**Message form the Executive Minister**

**Friends,**

**I was introduced to Thom and Joani Schultz decades ago when engaged in youth ministry.  Thom and Joanie created Group Magazine, which was more than just a subscription.  They used Group as a launching pad for an ever expanding array of ministry to youth.**

**As Thom, Joani and I have aged you could say that our interests have matured.  The burgeoning youth ministries of 20 years ago are largely a memory and the absence of youth and young adults has led to worry about the future of the church.**

**In 2013 Thom and Joani Schultz wrote about this worry in Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore: *And How 4 Acts of Love Will Make Your Church Irresistible*.**

**They point out something we have heard many times in many ways, "a huge majority of Americans still believe in a Higher Power."  However, fewer than 20% attend churches or other houses of worship.**

**One of the primary preoccupations in response to the decline is playing the blame game.  Who is to blame for this decline?  Who is to blame for the failure to attract new and younger members?  Who is to blame?  Thom and Joani indicate that we all are.**

**This space won't allow for the detail of what to do but the *4 Acts of Love* include: Radical Hospitality, Fearless Conversations, Genuine Humility, and Divine Anticipation.  Based on conversations church leaders have been having, I believe that there will be a great deal of surprise about what is meant by each of these Acts and also what is not meant.**

**Most telling are the comments from first time church attendees upon experiencing a church practicing the *4 Acts of Love*.**

***"I found my answer.  Jesus spoke to me during the presentation."***

***"I really enjoyed today, and all of the stories gave me chills."***

***"Who wants to be tolerated?  I want to be accepted, respected and included."***

***"Great atmosphere, friendly people, interesting topic."***

***"Very intense discussion, helpful."***

***"I really felt the power of the Holy Spirit here."***

**How wonderful if these were the responses of every person attending worship services in our churches.  It's possible.**

**Blessings,**

**Alan Newton**