

BY JIM MERRITT

Special to Newsday

**M**illennials (those born between 1981 and 1996) are currently the largest generational group, and they are also among the least religious Americans, with almost a third reporting they are religiously unaffiliated, according to a recent survey. This week's clergy discuss how they seek to engage the generation currently aged 27 through 42.

**THE REV. JENN PILAT**

Chaplain, U.S. Navy Reserves, and Rector, St. Anselm's Episcopal Church, Shoreham

As a millennial myself, I know that there are many special things that the Episcopal Church and, in particular, St. Anselm's in Shoreham, can offer this age bracket. In my experience, millennials are looking for three things in a house of worship: authenticity, structure and connections. The motto of the Episcopal Church is "Welcoming all God's children," and we strive to do that each moment of each day. Just as a hospital is for sick people, the church is for imperfect folks who strive to be better, love more and serve God. That's it. All people on the journey of following Christ are welcome here. We worship using the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible in tandem, organizing the Scriptures and daily devotions to pray across space and time with Episcopalians in other locations and generations. We are invited to balance on the traditions of the church, reason and thought, and the Scriptures, all the while putting prayer into action in our community. We build connections with each other and with God by worshipping in



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**ASKING THE CLERGY****How does your congregation serve millennials?**

community (the Daily Office and Eucharist on Sundays), praying with and for one another, and by serving those who Jesus would serve ... everyone.

**RABBI ILANA SCHACHTER**

Temple Sinai of Roslyn

**T**emple Sinai of Roslyn offers millennial generation worshippers a unique opportunity for multigenerational engagement. Earlier this year, on Simchat Torah, when Jews around the world celebrate the simultaneous conclusion of one Torah cycle and the beginning of another, our leadership team explored ways we could deepen engagement between millennials and their families. While this holiday is always multigenerational, we wanted to make sure that even

our youngest learners, from ages 0 to 5, felt included and excited about this festive celebration. So, rather than hosting this event in our ballroom as we had for several years, we moved into the synagogue's parking lot and combined our worship service with a carnival. Such an innovative collaboration between all of our synagogue departments was so joyful and engaging that we began creating more intentional, ongoing experiences that enable millennials and their children to learn, play and worship. As a result, we are experiencing a palpable sense of community among our millennials and their families. Whether millennials at Temple Sinai have grown up with Jewish worship or whether they are discovering Judaism for the first time through their children's eyes, we strive

to create an environment that invites participation and meaning for all.

**THE REV. DAVID CARL OLSON**

Associate Minister for Congregational Life, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock

**M**illennials value community, cooperation and service. Our Lifespan Religious Education program welcomes young families who pursue the spiritual but not religious path to find community. We recently held a series of workshops in walking the labyrinth and reflecting on the personal and shared meanings each found in the task. One Sunday morning workshop was centered on young families; a second staffed by young adults was held around a simple evening meal; and a final workshop took place at an all-congregation retreat where individuals, over the course of a day, were invited to engage the same walk. Pastoral care was offered in all these settings. We offer care in ways that are sensitive to LGBT people and to the people of color who find their ways to our multicultural services of worship. A strong music and arts program offers a place for creative people to connect. Direct service is offered in our relationship with the Roosevelt Community Garden where volunteers of all ages assist in whatever is needed. This hands-on engagement helps young adults and young families connect to their own sense of our inter-relatedness with the earth and all her creatures.

**DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS** you'd like Newsday to ask the clergy? Email them to [LLife@newsday.com](mailto:LLife@newsday.com). Find more LI Life stories at [newsday.com/LILife](http://newsday.com/LILife).