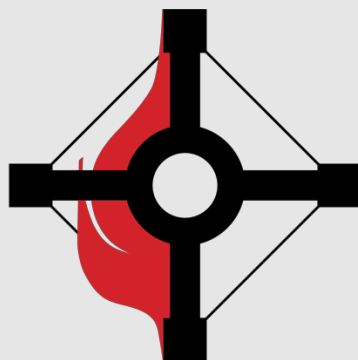


Final Report

# WHOLE CHURCH INITIATIVE



**SHILOH**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Whole Church  
**Initiative**

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“Our churches all have strengths and weaknesses and incredible people. Our combined efforts are powerful. Let's continue working together to show God's love. Yahoo and Yaymen!!” – Kelly Martinson, Shiloh WCI Member

“WCI was an amazing process to go through. I learned lots! Including how to maintain prayer throughout my life, the ways in which we learn throughout life and how to communicate with others. It impacted how I think and it made me see life and church in a different perspective. You learn that God is there and even when there is situations where you feel almost lost, he finds a way to connect. Going throughout the school year was tough, but I think the connections I made with many at WCI and the phenomenal ways that people impact the world made me want to follow in their steps and do the same.” - Alyssa Munson, Shiloh WCI Youth Member

## What was learned? Overview of work of Whole Church process.

Whole Church Initiative (WCI) has been a valuable tool for building congregations for several years in both the legacy Yellowstone and legacy Rocky Mountain conferences. As WCI states, we live in a rapidly changing world. Our faith communities need to respond to rapid change.

Shiloh's team consisted of Kelly Martinson, Trudye King, and Alyssa Munson. Our team was joined by 2-3 people from Grace UMC and Evangelical UMC to make a complete WCI team.

WCI is designed to help church leaders grapple with the changes in their midst by being like a personal trainer for the church. No quick fixes or prescriptions. Instead, church leaders take a journey of discovery and discernment following the Holy Spirit. This process involves:

- **PRAY** phase (8 weeks) – A team from the local church participates in Wesleyan spiritual formation practices
- **PARTNER** phase (4 sessions) – A cohort or circuit of teams from several WCI churches gather once a month for a 5-6 hour learning session.
- **PRACTICE** phase – This is when the talking, brainstorming and spending time with the Holy Spirit must give life to something new. Experiments occur to help grow something new.

This process leads to transformation of the church teams and their faith community. Joining with the Holy Spirit already at work is amazing!

We know that the 8+ month commitment is a challenge. Yet, the WCI resources can still be valuable tools to help church leaders prayerfully consider how to address the changes and challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

WCI Sessions and content covered in the Partner Phase:

### 1. The Church Today

Things have shifted — our culture, our churches, our communities. We all know that. This Session helps us to understand better the lifecycle of organizations, the possibility of resurrection in our churches, and the challenge associated with asking the question, Where did everyone go?

### 2. Mission of the Church

What is your mission? Your purpose? What is your church's "Why?" If we don't understand why we do what we do, then it is hard to invite others to join with us, or for us to join with others already doing that work in the world. This Session is

designed for a group to discover how important it is to know WHY we do what we do.

### 3. What Are We Doing?!

What are we trying to do and what difference are we trying to make? Once we know our mission or why we do what we do, then we need to discover ways to determine if we have accomplished what we set out to do. This Session is designed for a group to discuss how to identify and measure ministry outcomes with metrics that make sense.

### 4. Environmental Protection

Our church leadership teams set the tone for the work of the church. How might church meetings and ministries change if discussions focused on welcoming new ideas and what is important rather than urgent? This Session is designed for a group to discuss the importance of prioritizing important work to be accomplished.

### 5. Faith Sharing

We have a story to tell of God in Jesus Christ. What is our faith story? God has been with us throughout our lives. What would happen if we shared our experience with Amazing Love and invited others to see God in their own lives?

This Session is designed for individual reflection and group discussion about their faith stories and how important sharing faith stories is (120 minutes depending on conversation).

### 6. Find Your Foundation — works with Readiness 360 results

This helps a team or group understand better the results of the Readiness 360. The Readiness 360 report helps congregations gain shared, unprecedented insight as to where they are so that any new vision, goal or ministry becomes more achievable. By the end of this Session the church team will come up with 1 experiment, a simple thing, that can be done in the next 60 days to achieve a quick win in your area of strength.

## Readiness 360 summary





In May/June of 2018 Shiloh's congregation completed a Readiness 360 summary. The following is the summary of our results:

Congratulations for being willing to engage in a serious conversation about your readiness to reach new people in new ways! The Christian movement in North America was strong for so many generations because churches planted new churches that planted new churches. Untold thousands of churches, decade after decade, state after state! Only a small percentage of today's churches still have multiplication of ministry on their radar. Your church does - and that sets you apart!

Shiloh United Methodist Church asked several of its leaders and participants to participate in the *Readiness 360* process. The survey many of you took assesses your church's spiritual and practical readiness for faithful and effective ministry in the 21st century. 32 persons took the *Readiness 360*, a mix of staff, key leaders and active ministry participants.

*Readiness 360* assesses four critical capacities for multiplying thriving ministries. In the rating system below, your church's level of multiplication energy is indicated by the number of rabbits (God's most adorable multipliers). The more multiplication energy your church has, the more ready you will be to start something new. Shiloh is strongest in terms Spiritual Intensity and is most challenged in terms of Cultural Openness.

Key:

 In Crisis    Not Ready    Ready In Many Respects    More Than Ready

### Spiritual Intensity

There is some fire in people's hearts at Shiloh, but it isn't burning as brightly as it should. Shiloh has some work to do in strengthening the personal connection between your people and God and God's mission for you in the world. It would be wise to spend some time reconnecting with God through renewing spiritual practices both personally and as a church body.

### Dynamic Relationships

In some respects, your church has seen some amazing relationships and friendships across the years. However, the DNA of these relationships is not currently indicative of the church as a whole. You have some work to do in terms of cultivating trust within the church and relating effectively to folks who are different from the majority of the members.

### Missional Alignment

Many folks at your church have a good sense of where God is calling you to go, but others are not aligned with this point of view. There is seldom enough personnel or financial resources to run in many directions at once. Now is a time for serious conversation about Shiloh's priorities.

### Cultural Openness

On one hand, many in the church want to reach diverse people, but many in the church still have great apprehension about what this might mean in terms of changing the face of Shiloh. There may be some limitations in terms of how far the church is able to reach toward different kinds of people in the next few years. Open communication will be critical.

We have been provided with some hopeful news from this report based on this summary and working with our new area coach and creator of this survey, Paul Nixon. A small side note, Pastor Tyler worked hard with the Mountain Sky Conference to pool a resource that was supposed to go to the separate congregations of \$50 a month for a year of coaching, to turn it into \$200 a month to hire Paul Nixon who has worked to grow many congregations in the United States. Without working with the other churches Shiloh would never have had access to his expertise.

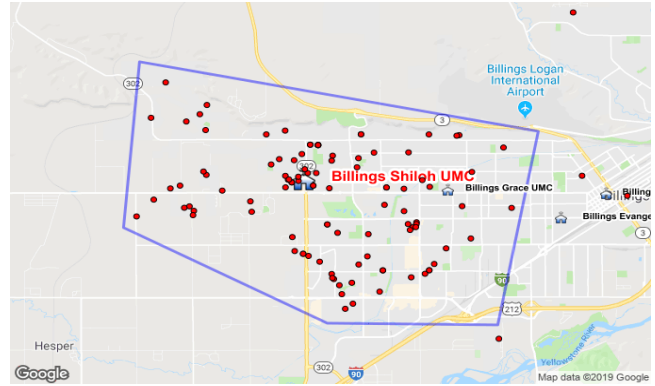
Surveying thousands of congregations across the United States with this tool Paul has learned that by taking the sum of the percentages he can determine the potential for a church to find new health and vitality again. Our percentage sum at Shiloh is 303. The number that is the breaking point for churches who can and can't find vitality again is 296. Meaning we are 1 step into health and vitality already, and if we continue to grow ourselves and welcome others in we will most likely find our way into the future life God is calling us to.

SPIRITUAL INTENSITY - 80%  
DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS – 75%  
MISSIONAL ALIGNMENT – 75%  
CULTURAL OPENNESS – 73%  
SHILOH TOTAL = 303

AVERAGE FOR US CHURCHES = 296

## Demographics Summary

Using a demographic tool called Mission Insite. We mapped those worshipping with us over the past year by address. Taking the bulk of those people in our worship services we selected the primary area our church serves. Mission Insite then generates reports based on census and consumer demographic data of the selected area. These would be similar tools that business uses to decide where to target advertising or that government uses to assess population changes.



Based on the data we pulled the two Experian Mosaic groups that would be ideal for us to reach out and try and increase participation in our church are *Digital Dependents* and *Rooted Flower Power*. The complete outline of these groups can be made available upon request. The reason to choose just two groups to focus on is that no church can be everything to all people and these two groups were the biggest discrepancy in percentage of people in the area to percentage of people in worship, for groups we are already reaching.

This data can be used to try “ministry experiments.” Ministry experiments are opportunities in which we try to offer something that answers spiritual questions, creates community, or otherwise invites people in these demographic groups into a relationship with Shiloh.

Mosaic Segment	# of People in selected area in 2018	% of people in selected area in 2018	% People in worship	# of People in Worship
Digital Dependents	3307	13.5%	7.2%	7
Aging In Place	2689	11%	11.3%	11
Rooted Flower Power	1964	8%	3.1%	3
No Place Like Home	1526	6.2%	6.2%	6
Aging of Aquarius	1373	5.6%	9.3%	9

## Outcome 1 – Continued prayer and collaboration with other Billings Methodist churches.

At the conclusion of the Whole Church Initiative process all 5 Methodist church teams from Billings sat around a table and concluded we are better together than we are apart. The initial experiment for these 5 churches was to support one another in outreach. Hope would support Shiloh for our Trunk or Treat and Grace and First would support Evangelical for their Trunk or Treat. Then teams were looking at supporting Grace, Hope and First at events they were having later. Immediately following this meeting, First began a pastoral transition and the initial experimental goals of the 5 churches together did not hold as First began a new transition.

In the interim, Pastor Wendy, Pastor Tyler, and Pastor Sarah began meeting regularly and settled on a new model of worship planning to help increase the capacity of sermons and worship across the city. This collaboration began to develop into a potential for the smaller churches to work together, as they faced common demographic and internal census challenges. From this work came the potential of hiring a team coach, Paul Nixon. In the coach search process it was decided that Hope needed to be in this group immediately as they continue to find shared value in the work being done by Shiloh, Grace and Evangelical. First is not out, they just had a different course to take through their transition. Paul Nixon was hired as a team coach for Hope, Grace, Evangelical and Shiloh's pastor's using conference combined funds from the WCI process.

A passion to see Methodists continue to work together has led to Shiloh finding great support from First UMC at our Easter Egg Hunt which is an outreach event to meet the millennial group, "digital dependents" described in the demographic report. Shiloh in turn is having a VBS because First invited us to help and send our kids to their program.

Additionally, a night for shared celebration was planned at the Mustang's game on August 24, 2019. Results are pending, but the hope is to start sharing with the community our excitement about working together and our shared understanding of God's love.

The last result was the formation of a team, nick named "the dream team." This group is continuing to meet, pray and consider what strengths we might find as Methodist by sharing our resources in Billings, that we might not find otherwise. This shared work would not be possible without the incredible combining ministry of the Free Store already living into a shared ministry reality. The dream team is currently meeting, praying, and seeking our direction. Shiloh's members of the group consist of Trudye King, Kelly Martinson, Cody Hoefle, and Sophia King.

A pastoral note on working together:

This shared work has led to increased spiritual depth amongst Methodists in Billings. The spirit felt at our Ash Wednesday service this year was deeply Holy Spirit centered and incredibly grounded in our call to share Christ love. We filled our sanctuary! Which, has not happened for several years at the shared Ash Wednesday service. The



continued collaborations feeds your pastor in having colleagues to move through challenges with, gain new insight from, and work to remove isolation that comes from being a pastor in a smaller church that has the potential to decline rapidly. The churches are beginning to learn that we are in this together, that our success depends on the other churches finding their calling too, and I believe God is doing a great thing with Methodists in Billings.

## Outcome 2 – Shiloh next steps supported by demographic information.

Based on the demographic data gathered in the Mission Insite work, Shiloh's desire to sustain people in like age and reach families with children is grounded in the needs of our community. "Digital dependents" are one of the primary child raising groups in Billings, so they fit the desires of who our congregation wants to reach. Additionally, serving those in similar age and life situations puts "Rooted Flower Power" within the reach of the ministries we hope to provide as well.

Programs like Aging Well will continue to be one of those opportunities to reach people in the older age demographics. This kind of programming can be a gateway for people to come and experience the safe space our church is. Groups like our care giving group and other groups we might form around study, life needs and spirituality might be areas to focus our attention as we continue to serve the older or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of life age demographics.

The Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk or Treat, Intergenerational Valentines Dance, movies and other family activities will continue to support us brining in the younger age demographic and connecting them with our church home. In order to continue to support these groups we will need to support children and youth increasingly over the next few years. Right now our children and youth ministries work for the small groups involved, but if those grow, even a little, then we will need to commit more resources to recruitment of volunteers and supporting these ministries. Additionally, we are going to need to look at things that support the life stages of younger adults in the life of our church. This support will include shifting times of our studies, the mediums of how we connect(online studies?), groups that continue to include families together or groups that have childcare at them. One idea shared recently was what if we fully sponsored one of the soccer teams that meet at our church with jerseys and advertising games our congregation can attend to cheer on our team.

Additionally, if we want young adults involved in our committees and teams we will need to make sure the teams are effective and welcoming to grow leaders.

All of this work will be supported by us developing a welcoming environment and an intentional discipleship process that help us establish a covenant relationship with people soon after they arrive. These relationships help us hold one another accountable to the work we set out to do with God together. At the current moment Joni Oswald is forming a team, at Pastor Tyler's direction, to begin to develop the welcoming process work. The primary first step is to refine the process of welcoming, greeters and ushers and then to focus energy on connection of new people, and making those first contacts/connections. Evidence for this helping growth is demonstrated by more new members in 2018 than we have brought in than in the previous 10 years, thanks to an intentional Pastor's Coffee/Shiloh 101 process we can build on(chart found below).

A pastoral note on welcoming new people in:

In the past few months in our leadership meetings I have heard repeated frustration about the younger generation not being gracious and willing participants in the work of

the church. This frustration will continue to be a stumbling block to our work welcoming new people in. We will need to learn, with grace, the needs of the people we want to be a part of our community and provide clear paths to responsible leadership in our church. From my own experience, the millennial groups we desire to reach will not place their resources, time, or money in something that does not support them finding health, spiritual grounding and good opportunities for their family. As a church this means we may need to lay aside previous understandings of who people are, their motivations, and how we think things “should be done” in order to be able to embrace new people and help them grow in their faith.

From experience, every generation is gracious and willing participants in the church, when they feel a sense of belonging and have a willingness to connect with people over shared study, prayer, and time together. Our generational divide is caused more by our own stereotypes, than by reality and from Jesus’ ministry we know that our misconceptions of others are often what keep us from God centered community.

Membership stats for previous 10 years:

Year	Prof. of Faith	Other Denom.	Same Denom.	Total
2018	7	0	9	16
2017	2	0	0	2
2016	?	?	?	9
2015	1	0	12	13
2014	0	0	4	4
2013	4	1	6	11
2012	0	0	4	4
2011	0	0	0	0
2010	1	2	3	6
2009	5	0	0	5