alternative-looking human such as myself, but their glances didn't linger.   |
| 8:15 AM       | The church was relatively friendly, but I didn't have any real conversations with anyone, which was not good, and that first greeter really threw me off. I didn't feel very welcomed.  |
| 8:15 AM       | The people of the church were very friendly and not fake. They were sincere and honestly enjoyed my company. I felt very welcomed and appreciated.  |
| 10:45 AM      | I felt welcomed not in the least. I felt like I had broken a rule by walking in alone as a young man.   |
| 10:45 AM      | The church was very friendly and made me feel very welcome.   |
| 10:45 AM      | The staff seemed friendly and the parishioners did not appear to notice new visitors. I did not feel welcome OR unwelcome - just there.   |
| 10:45 AM      | I felt very welcomed. Everyone was incredibly friendly, but not to the point that I felt uncomfortable.   |
| 10:45 AM      | I would rate the friendliness around a 6. Nobody was outwardly rude to me (outside of one particular incident I will discuss later), but no one really went out of their way to be friendly to me either.   |
| 10:45 AM      | The church was relatively welcoming. I did not like that the members wore name tags because it made me feel immediately pointed-out for not being a member. Aside from a woman who sat next to me and yelled at four different children (none of whom she was the parent of) during the service, it was a pretty welcoming atmosphere. Most of the members seemed to just mind their own business, which I did not mind too much. |

## Children's Ministries

**Question:** When you arrived at the church was it obvious by the signage where the children's ministry was located and that it was clean, secure, and well staffed? Did you feel at ease leaving your child? Did it look like a place your child would have fun at? *If you were not able to personally experience, visiting the children's area please answer based on visual perceptions. Consider how you would feel as a first time visitor if you were going to bring your child, a relative, or a friend's child to church. Be sure to look carefully at interior and exterior signage, what you read in the bulletin and on the website regarding the children's ministry. Studies show that the number four reason families don't attend church is concern for who will care for their children while they are attending church.*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 3.50 |
| 10:45 AM | 8.17 |
| Total    | 6.30 |

### Time of Visit      Childrens Ministries Comments

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|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 8:15 AM | I honestly cannot recall one single bit of signage regarding children's ministry times, location, etc. This area could really use a facelift.   |
| 8:15 AM | I did not get a chance to visit the children's area. However, based off the friendliness and warm welcome, I would feel comfortable having children there. But the woman, Peggy, did speak to the children in such a way that I would hope for a better form of influence or for someone to speak to them like human beings. Also, the children themselves did not seem comforted by her. They could have been uncomfortable for having to be in front of a large room of people, but I got the sense that they did not feel free to speak under her command. |
| 8:15 AM | I actually don't think they had a children's ministry. There was a children's message during the sermon (which I find so annoying and unnecessary) and then the kids went back to their seats, so I don't think there was childcare available. I didn't see or hear anything about a nursery, either, even when walking through the halls. On my way out, I saw some children's classrooms, but they were empty and the lights were out. There were also signs at almost every door saying "This is a peanut-free room," which is very harsh and unpleasant.  |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 8:15 AM  | From my experience, I do not believe there is a children's service for the 8:15am service. The children stayed in the church and were distracting to me. They were being loud and had no where to go but to try and listen to a sermon that did not apply to them. I saw a few classrooms on the way to the sanctuary, but they were all closed with the lights off.   |
| 10:45 AM | The children's quadrant was obviously signed and looked to be highly used. Also, there was a sign in/sign out system involving a printer that, judging from the lines and frustration I observed, was cumbersome and wasteful. Safe but outdated.  |
| 10:45 AM | Signs clearly pointed the way to the children's ministry. It was neat and well maintained. It was impressive how well equipped their children's ministry is. I would gladly leave my kids there and be tempted to join them.   |
| 10:45 AM | Upon entering the building it was clear to where children's ministries were. We had no children with, us but there was also a small children's message. The message to the kids made me feel that if I had kids, this would put me more at ease with the church's ability to care for kids there.  |
| 10:45 AM | I did not attend church with my child. The children attending the church seemed happy and well cared for. The adults seemed very interested in the children's spiritual growth. I would absolutely bring my own children to the NUMC. It seemed clean and safe and the staff seemed friendly and caring. I think that the children's ministry is doing a great job.  |
| 10:45 AM | First thing I saw was signage for the children's ministry. I did not get a chance to actually go through there since I do not have children, but it looked easy to find. I did see a couple of women who looked like they were helping gather the children after the children's message during the service, and they appeared to be very on the ball with organizing the flock.                              |
| 10:45 AM | I did not see clear signage for the children's ministry but the service included a little children's message and then dismissed them to children's church. I would not have let my child go out there because they would not have known which class to go to (or if there are even different age group classes), I would have been hesitant to let them leave me since they would not have known what to do. |

## Diversity

**Question:** *Did you observe anything, either before or during your visit, that would lead you to believe that this church values diversity? Examples include reaching out to young and old; wealthy and poor; male and female, or various ethnicities that might live in the area. What, specifically, did you observe that demonstrates the church's efforts to be relevant to the surrounding community? Examples may be offering a service in another language, showing diversity in pictures, using different types of music, offering classes on English as a second language, etc.*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 2.00 |
| 10:45 AM | 6.00 |
| Total    | 4.40 |

### Time of Visit      Diversity Comments

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 8:15 AM  | There were only upper-middle class white folks at the service, and honestly, it was only geared to such a crowd. There wasn't any information about anything in the area of diversity. The message, all about Africa, seemed to be such a disconnected, distant idea for the audience.   |
| 8:15 AM  | I did not notice any amount of diversity. There were Caucasians only in the congregation, and one female of African decent and one of Asian in a video about their youth group. Nearly all the members of the congregation looked alike. Women either had short, white hair or neatly cut blonde hair. The men were also very well kept. Everyone wore dressy clothing and tended to have expensive-looking jewelry. I did not notice a single pair of blue jeans. Also, the morning service is for an older demographic, whereas the later morning service is for a younger crowd, where I expect more diversity to come from. It did feel heavy on the wealthy spectrum. There were no other cultures discussed in any of the speeches. There were no other languages besides English in any of the writing. |
| 8:15 AM  | There was absolutely nothing that indicated that the church values diversity and there was not a single non-white person in the sanctuary.   |
| 8:15 AM  | I did not see any diversity in this church. The majority of people attending were older Caucasian men and women. I did not see one person of a different ethnicity. There were a few younger couples, but not very many. Maybe 5 younger families. They also all seemed to be middle class. Not rich, not poor.  |
| 10:45 AM | Other than valuing the safety of their children, on signs of valuing diversity. I feel having long hair added to the congregation's objection to me.   |

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 10:45 AM | There were people of all ages in the congregation. I live in a small town where there is very little racial diversity, so that would be a non-issue for any of the churches here.  |
| 10:45 AM | There was a large sign with an upcoming meeting about learning about Arab culture. Also, they were recruiting people for a Habitat for Humanity project. They were also "advertising" a place to get blood pressure checks done.   |
| 10:45 AM | I didn't notice much about their values surrounding diversity. The service seemed very welcoming to all people. The children's message was inclusive to young people.  |
| 10:45 AM | I saw no real indication of any diversity. The congregation, to my knowledge, was all Caucasian. I did not see any information on programs that were targeted specifically toward promoting diversity. I looked on the website and saw that they do work with the local food pantries and programs of that sort. |
| 10:45 AM | Aside from having a diverse age group (children through seniors) there was no visible diversity in the church. All seemed to be relatively well-off financially, white, and church-literate.   |

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## Return

**Question:** *Please explain why or why you would not return to church here. Based on your overall experience and what the church has to offer would you encourage other people to attend church here? If so, what age group (older/younger/families/college/teens/children) would you recommend to attend?*

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 4.25 |
| 10:45 AM | 5.17 |
| Total    | 4.80 |

| Time of Visit | Return Comments   |
|---------------|---|
| 8:15 AM       | No, I personally wouldn't return simply because it's the same old thing, so to speak. I could point a person to any handful of UMC's and the variety wouldn't be much. So, my question would be to any church: what makes you different? For this congregation, sadly, the answer is nothing.   |
| 8:15 AM       | I would attend again based off the welcoming environment, the easily understood and relatable message, and to possibly get involved with a volunteer service. I would not, however, want to attend based off the lack of diversity. As the most diverse individual in the building, I would hope for more. This is a church I would recommend those ages 40-plus and Caucasian to attend. |
| 8:15 AM       | I definitely wouldn't return to this service, but I would potentially be willing to try out the later blended service, which I would hope would be a little more modern and maybe have nicer people. I don't think I would encourage anyone to attend church there after the experience I had. While my experience was by no means awful, it also didn't seem like anything special.      |
| 8:15 AM       | I would not return because I did not like the music and I felt as though I did not fit in with the congregation. Although everybody was very friendly, I do not feel that I would make it a habit of going to that particular church. I would recommend older adults attend this service; the music and sermon is more for that generation.   |
| 10:45 AM      | Because I enjoy comradely conversation, I would not return here because it seemed to be severely lacking in that department. Other than the nostalgic warmth of the sanctuary, there is nothing I would recommended to others. There were however many teenagers in attendance. Teens might like the number teens.  |

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|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 10:45 AM | I would not return because I enjoy more contemporary services. My wife and I had to nudge each other awake more than once. I would recommend this church for the older set who like a slower-paced service.   |
| 10:45 AM | It is out of the way to be a regular church for us. Families looked to be a main segment the church was interested in and I would recommend this church to them.  |
| 10:45 AM | I don't think that I would return to church here. The service was longer than I expected and seemed to pass slowly. The slow music and children's message seemed to draw the service to an extreme length and the sermon was not as engaging as I had hoped. I would encourage other people to attend the services here, especially families and older people. I think that teens and college students would find the services dull and long. |
| 10:45 AM | I enjoyed the service for the most part, but I wasn't blown away. The blended service is great for younger and more contemporary people. I would think if you are in your 20s or 30s, you would love this service. However, like I had mentioned before, no one was outwardly polite to me except for Pastor Chris, who I liked a lot. He seems to get it; engaging people and making them welcomed.  |
| 10:45 AM | I would probably not return because I found the sermon to be ill-defined, did not believe that God's Word was at the center of their concern, and found the congregation to be relatively disengaged. I might encourage older folk who do not want to interact much with others during their worship service to attend here.  |

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## Overall Commentary

**Question:** Overall, on the same scale where 1 is extremely poor and 10 is outstanding, how would you rate your overall experience at the church today? Did anything offend you or make you feel uncomfortable? During your visit, if you chose to fill out a visitors card, the church may try follow up by sending you a letter, email etc. We like to keep track of this so please send us an email letting us know. Finally, based on your experience, (keeping in mind that the point of this research is to improve the experience for future visitors) what suggestions would you make to this church?

### Average Score:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 8:15 AM  | 5.50 |
| 10:45 AM | 5.17 |
| Total    | 5.30 |

### Time of Visit Overall Comments

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 8:15 AM | The people were friendly, but the service lacked creativity and spirit. It was a systematic program as usual, and this tends to put people like myself to sleep. I would consider some new approaches, like teaching the scripture.   |
| 8:15 AM | I would suggest speaking with the woman in charge of the children's ministries about the way she speaks to children. I would also suggest encouraging diversity not only culturally, but economically as well. I was impressed with how welcome I did feel in such an environment with no diversity, however. The one other thing that I didn't feel quite fit under any other category is the suggestion that the spoken, in-unison prayers be removed or made to feel less like it comes from the occult. There was a dull hum of voices repeating archaic words. If the language in the prayers was more modern and relevant to our current society I would not have been off-put by them. |
| 8:15 AM | There wasn't anything that offended me or made me uncomfortable, but I would definitely recommend that people be more inviting and friendly to visitors. The other things I didn't like mostly had to do with the fact that it was the traditional service. UPDATE (8/29): Today when I got home from work, there was a gift bag with a folder of information about the church and a loaf of bread on my door.  |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 8:15 AM  | I was not uncomfortable but felt as though I did not fit in with the rest of the congregation. I felt out of place, as though people thought I had come to the wrong service. I was the youngest person (other than kids 18 and younger) at the service. I did fill out a visitors card and will keep you informed if I get a follow up email or call. I would highly suggest they play different music to match the sermon. I would also suggest that they put signs up on where the sanctuary is located. If a person had not escorted me there, I do not believe I would have found it very easily. |
| 10:45 AM | With Newburgh being a small town, close only to other small towns and situated on a street full of other churches, I can understand the church not expecting or reaching out for new members, but it would be my suggestion to be open.  |
| 10:45 AM | I would recommend denser foam padding on the pews and more contemporary music.   |
| 10:45 AM | The congregation could be more friendly, but I heard this is Newburgh's reputation to not be too friendly. We did leave our contact information.   |
| 10:45 AM | I did not choose to fill out a visitor card. Some suggestions that have are: 1. The music should be exciting and upbeat. 2. Children's message could possibly be moved to a different time. 3. Sermon should be to-the-point.  |

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10:45 AM

I wanted to rate the entire service higher, but there was an incident near the end of the service that spoiled the entire experience for me. This service featured communion, and not being an avid believer nor a member of this church, I made the decision not to partake. When the usher, an older gentleman, tall, wearing a nice suit, saw me not stand up, he asked me if I needed someone to bring the communion to me. I have a disability in my arms, so I am assuming he thought maybe I would have difficulty holding the bread or something to that effect. I explained to him that I was here as a guest and not being a member of the church, I did not feel comfortable participating in communion and I thanked him. I was polite and respectful. When he got to the front of the congregation, he informed two of the ushers who were helping with communion that I was in the back, and since I had a disability, I clearly did not want to come up and take communion because I was physically unable. He completely ignored what I had said about not being comfortable taking communion because I was a guest. I explained the same thing to the two ushers who came back, and they were polite and said okay. The whole situation left me feeling singled-out and embarrassed. I am a guest at your church - I do not need everyone staring at my disability while I am there. It is unfortunate that one person had to ruin the whole experience for me, but it is what it is. Outside of that, I would suggest a bigger outreach of the congregation to make newcomers feel welcomed. Before that point in the service, I had enjoyed myself. The music was great and the sermon was an interesting topic (if not a little boring in presentation).

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10:45 AM

The church seems to be catering to their members, not guests. They seem to have a very clear idea of what the current members want and deliver on that. The theme of the message, in fact, was to move away from basic Christianity (spiritual milk) and dive into discipleship (spiritual meat). The pastor noted that while beginners might need the basics, their church needed to delve past that. As a visitor, if I did not feel very familiar with church and Christianity I would feel as though their services were not for me and if I wanted to be mentored in the ways of Christ I should go elsewhere.

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## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 8:15 AM  
**Service Date:** 1/27/2013  
**Service Title:** Joy in the Harvest  
**Guest Gender:** M  
**Guest Age:** 26  
**Guest ID:** 22912  
**Overall Rating:** 4

#### **1. Directions**

Yes, I stopped at a grocery store just up the street and they were helpful. In fact, I needed help finding the church.

#### **2. Signage**

Yes, there was a large sign in the front indicating that the service for the day would have guest speakers. It was welcoming a missionary couple who were coming to share their stories of African missions. They were a little light on signage for children's ministry and entrances.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

I came in through a back door and there wasn't a greeter present. I did find my way to the sanctuary and closer to it I ran into a greeter. She apologized that no one was there to greet me and very politely and sincerely directed me to some helpful resources.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

It was rather quiet and it had sort of a serious, solemn vibe to it. Some folks greeted me, but they pretty much jumped right into the service.

#### **5. Seating**

The seating was comfortable. Oddly enough, it was a little stuffy in there. The people were sort of sitting on top of one another. The seats seemed so far away from the pulpit and all the activities toward the front.

## **6. Music**

Traditional, once again. I didn't enjoy the music at all. It was typical choir music that dates back to the 1500s and really has no identity in this generation, or really any generation before it. I think they could really use some work in this area. But having said that, the people were at least slightly involved in the music.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

Yes, there was a greeting time. Some folks talked to me, but it did seem like they were trained to operate in this manner. It had that air of over-politeness which can make a discerning mind feel as if they are being fake. In fact, many people in the service wore name tags. I feel like this only segregates the people. Like, what do I have to do to get a name tag? Join the club?

## **8. Sermon**

The sermon was OK as far as time was concerned. The message was in regard to missions in Africa. It seemed as if the whole thing was building up to the punch line: please donate a large sum of money so that we can live in Africa, which isn't so bad, by the way. The message was sort of detached from the true nature of Africa; rather, it focused on the speaker's life and ministry toward the end goal of raising money.

## **9. Speaker**

The pastor led the service but then handed the sermon over to the guest speaker. There were no visual aids or anything to add to the stimulation, which is sad, because I'm sure photos of Africa may have encouraged the audience to be a little more engaged in the message.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

They were very friendly. I was invited by several people to enjoy refreshments and fellowship time and everyone was very inviting.

## **11. Connect-Resources**

I found various information about the church: bulletins, booklets, fliers, etc. The website was very nice and helpful in regards to information regarding programs, children's ministry, youth groups, etc.

**12. Friendliness**

I met several new people who initiated conversation, and they were very inviting and warm. Most of those who welcomed me were women. I've noticed that a lack of male leadership is an issue in these environments at times. But overall I did feel welcomed.

**13. Children's Ministries**

I honestly cannot recall one single bit of signage regarding children's ministry times, location, etc. This area could really use a facelift.

**14. Diversity**

There were only upper-middle class white folks at the service, and honestly, it was only geared to such a crowd. There wasn't any information about anything in the area of diversity. The message, all about Africa, seemed to be such a disconnected, distant idea for the audience.

**15. Return**

No, I personally wouldn't return simply because it's the same old thing, so to speak. I could point a person to any handful of UMC's and the variety wouldn't be much. So, my question would be to any church: what makes you different? For this congregation, sadly, the answer is nothing.

**16. Overall Experience**

The people were friendly, but the service lacked creativity and spirit. It was a systematic program as usual, and this tends to put people like myself to sleep. I would consider some new approaches, like teaching the scripture.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 8:15 AM  
**Service Date:** 12/16/2012  
**Service Title:** Third Sunday of Advent  
**Guest Gender:** F  
**Guest Age:** 25  
**Guest ID:** 25474  
**Overall Rating:** 8

#### **1. Directions**

Those I asked stated the road the church was most likely on, as there were a few churches on the same road.

#### **2. Signage**

There was outdoor signage with the name of the church. There were no service times listed, but upcoming events were listed. Indoors there was no signage, but it was easy to figure out where the service was held.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

The pre-service greeting felt very sincere, but perhaps a bit too sincere. The greeter made direct eye contact and shook my hand and held onto it. It felt safe and welcoming, not aggressive or too short-lived.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

There was music playing and a lot of chatter. The noise level was surprisingly loud, but not aggressively so. I still felt welcome. The environment felt alive. I was greeted by at least three attendees, non-greeters, upon entering and finding a seat.

#### **5. Seating**

The room was very evenly dispersed and I had an easy time of finding a seat. By the time the service began the entire room was more than 1/2 full and there was no huddling or awkward closeness.

## **6. Music**

The music was traditional. I did find it to encourage a sleep-like state at that early in the morning. The singing among the congregation was not very full. Those singing near me were doing so rather quietly. The choir was plenty loud enough and material was provided, so the music was available to everyone. The music definitely would not have appealed to a younger demographic.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

I was greeted by around three or four congregation members. It felt appropriate and not overwhelming. I was surprised that the greetings didn't feel totally scripted. Most people seemed sincere, but a couple seemed to be introducing themselves out of feeling they must. The preacher welcomed everyone from the pulpit. He was sincere in doing so.

## **8. Sermon**

There was never a moment of downtime. They have media screens all throughout with images or words to the prayers or songs. They also played a commercial. I felt alert and stimulated the entire time (with the exception of the style of music, which just isn't my taste, so it did make me feel a tad sleepy). The sermon itself was about truly loving one another. The preacher pointed out that human beings are the cause to our problems and we hold the power to fix our problems. He said ridding ourselves of hate speech is a major step. It was a very easily understood message.

## **9. Speaker**

The primary speaker was Rev. Nunley. He was very sincere in his speeches and I did not actually feel like I was being preached to. It felt more like someone wanting the best from everyone in the room. Peggy Nunley was another speaker who spoke about what the children had been doing. She spoke to the children, encouraging them to share what they have been working on. Not many children seemed comfortable sharing and she also barely offered the microphone to them. The way she spoke to the children irked me a bit. Many people feel they must talk down to children, almost as though they were pets. It did not feel like she was actually interested in allowing the children to speak for themselves. She coaxed them into speaking and basically told them what to say. Such things as, "Have you been learning about Jesus?" instead of, "Tell us something you learned about Jesus." There were visual aides used throughout, as stated before. Words to songs that were not from the hymnals were on screens, as were the words to prayers.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

I felt excellent about the kindness among the congregation. I had a woman encourage me to attend the later service for younger people, where they have a band rather than a choir. She was very interested in why I was there and interested to hear of my recent move to the area. Another woman introduced herself and I got a sense that she sincerely cared for me. I was not feeling my best that day and she seemed to notice it and was able to make me feel like smiling just with her eye contact. I felt that from nearly everyone who looked at me. I felt a curiosity and a genuine appreciation.

## **11. Connect-Resources**

The church had an abundance of information and programs to be a part of. There was a table just outside the doors to the congregation with information as well as a welcome center comprised of a large desk with very friendly old ladies interacting with everyone. The pamphlet handed out had a great deal of information, from what the sermon was about to what current events they have coming up to ways to get involved by volunteering, donating or otherwise. The website is very clean and professional. I was able to instantly find their mission and history. I also easily found service times, staff information, youth group schedules and info, children's service info, even specifics for ways men or women could get more involved. There were also several ways to keep connected with them via social media and smartphone/tablets with apps for download. I did not find any inconsistencies or dead links. It is honestly an excellent site - well organized and easily comprehended.

## **12. Friendliness**

I felt extremely welcomed. There were, of course, the kind of attendees who may turn their nose up at a slightly alternative-looking human such as myself, but their glances didn't linger.

## **13. Children's Ministries**

I did not get a chance to visit the children's area. However, based off the friendliness and warm welcome, I would feel comfortable having children there. But the woman, Peggy, did speak to the children in such a way that I would hope for a better form of influence or for someone to speak to them like human beings. Also, the children themselves did not seem comforted by her. They could have been uncomfortable for having to be in front of a large room of people, but I got the sense that they did not feel free to speak under her command.

#### **14. Diversity**

I did not notice any amount of diversity. There were Caucasians only in the congregation, and one female of African decent and one of Asian in a video about their youth group. Nearly all the members of the congregation looked alike. Women either had short, white hair or neatly cut blonde hair. The men were also very well kept. Everyone wore dressy clothing and tended to have expensive-looking jewelry. I did not notice a single pair of blue jeans. Also, the morning service is for an older demographic, whereas the later morning service is for a younger crowd, where I expect more diversity to come from. It did feel heavy on the wealthy spectrum. There were no other cultures discussed in any of the speeches. There were no other languages besides English in any of the writing.

#### **15. Return**

I would attend again based off the welcoming environment, the easily understood and relatable message, and to possibly get involved with a volunteer service. I would not, however, want to attend based off the lack of diversity. As the most diverse individual in the building, I would hope for more. This is a church I would recommend those ages 40-plus and Caucasian to attend.

#### **16. Overall Experience**

I would suggest speaking with the woman in charge of the children's ministries about the way she speaks to children. I would also suggest encouraging diversity not only culturally, but economically as well. I was impressed with how welcome I did feel in such an environment with no diversity, however. The one other thing that I didn't feel quite fit under any other category is the suggestion that the spoken, in-unison prayers be removed or made to feel less like it comes from the occult. There was a dull hum of voices repeating archaic words. If the language in the prayers was more modern and relevant to our current society I would not have been off-put by them.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 8:15 AM  
**Service Date:** 8/26/2012  
**Service Title:** A Simple Way: Plug In  
**Guest Gender:** F  
**Guest Age:** 23  
**Guest ID:** 23811  
**Overall Rating:** 4

#### **1. Directions**

I stopped at a Marathon station right down the road from the church and the employee didn't know where the church was located. (I asked for Newburgh United Methodist.)

#### **2. Signage**

The signage when I arrived at the church was very good. There is a large sign outside with the service times listed very clearly. I thought the parking lot was organized well, but as it turned out, I somehow parked in the back of the church and, once inside, had to follow multiple signs and travel through a maze of hallways to get to the sanctuary. I think the fact that so many people were parked back there was what made me think that was the right place to park, and the entrance looked like a main entrance, so I didn't drive around to the other side of the church to check it out. Having said that, the signs inside the church leading to the sanctuary were pretty clear, which was helpful.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

I was greeted on my way in by a mentally handicapped man. He didn't make eye contact and his handshake was very weak. While it was nice that he was included, he probably shouldn't be the first person a visitor encounters on their way into the church. I was also greeted by someone stationed around the hallways. He was very nice and shook my hand. There were two people stationed with bulletins at the doors to the sanctuary. They were also very nice.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

The sanctuary was quiet. I was not acknowledged at all before the service started.

#### **5. Seating**

The sanctuary was very empty when I arrived six or seven minutes early. It was awful because everyone was in the back half of the seats, so everyone who came later had to walk all the way up front. It's a long, narrow sanctuary, so it's quite a hike to the front of the aisle. When I sat down, I was at about the halfway point and there was nobody in front of me at all.

#### **6. Music**

The music was very traditional and I didn't enjoy it at all. It was definitely geared more toward an older congregation, which made sense as it was the classic service. Neither the congregation nor the choir seemed engaged in the music at all.

#### **7. In-Service Greeting**

There was a greeting time and I was greeted, but it was very awkward. People only said "good morning" and then looked away, so it was kind of like, do they notice I'm new and just not care? Then one woman said, "Oh, you look new! Are you new?" I said, "Yes, it's my first time here." She shook my hand and said, "Hi, I'm (name)," but then was talking to someone else as I said, "Nice to meet you, I'm (name)." So the whole thing was extremely awkward and felt very fake. Visitors were welcomed from the pulpit in a very sincere manner. It was pretty perfect and visitors and everyone else were encouraged to fill in the perforated part of the bulletin and put it in the offering plate. I really like churches that do that because then the visitors aren't the only ones filling something out. It also really helped that they instructed us what do with the card.

## **8. Sermon**

The sermon was about plugging in to groups in the church. The message felt a little long, and then the speaker made a joke about how long it was at the end, which I think is awkward. If you know you're going over on your time, you should cut yourself off, rather than make a joke about it. One thing I really didn't like about the message was that the speaker was using the leftovers from last week. They're in a three-part series right now called "A Simple Life." The first week was grow, this week was plug in, and next week is serve. But almost the first half of the sermon this week was about grow. I think this is probably why the sermon was so long and I didn't understand why he felt the need to tack that onto the beginning. There wasn't any dead space. I wasn't really able to focus on the sermon all that well, unfortunately. It was kind of all over the place, the speaker tripped over his words a lot of the time and it just wasn't that interesting of a message. Of course, it also wasn't a message that was aimed at visitors, so that's somewhat understandable. The message itself seemed a little stale. He used a lot of analogies that I've heard over and over again growing up in church (belonging to a church is like being on a team, wouldn't it be cool if people were as excited about church as they are about football games, etc.), and I didn't feel like he brought anything new to the table.

## **9. Speaker**

There was a woman who did all the call and responses and scripted prayers. She had a very good speaking voice. I was thrown off a little by the scripted prayers, though. I've only been to a Methodist church one other time, and they had call and responses, but no scripted prayers, so I didn't expect that here. It felt really forced and I didn't like it at all. Someone else did the formal prayer section of the service. It was really, really strange because first, instead of him praying out loud, we had a moment of silence. It was the most awkward thing I've ever experienced. I've never heard of having silent prayer time in church. But then he prayed out loud and it was fine and flowed well. During the sermon, the preacher had visual aids of T-shirts and stuff showing you were "part of a team" to go along with plugging in. It was relevant, but also a little cheesy.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

Not a single person talked to me on the way out of the sanctuary, in the lobby, or on my trek through the halls to find the entrance I parked near.

### **11. Connect-Resources**

There was a welcome booth, but it was pretty crowded, which was weird because it didn't really seem like anyone was visiting. The website is set up very well. There was a clear navigation menu that was consistent throughout all the pages, which is fantastic, and the design is very clean. Their Twitter feed could use some work, though. It seems to be pretty new, so that's fine, but the second to last tweet is: "Last official day of my vacation. Yet looking forward to getting back to work." This is clearly posted from one of the pastors' points of view, and that's not how you use a company Twitter. You are representing the church, not yourself.

### **12. Friendliness**

The church was relatively friendly, but I didn't have any real conversations with anyone, which was not good, and that first greeter really threw me off. I didn't feel very welcomed.

### **13. Children's Ministries**

I actually don't think they had a children's ministry. There was a children's message during the sermon (which I find so annoying and unnecessary) and then the kids went back to their seats, so I don't think there was childcare available. I didn't see or hear anything about a nursery, either, even when walking through the halls. On my way out, I saw some children's classrooms, but they were empty and the lights were out. There were also signs at almost every door saying "This is a peanut-free room," which is very harsh and unpleasant.

### **14. Diversity**

There was absolutely nothing that indicated that the church values diversity and there was not a single non-white person in the sanctuary.

### **15. Return**

I definitely wouldn't return to this service, but I would potentially be willing to try out the later blended service, which I would hope would be a little more modern and maybe have nicer people. I don't think I would encourage anyone to attend church there after the experience I had. While my experience was by no means awful, it also didn't seem like anything special.

## **16. Overall Experience**

There wasn't anything that offended me or made me uncomfortable, but I would definitely recommend that people be more inviting and friendly to visitors. The other things I didn't like mostly had to do with the fact that it was the traditional service. UPDATE (8/29): Today when I got home from work, there was a gift bag with a folder of information about the church and a loaf of bread on my door.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 8:15 AM  
**Service Date:** 7/29/2012  
**Service Title:** Kingdomtide  
**Guest Gender:** F  
**Guest Age:** 24  
**Guest ID:** 23719  
**Overall Rating:** 6

#### **1. Directions**

When we stopped at a gas station prior to the church service, the attendant told us exactly how to get there.

#### **2. Signage**

There was a sign explaining that we had made it to Newburgh UMC but it did not direct us toward a door in which to enter. I had to follow other people in order to find the right place to enter. The sign did display times of worship.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

As I walked in, an older gentlemen held the door open for me, shook my hand and led me to the greeter. The greeter then gave me a brochure for the day and told me about the different kinds of ministries they were participating in as a church. She introduced herself to me, made eye contact, shook my hand. She also introduced me to a few different people and explained that there was another service at 10:45am for younger people if the music was too traditional for me. She said they have more contemporary music at the other service times. Everybody I met was very kind and sincere. They welcomed me back. I thought the whole exchange wonderful.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

When I sat down in the pews, there was a greeting time and all the people around me shook my hand and introduced themselves to me. They all had on name tags. There was traditional music playing in the background.

## **5. Seating**

The seating was fairly comfortable and there was plenty of room for me to pick a seat. The room was full but not too crowded.

## **6. Music**

The music was traditional. The music really could have put me to sleep. I believe, unfortunately, that the music was the worst part of the service. We sang along out of a book and it was not displayed on the big screen. The congregation was very traditional, holding their books in front of them and singing quietly to themselves. I do not believe the younger generation would be very intrigued by this music.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

They greeted me with sincerity. They all shook my hand, smiled and made eye contact. I was not overwhelmed at all by the people, it was just the right amount of people trying to say hello. Very friendly and sincere.

## **8. Sermon**

The actual message lasted about 25 minutes. The message was very relevant and understandable. The use of scripture was relevant to the subject. I was intrigued by the subject and I could make application to my life. The message was about the little details of life and how they do not matter to God. God does things beyond our expectations and HE wants us to write our own story without limitations. The only time when there was dead space was when he asked people to bow their heads and pray silently. Understandable silence. It was kind of strange though because the music was very traditional but the pastor was very contemporary. According to the music, I was expecting the sermon to be boring and I thought he was going to quote scriptures the whole time but he found a way to present scripture and a message in a modern way.

## **9. Speaker**

They were very prepared for the service and they used the projector and small t.v.'s for visual aids. The pastor also used a journal to represent the story of peoples' lives. Very relevant and understandable with the use of props.

#### **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

I was wandering around somewhat aimlessly and the same greeter whom I met at the beginning came up to me and asked if there was something she could help me with. I asked again about ministries, and she led me to a brochure stand with all the things within the community they are involved in as a church. She told me about many community organizations, mission work and how I could be involved. Very friendly and informative.

#### **11. Connect-Resources**

See previous question. When I visited the web site, I could easily find times, how to get to the church and their core beliefs and values. Their web site is very modern and attractive. I easily found up coming events and how to contact them if I needed to. Very nice website!

#### **12. Friendliness**

The people of the church were very friendly and not fake. They were sincere and honestly enjoyed my company. I felt very welcomed and appreciated.

#### **13. Children's Ministries**

From my experience, I do not believe there is a children's service for the 8:15am service. The children stayed in the church and were distracting to me. They were being loud and had no where to go but to try and listen to a sermon that did not apply to them. I saw a few classrooms on the way to the sanctuary, but they were all closed with the lights off.

#### **14. Diversity**

I did not see any diversity in this church. The majority of people attending were older Caucasian men and women. I did not see one person of a different ethnicity. There were a few younger couples, but not very many. Maybe 5 younger families. They also all seemed to be middle class. Not rich, not poor.

#### **15. Return**

I would not return because I did not like the music and I felt as though I did not fit in with the congregation. Although everybody was very friendly, I do not feel that I would make it a habit of going to that particular church. I would recommend older adults attend this service; the music and sermon is more for that generation.

## **16. Overall Experience**

I was not uncomfortable but felt as though I did not fit in with the rest of the congregation. I felt out of place, as though people thought I had come to the wrong service. I was the youngest person (other than kids 18 and younger) at the service. I did fill out a visitors card and will keep you informed if I get a follow up email or call. I would highly suggest they play different music to match the sermon. I would also suggest that they put signs up on where the sanctuary is located. If a person had not escorted me there, I do not believe I would have found it very easily.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 10:45 AM

**Service Date:** 11/18/2012

**Service Title:** Art of Gratitude

**Guest Gender:** M

**Guest Age:** 22

**Guest ID:** 23885

**Overall Rating:** 6

#### **1. Directions**

I actually stopped at 4 stores nearby, as Google maps did not lead me directly to the church. Associates in each establishment did not know of the church. I finally found an old couple familiar with it.

#### **2. Signage**

Yes, they had a big sign, very visible. The sanctuary was visible from the well marked entrance.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

There was a very brief greeting and very little eye-contact. People seemed to have deemed me suspicious.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

Though the ambiance and church itself was lovely, people appeared stressed and kept to themselves. There was only a brief greeting upon entry.

#### **5. Seating**

The sanctuary was designed long and narrow which requires a decent walk in front of people to find a seat. This could be troublesome for some, but there was plenty of seats.

#### **6. Music**

The music was blended very nicely, with youths playing soft rock, then hymns that were generically pleasant. It seems they have a better chance of being attractive to a younger audience than usual.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

Again, there was little greeting extended to any visitors. Perhaps they never have them and have forgotten about them. There is little to say about something's absence.

## **8. Sermon**

It was a lengthy service. As a precursor to Thanksgiving, the speaker covered the importance of remembering our common ancestry, also that gratitude is a spiritual discipline, not a denial of reality. It was stimulating, yet stretched out.

## **9. Speaker**

The speaker had high energy, jumped around quite a bit, and spoke with a fast rate of speech. In attempt to flesh out his message, the speaker just rambled off a list of quotes most likely retrieved from a Google search.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

I wandered around lost after service for a bit which only increased the congregations suspensions of me. Maybe I was walking too close to their children.

## **11. Connect-Resources**

Opposite the entrance stood a clearly marked welcome desk with an almost overwhelming amount of literature. It was hard to tell what really applied to the local community itself. Website was consistent in overflowing information.

## **12. Friendliness**

I felt welcomed not in the least. I felt like I had broken a rule by walking in alone as a young man.

## **13. Children's Ministries**

The children's quadrant was obviously signed and looked to be highly used. Also, there was a sign in/sign out system involving a printer that, judging from the lines and frustration I observed, was cumbersome and wasteful. Safe but outdated.

## **14. Diversity**

Other than valuing the safety of their children, on signs of valuing diversity. I feel having long hair added to the congregation's objection to me.

**15. Return**

Because I enjoy comradely conversation, I would not return here because it seemed to be severely lacking in that department. Other than the nostalgic warmth of the sanctuary, there is nothing I would recommended to others. There were however many teenagers in attendance. Teens might like the number teens.

**16. Overall Experience**

With Newburgh being a small town, close only to other small towns and situated on a street full of other churches, I can understand the church not expecting or reaching out for new members, but it would be my suggestion to be open.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 10:45 AM

**Service Date:** 10/21/2012

**Service Title:** Time

**Guest Gender:** M

**Guest Age:** 49

**Guest ID:** 23749

**Overall Rating:** 5

#### **1. Directions**

The church was very easy to find and local businesses are familiar with it.

#### **2. Signage**

There were adequate signs. There were plenty of signs inside directing anyone to whatever was of interest to them.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

The greeter was very friendly and made good eye contact as he shook my hand. His welcome felt quite sincere.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

The music used contemporary instruments, but the tempo of some familiar songs was too slow. Several members of the congregation greeted me and asked if I was new there, and they warmly welcomed me when I said this was my first visit.

#### **5. Seating**

The seats are pews with thin padding on the seat, but not the back. They were not very comfortable. The service was well attended. People were fairly evenly dispersed. It did not quite feel crowded.

#### **6. Music**

The music was blended and there were only two hymns. The congregation participated well enough in singing, but while the music was contemporary, the tempo was way too slow, so the music was not uplifting.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

There was a greeting time during the service and visitors were warmly welcomed from the pulpit. I was greeted by 14 people, about half of whom recognized I was a visitor and made me feel very welcome.

## **8. Sermon**

The message was about time and how it affects our daily lives. The service was not overlong. The minister is a very good speaker, but due to a combination of poor acoustics and a not-so-great sound system, I would recommend this church as a sleep aid.

## **9. Speaker**

Ray Tromley really did not stand out, good or bad. He's just an average speaker who fades into the woodwork. Rev. Nunley led the children's service up front. The children's message tied in with the sermon, giving the service a unified feel. The videos were shown on a main screen behind the altar and on TVs mounted halfway back on each side of the sanctuary, but unless you sit close to one, the words can be difficult to make out due to the small screen sizes. Using a larger font size would help a lot there.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

I stood in the hallway looking around, and it did not take long before someone asked if I needed help.

## **11. Connect-Resources**

It was very clear and obvious that the church had more information to offer. There was an information table between the entrance doors where it could not be missed. The website is easy to navigate and has lots of information about preschool, children's and youth ministries, announcements and an events calendar. The core beliefs and mission are clearly stated. The website is designed in Adobe Flash and is slow to load.

## **12. Friendliness**

The church was very friendly and made me feel very welcome.

## **13. Children's Ministries**

Signs clearly pointed the way to the children's ministry. It was neat and well maintained. It was impressive how well equipped their children's ministry is. I would gladly leave my kids there and be tempted to join them.

**14. Diversity**

There were people of all ages in the congregation. I live in a small town where there is very little racial diversity, so that would be a non-issue for any of the churches here.

**15. Return**

I would not return because I enjoy more contemporary services. My wife and I had to nudge each other awake more than once. I would recommend this church for the older set who like a slower-paced service.

**16. Overall Experience**

I would recommend denser foam padding on the pews and more contemporary music.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 10:45 AM

**Service Date:** 8/12/2012

**Service Title:** The Bread of Life

**Guest Gender:** M

**Guest Age:** 41

**Guest ID:** 21073

**Overall Rating:** 8

#### **1. Directions**

The guy at Swifty's gas station with a white T-shirt and black goatee knew exactly where the church was.

#### **2. Signage**

There was a large white sign out front, but it listed the late service as 11 a.m. instead of 10:45 a.m. The parking lot and entry were clearly marked as well as special parking for visitors.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

There were two greeters in the vestibule who warmly greeted me with a hello and a handshake. The lady handing out bulletins smiled and said hello. They all made good eye contact. While waiting for my wife to leave the restroom, an usher pointed at me and said hi. This made me feel very much at ease.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

Upon entering there was music over the intercom for five minutes before the service. We were welcomed by the staff, but the congregation seemed to chat among themselves in small groups of about four or five.

#### **5. Seating**

The seating was OK. The pews seemed to fill up in the last couple minutes before the service. There were a few people per pew, but my wife and I had our own pew. The people appeared to be scattered equally.

## **6. Music**

There was a mix of both contemporary and traditional music. The harpist and flutist seemed to be a nice duo. It was both relaxing and uplifting. The singer had a nice voice and the band seemed well rehearsed. The music appeared to be enjoyed by all, from senior citizens to youth. The congregation appeared not too personally involved in the music until instructed.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

During the greeting time several people shook our hands and said hello, and that was the extent of greetings in this period of the service. Extra conversation did not appear to happen anywhere, and there were some uncomfortable silences. Visitors were not mentioned from the pulpit, but there was a card for members to put their contact information on and a place there for visitors information.

## **8. Sermon**

The message was divided into a brief children's message and the main message. The main message was about 20 minutes long, slightly longer than ideal, but acceptable. The sermon was very relevant and a good lesson to learn: to not to worry about tomorrow and to enjoy life.

## **9. Speaker**

The lead pastor, Chris Nunley, was on vacation, so Dr. Todd A. Gile was there. It was a well-planned service, with the speaker rarely referring to his notes. There were videos as well as a large screen utilized as a liturgist read from the Bible.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

At the conclusion of the service, most people appeared to be in a rush to go home. The usher said "Nice to see you," but that was about it. A few members of the church were talking in what seemed to be the same small groups.

**11. Connect-Resources**

There was a rack of brochures with information and projects the church was involved in, like prayer lists. This was nice, but reading them caused me to be in the way of traffic to the nursery and offices. Being in IT for 25 years, I thought the website was informative, user-friendly and an asset. I found lots of information and calendars in several locations, including the website and program. The only inconsistency was the time on the sign saying the service was at 11 a.m. instead of 10:45 a.m.

**12. Friendliness**

The staff seemed friendly and the parishioners did not appear to notice new visitors. I did not feel welcome OR unwelcome - just there.

**13. Children's Ministries**

Upon entering the building it was clear to where children's ministries were. We had no children with, us but there was also a small children's message. The message to the kids made me feel that if I had kids, this would put me more at ease with the church's ability to care for kids there.

**14. Diversity**

There was a large sign with an upcoming meeting about learning about Arab culture. Also, they were recruiting people for a Habitat for Humanity project. They were also "advertising" a place to get blood pressure checks done.

**15. Return**

It is out of the way to be a regular church for us. Families looked to be a main segment the church was interested in and I would recommend this church to them.

**16. Overall Experience**

The congregation could be more friendly, but I heard this is Newburg's reputation to not be too friendly. We did leave our contact information.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 10:45 AM  
**Service Date:** 8/26/2012  
**Service Title:** Kingdom tide  
**Guest Gender:** F  
**Guest Age:** 28  
**Guest ID:** 23721  
**Overall Rating:** 7

#### **1. Directions**

Yes, I stopped at the Huck's gas station on the corner near the church, and they were very helpful.

#### **2. Signage**

I pulled into the first entrance, which led me to the back of the building. I wasn't sure where to go. The signs were easy to read, but not always clear. I entered under the door labeled "offices" and found the sanctuary. Once inside, it was very easy to find the location of the service. Greeters at the door were able to direct me to the service as well.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

Yes! The greeters were wonderful! One was holding the door open and welcomed me with a handshake. Another was providing church bulletins and welcomed me into the service.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

The worship band was playing music and people were visiting with each other. People walking by often said hello, but then moved on to find their seats.

#### **5. Seating**

The room was mostly filled, but there were plenty of seats. I did not feel crowded at all. The pews were comfortable enough, but by the end of the service they were slightly uncomfortable. I noticed a lot of fidgeting from the congregation as the sermon went on.

## **6. Music**

Contemporary music was played, but it seemed exceptionally slow. I recognized some of the songs from other services at different churches, but the tempo was much slower. The congregation didn't seem very engaged. The slow pace of the music made it less exciting and harder to find the melody.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

There was a greeting time and people from all around my seat turned to greet me. The greetings from everywhere (the pulpit and the pews) seemed sincere and were welcomed. I did not feel that the amount of welcomes was overwhelming.

## **8. Sermon**

There was not a lot of dead space in the sermon, but I felt like it was too long. It seemed like there was a lot of repetition (tears) and the message could have been made more direct and timely. The children's message was also a stopping point for the service. It was a very simple message, but the whole service stopped while it took place.

## **9. Speaker**

Visual aids were used (T-shirts, hats, etc.), but too many slowed the service down. The speaker was engaging, but by the end of the sermon, many people had lost interest and perhaps even missed the point.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

Yes. People were very friendly and helpful.

## **11. Connect-Resources**

Yes. The service focused on some of the other activities that the church could offer. I did see an information table and someone sitting there to direct and answer questions. The website was very helpful as well and I found all of the information that I needed. I did not find any problems while using the website.

## **12. Friendliness**

I felt very welcomed. Everyone was incredibly friendly, but not to the point that I felt uncomfortable.

### **13. Children's Ministries**

I did not attend church with my child. The children attending the church seemed happy and well cared for. The adults seemed very interested in the children's spiritual growth. I would absolutely bring my own children to the NUMC. It seemed clean and safe and the staff seemed friendly and caring. I think that the children's ministry is doing a great job.

### **14. Diversity**

I didn't notice much about their values surrounding diversity. The service seemed very welcoming to all people. The children's message was inclusive to young people.

### **15. Return**

I don't think that I would return to church here. The service was longer than I expected and seemed to pass slowly. The slow music and children's message seemed to draw the service to an extreme length and the sermon was not as engaging as I had hoped. I would encourage other people to attend the services here, especially families and older people. I think that teens and college students would find the services dull and long.

### **16. Overall Experience**

I did not choose to fill out a visitor card. Some suggestions that have are: 1. The music should be exciting and upbeat. 2. Children's message could possibly be moved to a different time. 3. Sermon should be to-the-point.

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 10:45 AM  
**Service Date:** 9/2/2012  
**Service Title:** The Simple Way: Serve  
**Guest Gender:** M  
**Guest Age:** 30  
**Guest ID:** 23753  
**Overall Rating:** 2

#### **1. Directions**

I stopped at a gas station about a quarter of a mile away from the church. They knew exactly where Newburgh UMD was located. The church is located conveniently right off the Lloyd Expressway, so it really is easy to find.

#### **2. Signage**

Like I mentioned before, it was exceptionally easy to find. The sign gave all the important information clearly - the name, service times, etc. Parking was clearly marked, as was the entrance to the building.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

I did not see anyone that was a specified greeter. When I got to the sanctuary itself, I was greeted by someone briefly when I received my bulletin, but it seemed like more of an afterthought than anything else. The gentleman was polite though.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

There was no music being played in the building when I entered. Since the second service is the one with the live band (from what I gathered), the band was tuning up and getting ready which explains the silence. I was only greeted by one person, but it was Pastor Chris Nunley, one of the two pastors. I appreciate that he noticed I was new and took a brief moment to get to know me and welcome me.

## **5. Seating**

The seating was comfortable. I arrived 10 minutes early and was able to easily find seating. The room filled in to where it was about 3/4 full, with everyone being pretty evenly spread out.

## **6. Music**

The music was blended, leaning more toward contemporary. There was a live band, and the band was very good. They had lots of energy and were all very talented. The songs were easily accessible for the younger people. They even threw in some dubstep at one point, which I thought was a fun touch. If anything, it may be the older members of the congregation that would have problems, or feel disenfranchised with the music.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

There was a greeting time, but it seemed more like a formality than anything. Like, "churches are supposed to have a greeting time, so, here it is." It felt a bit forced. The people were polite enough, but it did not exactly feel like a special part of the service either.

## **8. Sermon**

The sermon was about 20 minutes long. It was about teaching people how they could better serve the Lord in modern times and how it takes practice to try to live as Jesus did. No dead space, but Pastor Todd was not, in my opinion, the most engaging of speakers. Nice guy who seemed likeable, but I was not exactly jumping out of my seat listening to him.

## **9. Speaker**

Pastor Todd was leading the service. As I mentioned before, nice guy, but did not set the world on fire with his presentation. They did make great use of music and visual projection to help aid the message though. It was very well done and added a lot to the service.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

It took a little while before anyone really noticed me. It seemed like most people all knew each other so they did not have a lot of time for anyone new. Really, outside of Pastor Chris before the service, I did not feel extremely welcomed by many.

### **11. Connect-Resources**

The information desk was right up front when you walked into the building, and had plenty of information available. The website was extremely easy to navigate and the important information was not difficult to find at all. It even had easy access to being able to e-mail people of the church, which I thought was a great touch. All of this was really top notch.

### **12. Friendliness**

I would rate the friendliness around a 6. Nobody was outwardly rude to me (outside of one particular incident I will discuss later), but no one really went out of their way to be friendly to me either.

### **13. Children's Ministries**

First thing I saw was signage for the children's ministry. I did not get a chance to actually go through there since I do not have children, but it looked easy to find. I did see a couple of women who looked like they were helping gather the children after the children's message during the service, and they appeared to be very on the ball with organizing the flock.

### **14. Diversity**

I saw no real indication of any diversity. The congregation, to my knowledge, was all Caucasian. I did not see any information on programs that were targeted specifically toward promoting diversity. I looked on the website and saw that they do work with the local food pantries and programs of that sort.

### **15. Return**

I enjoyed the service for the most part, but I wasn't blown away. The blended service is great for younger and more contemporary people. I would think if you are in your 20s or 30s, you would love this service. However, like I had mentioned before, no one was outwardly polite to me except for Pastor Chris, who I liked a lot. He seems to get it; engaging people and making them welcomed.

## 16. Overall Experience

I wanted to rate the entire service higher, but there was an incident near the end of the service that spoiled the entire experience for me. This service featured communion, and not being an avid believer nor a member of this church, I made the decision not to partake. When the usher, an older gentleman, tall, wearing a nice suit, saw me not stand up, he asked me if I needed someone to bring the communion to me. I have a disability in my arms, so I am assuming he thought maybe I would have difficulty holding the bread or something to that effect. I explained to him that I was here as a guest and not being a member of the church, I did not feel comfortable participating in communion and I thanked him. I was polite and respectful. When he got to the front of the congregation, he informed two of the ushers who were helping with communion that I was in the back, and since I had a disability, I clearly did not want to come up and take communion because I was physically unable. He completely ignored what I had said about not being comfortable taking communion because I was a guest. I explained the same thing to the two ushers who came back, and they were polite and said okay. The whole situation left me feeling singled-out and embarrassed. I am a guest at your church - I do not need everyone staring at my disability while I am there. It is unfortunate that one person had to ruin the whole experience for me, but it is what it is. Outside of that, I would suggest a bigger outreach of the congregation to make newcomers feel welcomed. Before that point in the service, I had enjoyed myself. The music was great and the sermon was an interesting topic (if not a little boring in presentation).

## **Newburgh UMC**

### **Commentary by Service/Guest**

This section of the report groups the comments by service and guest experience. It allows you to review the feedback from each individual mystery guest experience.

**Service Time:** 10:45 AM  
**Service Date:** 8/19/2012  
**Service Title:** A Simple Way: Grow  
**Guest Gender:** M  
**Guest Age:** 28  
**Guest ID:** 23718  
**Overall Rating:** 3

#### **1. Directions**

I stopped at the CVS on the corner across from the church. I asked where Newburgh UMC was located and was said, "I think it's down the highway (66)." It was actually on Highway 261, just down the street.

#### **2. Signage**

There was a United Methodist symbol at the entrance; however, I originally parked on the wrong side of the church, then drove around and spent a few minutes watching other people to try to figure out which doors to enter through. The doors were not labeled in a way that made much sense as to which was the "main" entrance.

#### **3. Pre-Service Greeting**

I was greeted by the main greeter and they smiled and said "Hello, welcome." I received a bulletin once I walked further in. I believe the greeting was sincere.

#### **4. Pre-Service Atmosphere**

The worship band was warming up when I entered, they were playing some music and tuning the guitar. There were a few people scattered throughout the sanctuary. The congregation chatted among themselves.

## **5. Seating**

The seat was deceiving because I thought it would be padded (because there was cloth on it) but that was not the case. It was fine after the first time I sat down but I guess it caught me off guard. The sanctuary was about 1/3 full and the congregation was dispersed around the pews in little groups talking.

## **6. Music**

The music was relatively contemporary. It was played by younger individuals but was very slow (perhaps to appeal to the blended audience). The congregation was not engaged in the music. Two or three individuals tried to clap along but this died out immediately when no one else began to join in.

## **7. In-Service Greeting**

There was a "turn around and greet your neighbors" time for about thirty seconds. I shook hands with the man in front of me, that was the only greeting I had.

## **8. Sermon**

The message was about a number of topics and lasted just over thirty minutes by itself. The pastor spoke for the first twenty minutes then said "OK, let's get started..." and embarked on a three-point explanation of the sermon series (G.P.S.). The service was about the G (Grow) and had four points under it, as well. The pastor spoke about Hebrew books, India's belief in entities, and quoted John Wesley more than the Bible (I understand he founded the Methodist church, but the percentage was two to three John Wesley quotes per Bible verse). While there was a good intent behind the message, it was too long, somewhat hard to follow, and rarely tied back into the Word.

## **9. Speaker**

Power Point was used (Mac's version) and the pastor referenced many different things; however, the sermon was very scattered and hard to follow. I found myself checking my watch numerous times because by the time the message was over I had a hard time remembering where it even began.

## **10. Post-Service Atmosphere**

I glanced around with my bulletin in my hand as though I were looking for someone and did so for about three minutes. No one spoke to me but a few people smiled or nodded politely at me as they walked by.

## **11. Connect-Resources**

There were a few ways to get more information and the pastor encouraged both visitors and members to fill out the "Welcome Guest" slip in the bulletin. There was a calendar on the back of the bulletin that was well done. I did not find any dead links when I checked out the website.

## **12. Friendliness**

The church was relatively welcoming. I did not like that the members wore name tags because it made me feel immediately pointed-out for not being a member. Aside from a woman who sat next to me and yelled at four different children (none of whom she was the parent of) during the service, it was a pretty welcoming atmosphere. Most of the members seemed to just mind their own business, which I did not mind too much.

## **13. Children's Ministries**

I did not see clear signage for the children's ministry but the service included a little children's message and then dismissed them to children's church. I would not have let my child go out there because they would not have known which class to go to (or if there are even different age group classes), I would have been hesitant to let them leave me since they would not have known what to do.

## **14. Diversity**

Aside from having a diverse age group (children through seniors) there was no visible diversity in the church. All seemed to be relatively well-off financially, white, and church-literate.

## **15. Return**

I would probably not return because I found the sermon to be ill-defined, did not believe that God's Word was at the center of their concern, and found the congregation to be relatively disengaged. I might encourage older folk who do not want to interact much with others during their worship service to attend here.

## **16. Overall Experience**

The church seems to be catering to their members, not guests. They seem to have a very clear idea of what the current members want and deliver on that. The theme of the message, in fact, was to move away from basic Christianity (spiritual milk) and dive into discipleship (spiritual meat). The pastor noted that while beginners might need the basics, their church needed to delve past that. As a visitor, if I did not feel very familiar with church and Christianity I would feel as though their services were not for me and if I wanted to be mentored in the ways of Christ I should go elsewhere.