

## What if?

My habit every Sunday morning is to worship with a different church (or sometimes two) in the district. Every congregation is unique – and so is every pastor! I've been blessed to hear a wonderful variety of sermons and preaching styles. I've sung along with Fannie Crosby hymns accompanied by piano, Charles Wesley hymns accompanied by the organ, and brand new hymns – including some I've never heard before – accompanied by a band. I've been warmly welcomed, drunk a lot of coffee, chatted with many faithful people, eaten quite a few cookies, and thoroughly enjoyed each and every experience. But it wasn't until today that I realized that most Sunday mornings I've sat alone. It really didn't register until this morning, when a young man named William moved out of his pew, introduced himself, and sat down on the pew next to me. In those few short moments before the worship service started, I learned a number of important things about William – including the fact that it was his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. But the thing I learned which quite amazed me was the fact that he'd lived in that community and been part of that church *for just a year*. Think about that: it was a newcomer to that church – and a young one at that! -- who moved out of his pew and made me feel truly welcome.

What if...

What if visitors to our churches on any given Sunday morning didn't end up sitting alone? What if long-timers made a commitment to move out of their pews – out of their “comfort zones” – in order to let new-comers know they were truly welcome? What if greeters not only handed out bulletins, but offered to help visitors understand the order of worship, showed them where to hang their coats, explained the options available to children, and pointed out the location of the nearest restrooms? What if, in addition to liturgists and acolytes and other weekly worship leaders, volunteers were appointed and even listed in the bulletin to personally escort visitors to the coffee and cookie table? *What if we bent over backwards to welcome our Sunday morning visitors and guests?* What if we followed the example of a friendly teen named William?

Tamara

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