



READINESS 360

Multiply your impact.

Readiness 360 Complete Report

For St. Paul's United Methodist Church

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Prepared By:



The Baltimore-Washington Conference

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Overview

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!

St. Paul's 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. **62 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. St. Paul's UMC is strongest in terms of **Spiritual Intensity** and is most challenged in terms of **Dynamic Relationships**.

Key:

 In Crisis  Not Ready  Ready In Many Respects  More Than Ready

Spiritual Intensity

There is some fire in people's hearts at St. Paul's UMC, but it isn't burning as brightly as it should. St. Paul's UMC 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

Your church will have great difficulty incorporating a significant host of new people until your leaders improve their skills in teaming together as a unified body and their skills in building positive relationships with people in the surrounding community.

Missional Alignment

Your church's mission may look good on paper, but it is not yet really lived out in the real-life activities and life of the congregation. Now is the time for being honest with one another about this. A season of prayerful discernment about "What business are we really in?" is in order.

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 St. Paul's UMC. 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.

Spiritual Intensity - 74%

All great Christian movements are intense spiritually, marked by a deep love for God and a surrendering to what God is seeking to do through human beings. It is critical that a spiritual fire burns within the hearts and souls of those leading and participating in the life of the church. Without personal passion for Christ and robust imagination as to what is possible as we follow Christ, a church will lack an adequate source of spiritual energy for vital and multiplying ministry.

There is some fire in people's hearts at St. Paul's UMC, but it isn't burning as brightly as it should. St. Paul's UMC 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.

In your church:

- Many people have an expectation of encountering the living Christ personally and/or in the congregation.
- Practicing spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible study, fasting, Christian works, etc.) is an important part of life together.
- People are a bit risk-averse and hesitant to take bold steps of faith.
- The spiritual vitality of leaders - paid and unpaid - isn't readily apparent.

Areas of Relative Strength	Score	Areas of Potential Improvement	Score
1. People have found that hard work and financial sacrifice pays off richly in spiritual fruit.	88%	1. Your church prays together in order to better understand God's will and make good decisions.	64%
2. People report meeting the living Christ at some point in their life.	85%	2. At your church, sometimes God moves you beyond your fears, so that you speak, give and move boldly.	67%
3. People are willing to make personal sacrifices in order for God's will to be done.	80%	3. Your church has discovered the blessings received in serving and blessing others.	69%

Dynamic Relationships - 67%

Helping people to grow spiritually as disciples of Jesus depends in large part on our relational skills - our relationship with God and with others. A church's people must develop good habits for leading others into a transformative relationship with God through Christ.

Your church will have great difficulty incorporating a significant host of new people until your leaders improve their skills in teaming together as a unified body and their skills in building positive relationships with people in the surrounding community.

Your ability to form relationships with new people is colored by:

- A lack of welcoming behaviors.
- A struggle to incorporate new people into the life of your church.
- A hesitation to partner with others in your ministry.
- A dependency on a few people to do a lot of the work. There is a need for greater teamwork and leader development.
- Leaders - paid and unpaid - who may be struggling to work together.

Areas of Relative Strength	Score	Areas of Potential Improvement	Score
1. People are okay with the idea that your church could grow.	88%	1. Your church seems committed to doing things in a way that is oriented to guests and visitors.	50%
2. People are happy to open the church's facilities for community use.	85%	2. Though conflict is inevitable, your church is able to manage misunderstandings and disagreements in ways that are helpful to the church.	56%
3. Your church has a healthy, trusting relationship with other churches and ministries in the community.	78%	3. People have a healthy, trusting relationship with your church's denomination or network.	56%

Missional Alignment - 68%

Highly fruitful churches consistently prioritize the investment of their resources (time, talent, treasure) according to their biblical vision and mission. Plans and major initiatives must stem clearly from biblical mandates and a quest for fruitfulness, in sync with a church's distinctive callings that have unfolded across the years. There is a willingness to let go of strategies that aren't bearing as much fruit. The more churches do this the better they are aligned.

Your church's mission may look good on paper, but it is not yet really lived out in the real-life activities and life of the congregation. Now is the time for being honest with one another about this. A season of prayerful discernment about "What business are we really in?" is in order.

To this end, your church has:

- A low priority for reaching new people.
- Alignment to a clear direction.
- Fear of backlash if the church makes decisions that are in line with its mission as opposed to pleasing people or maintaining status quo.
- Uncertainty about the church's ability to start new ministries that thrive.
- Clarity about the core principles of the church's faith.
- Mixed feelings or confusion about the church's direction.

Areas of Relative Strength	Score	Areas of Potential Improvement	Score
1. People think in terms of the church's mission more than "what's in it for them" personally.	88%	1. People believe that following correct procedure is sometimes more important than mission advancement.	41%
2. Your church focuses on God's abundance, not on your lack of resources.	86%	2. People accept the fact that expanding ministry makes it impossible to know everyone.	51%
3. Your church has clear priorities.	82%	3. There is widespread enthusiasm for your church's direction.	54%

Cultural Openness - 72%

Since the first century, effective churches have been reaching across cultural boundaries to share the Christian good news with diverse people, who begin with different experiences, perspectives, and stories. Churches that exhibit fortress behaviors or who spend excessive time mourning social change often have difficulty sharing life with new kinds of people.

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 St. Paul's UMC. 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.

Your congregation's capacity for embracing new cultures (e.g. socio-economic, racial/ethnic, generational, etc.) is marked by:

- Attitudes and behaviors that indicate some difficulties in crossing cultural boundaries, especially with your neighbors.
- A good ability to form meaningful community with people who puzzle and/or offend you in certain respects.
- A perception that diversity in your church is a good thing.
- Energy for working with different kinds of people.
- Difficulty in sharing power with new people.
- Mixed experiences that may make it difficult to reach young people.

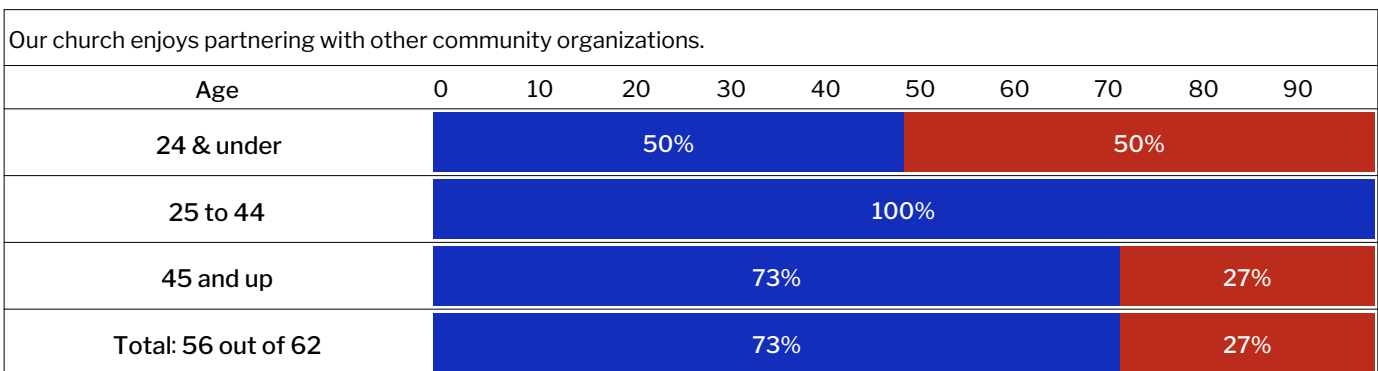
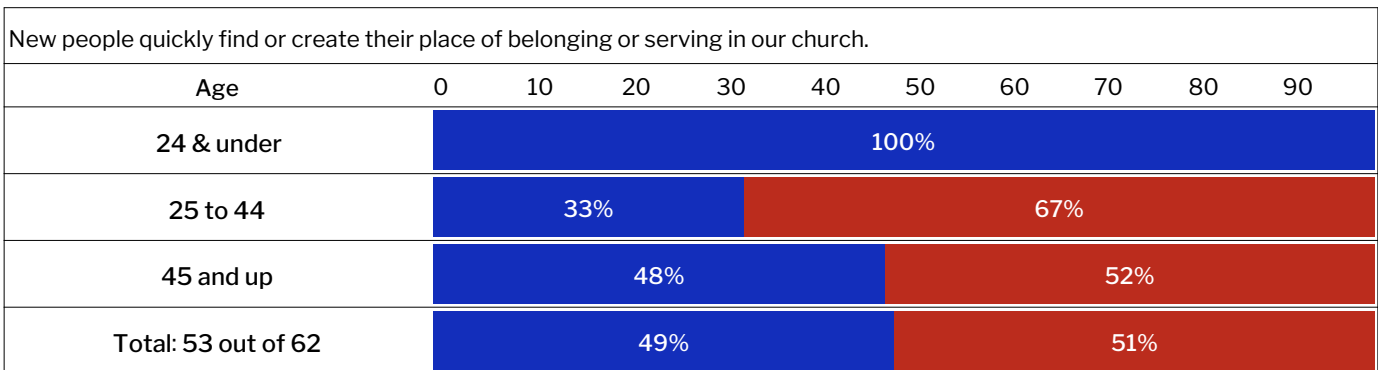
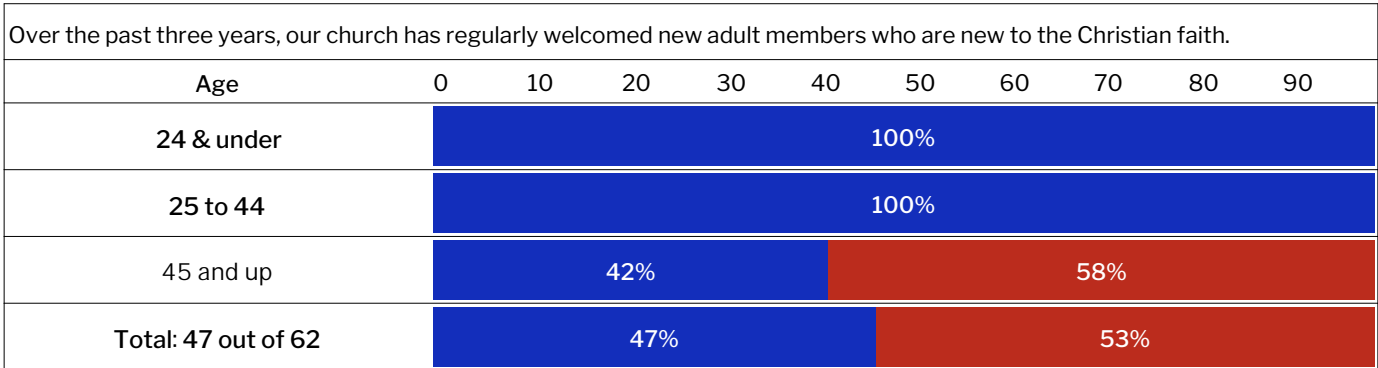
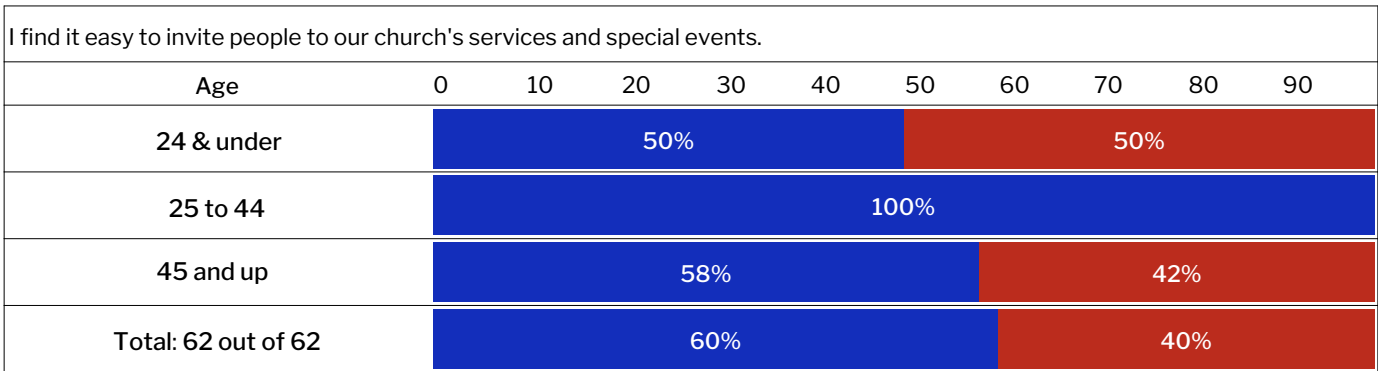
Areas of Relative Strength	Score	Areas of Potential Improvement	Score
1. People report experiencing a sense of common humanity with people who are different than themselves.	92%	1. You have a mix of newcomers and old-timers in leadership at your church.	41%
2. People feel that they value the ideas of young people.	91%	2. People believe that your church is building relationships with young people (ages 18-30).	45%
3. People have a positive attitude toward their neighbors who have different instincts, tastes or points of view.	88%	3. People feel that your church is intentionally seeking to build new relationships with people in your community.	55%

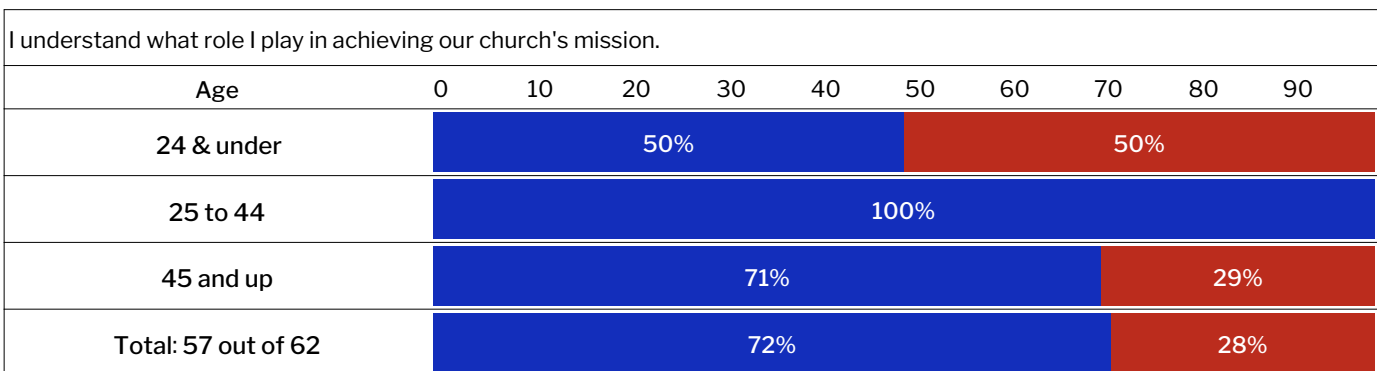
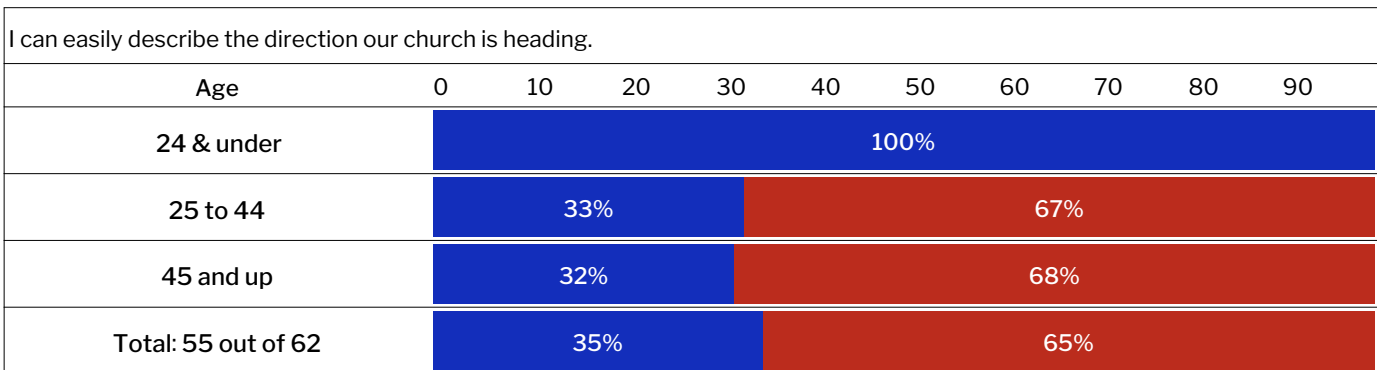
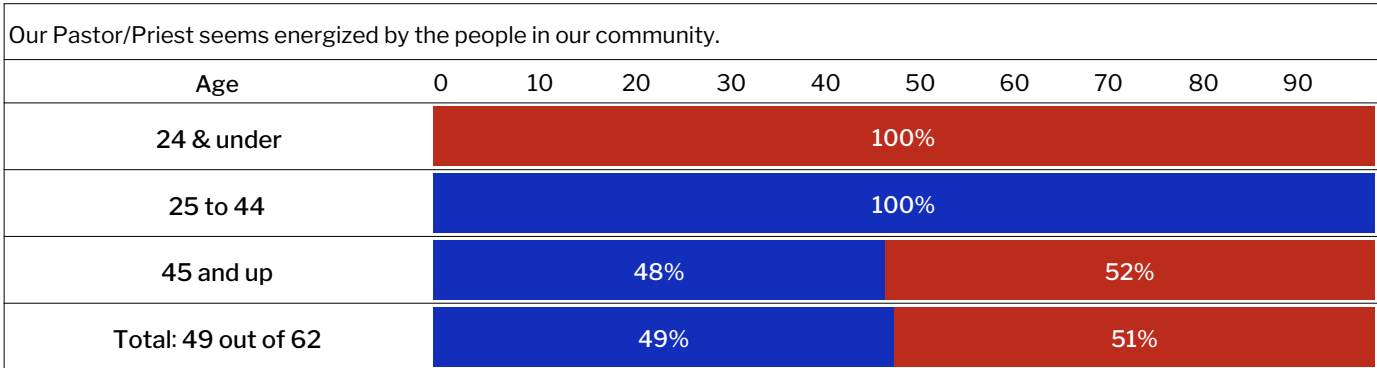
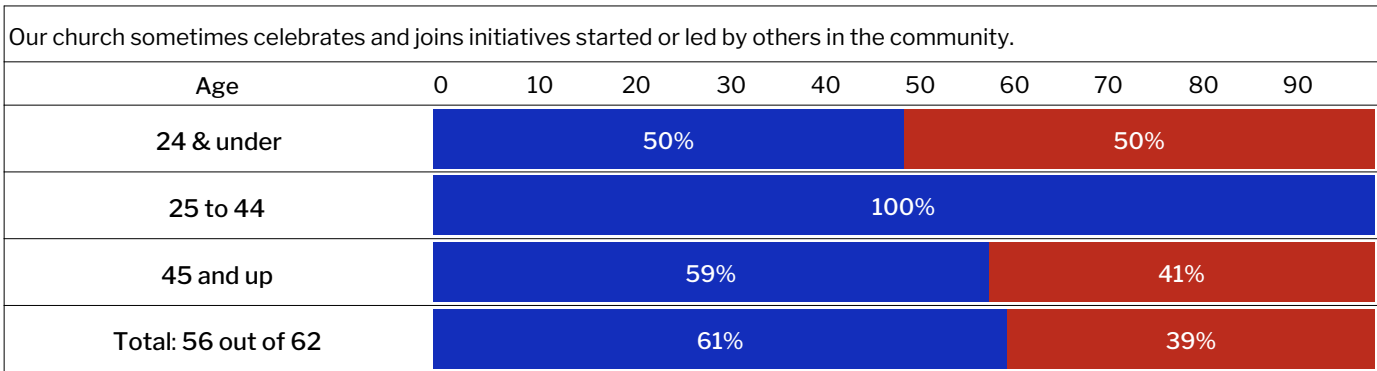
What is God calling your church to focus on now?

- Getting more young people to attend church to carry on!
- New membership, more giving, more gathering as a community. Our youth.
- There seems to be no efforts to grow. There are no outreach activities to bring in new members and then keep them. I don't know if church leaders don't know how to do this or don't have the desire. We have hardly any young families at our church. It's really sad. The number of people that attend the three services could easily fit into one service with plenty of room for more. Also, the youth program is nearly non-existent. There are many other local youth programs through churches and Christian-based groups that teens in the Sykesville/Eldersburg area participating in - just not at St. Paul's. It is encouraging that there will be new youth leadership, but they will need the support of pastors to be able to do their job effectively. It will also take effort by the pastors to engage in outreach. We need new and fresh leadership with a new and fresh vision and the energy and ability to implement it.
- It's members and outreach!
- Increased membership and attendance.
- Within the church and community - Developing a relationship with those who may not be regular attendees while continuing to nurture those who fellowship regularly.
- Bringing people to Christ!
- To deal with change in leadership and to maintain the church facilities.
- I think that God is calling us to go out and grow our ministry. We used to be a bigger church with more youth and a lot more people. It doesn't seem we're doing anything to get back there.
- Be in the community connecting people with ways to serve God and others in love.
- to get new members to support our food pantry
- Building up our Church because right now it seems to be falling apart.
- To restore the joy of God's love within and to share that with others so we can grow and replace all of the members of the congregation that have left over the last 3 years.
- It seems to me that our church is struggling to simply survive. For whatever reason, Covid19 provided opportunity for a significant number of members to stop attending and/or move on to other churches. Adding to this, and perhaps even a greater issue, is the rift growing in the "United" Methodist church. Some very good and faithful members have left due to this issue. It's an unfortunate confluence of issues, but for now survival is difficult. Our church and its leaders and faithful members did an outstanding job at adapting to Covid conditions, but it still took a toll. Regular attendance and the giving that comes with it is WAY down! Many of my beloved friends are gone. It makes me sad.
- I've invited new people to church, and once they try Wesley Freedom, they don't come back. one person stated they just liked better how the message was delivered.
- Inviting new people and providing an exciting, energetic, optimistic environment where people are excited to return and become part of the family of Christ.
- Love and caring to all people regardless of their background.
- Getting back to Faith and putting things in God's hands knowing he has a plan for our Church and he will lead us if we are going to him for the answers. Regaining focus on caring for our members and treating each other with kindness as Christians should.
- That's a great question that I currently do not know the answer to. I think serving the local community, but also supporting church members in the things they are doing to serve in God's name. Making them feel supported, encouraging others to support them in a specific way, and letting the congregation know what is going on and how members can support them.
- Our church congregation has dwindled substantially since Covid shut-down and most of our young adults have grown and left town. The original "core" of the church still exists but they are aging and dying. We need a way to attract new members and new families. We are a lovely church but too small to make the same community impact we used to. We are also losing our dynamic youth leader because of one staff member and that youth leader is not getting the needed support from other leadership. Community members with children are choosing other churches that have a vibrant and active community of youth.

- To be a church in Christ and in Sykesville.
- making new disciples for Jesus Christ
- Our church is divided. I believe God wants us to grow our church, make more disciples, and do more outreach. The focus should be on young families and youth to come to church consistently, for the adults to take active roles, for our services/pastors to be engaging and relatable to our lives. For our head pastor to lead us.
- The good news of Jesus Christ - that is revealing God's Holy Character. His Holiness and his Grace! Both!
- Growing our church with God's love
- Forums/spaces that invite people to question and explore how the Bible speaks to their lives and the world they are navigating today. Reexamine what it means to "do church" - it has to broaden beyond the traditional worship hour, because people of my children's and grandchildren's generations are turned off by traditional church and they're not coming back. Also, expand our outreach to folks in subsidized housing (beyond the Homework Club).
- Coming out of Covid with reduced numbers in the pews, we are striving to reinvigorate the congregation as well as inviting new people to worship with us. We are also struggling with understanding those active members who chose to leave our church rather than accepting those with varied sexual orientation. Our Strategic Planning committee is seeking God's guidance in these issues.
- I don't know.
- Growth in numbers and tithing are needed to keep the church budget solid before even considering new projects that would divert members or funding to anything new. I believe the church should focus on things that balance cost and bringing in new members. Our church has lost members due to the divided feelings and beliefs about same sex relationships and clergy that is plaguing the Methodist church. I think our church needs to focus on healing, spiritual growth & strengthening our bonds and mission as a church. Then we can "go forth" to make disciples.
- Welcoming All to our church!
- I believe God is calling our church to be more engaged in the community. I feel we are too inward focused. I believe we also need a growth mindset - how can we bring in new families? The Grace and Addiction ministry has ceased. Sunday attendance is down. (When I started attending, St. Paul's averaged 200+ people each week). Sunday School attendance is down. St Paul's feels like a church in decline.
- Grow! Grow ! Grow!
- God has given us an opportunity, we are going through an experience that will help us all grow to be a bit closer to god and the best possible version of ourselves. It's not about our current beliefs or the beliefs we had when we began this journey. It's about having faith that god is providing us with the path/joys/challenges we need. And that no matter what's happens with us, in this life, on this earth, it's gods love that made this life worth living.
- I feel God calling our church to be out in the community. To be God's hands and feet and to preach the gospel without saying a word.
- I hope that it is figuring out how to bring people of all ages into one service/community of believers and seekers, and experience, the love of God in their lives

- be better at reaching out to new potential members...postcards, mailings, posting on Facebook pages such as Sykesville Community Online, prayer box/information box in front garden/near sidewalk. be better at reaching out and contacting former members who just no longer show up...to be done by the pastors personally start passing the offering plates especially on busier Sundays/services...Easter, Christmas, Confirmation
- Let people come as they are, accept them for who they are. They have to talk to God and have their personal conversation with their Father. I feel it is not my place to judge.
- I think our music program needs a boost to a little more modern mixed in with the traditional. I believe there should be adult Sunday School or a Bible study class for adults every Sunday. The focus has been on child Sunday School only for many years, which is important. However those kids grow up, go to college, and often move away. There must be spiritual education for adults to draw them in and keep them in the fold. Lastly there should be more focus on finding out why people stop coming and what can be done to keep people from leaving. The pastors, whoever they are, need to develop relationships with members and spend time with them in their homes and other places in the community outside the church building. If we continue to do what we've always done then we're not going to get any different results.
- Increase faithful witness and service.
- One service with a variety of music, styles, and innovations, while retaining some of the traditions as well
- We need to be more unified.
- Not sure
- We as a congregation and as human beings need to embrace those who are not like ourselves, with diverse cultures, races, ages, sexual orientations, family structures, and affluence levels. In my opinion, only then can we be open to striding into God's preferred future.
- People need to work together instead of trying to focus just on themselves.
- I do not know. Member's convictions about the church's issues are strong and divided. People are stubborn and seem unwilling to change or even see past their disagreements. I believe most are truly trying to follow what they believe is the word of God. So who can change thoughts, lives, and beliefs besides the Lord Himself? Smarter folks than myself are struggling. I wish I knew the answer.
- We need a renewed energy and spirit in our pastors. We need those that attend to have a real desire to return and hear what the pastor is going to say that can help them live their life better in Christ and how that will provide them real difference in their lives.
- Working on connecting and communicating. It would be great to see additional signage around the church to assist individuals/families visiting for the first time. Increased usage of email and media outlets already in place to regularly connect members of the church and those visiting. Sharing descriptions of groups within the church (no acronyms) and recapping activities (pictures are always fun) in weekly/biweekly emails. This would likely help new members/families familiarize themselves with the church community and resources within the church.
- Attitudes, ability to really listen to one another
- Not sure
- I think that our church talks a lot about politics. I don't want to hear either side of politics in church, I just want to go to church to learn about God and what he's called me to do. I found an organization that I go to twice a week and a bible study I do with them too. Not once have they talked about politics and I don't know which side they are on. I always feel God working through them and I learn so much about God there. I've felt the closest to God than I have ever there and I realized that I don't feel that way at church. I think there are changes that can be made to make people feel closer to God.
- lose provincialism grow in cohesiveness of all concerned
- our 11:00 service never ends on time. it's hard to plan the rest of the afternoon, if we don't let people go at noon. I'm sure that is affecting in person attendance. some of the music goes at a very slow temp, like a funeral march or something. we also seem to have three sets of closing prayers and activities. just when you think it's over... it's not.
- Be more faithful!
- We need to focus on uniting church members around our common love of St. Paul's, love of the God, love of our community, and a desire to live as disciples of Christ. We need pastors who have a vision for growing and uniting the church instead of dividing it.
- The "feel" and the experience of our worship service. More inspiring Sunday messages of God's love in our lives. I want to leave services feeling inspired and excited not just educated on the history of the Bible and its stories.





I have confidence that our Pastor/Priest can lead us to accomplish our vision-based goals.										
Age	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
24 & under	100%									
25 to 44	100%									
45 and up	58%					42%				
Total: 59 out of 62	58%					42%				

I would put up with a worship style that annoyed me if it was effective in connecting new people to Christ.										
Age	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
24 & under	100%									
25 to 44	100%									
45 and up	57%					43%				
Total: 58 out of 62	60%					40%				

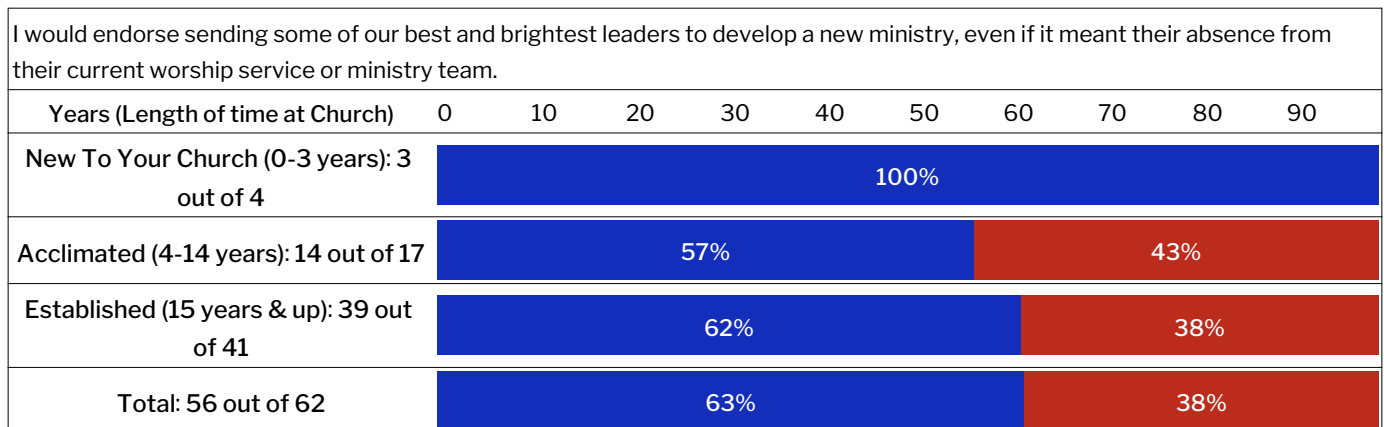
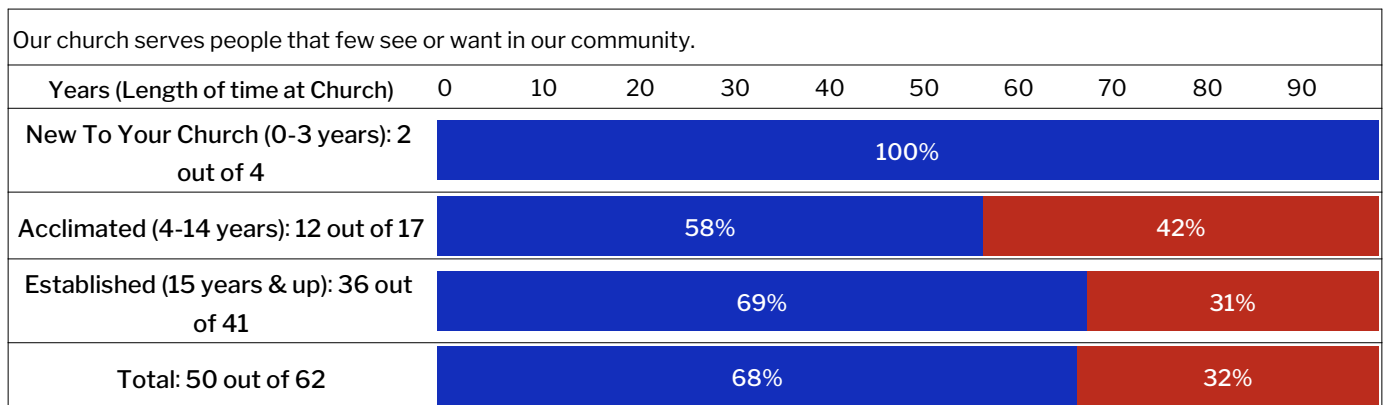
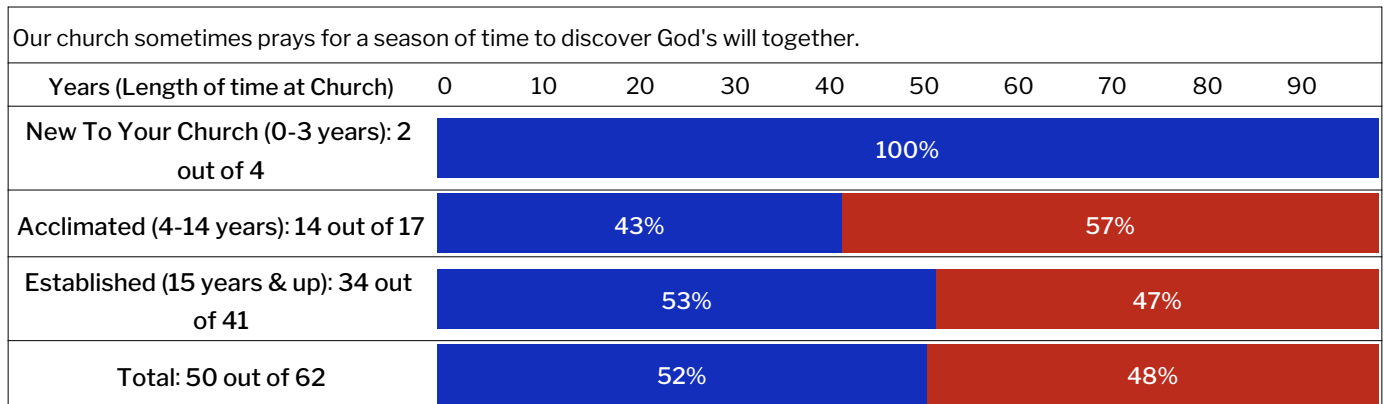
Our church is having success building relationships with young people (ages 18-30).										
Age	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
24 & under	100%									
25 to 44	100%									
45 and up	21%		79%							
Total: 61 out of 62	20%		80%							

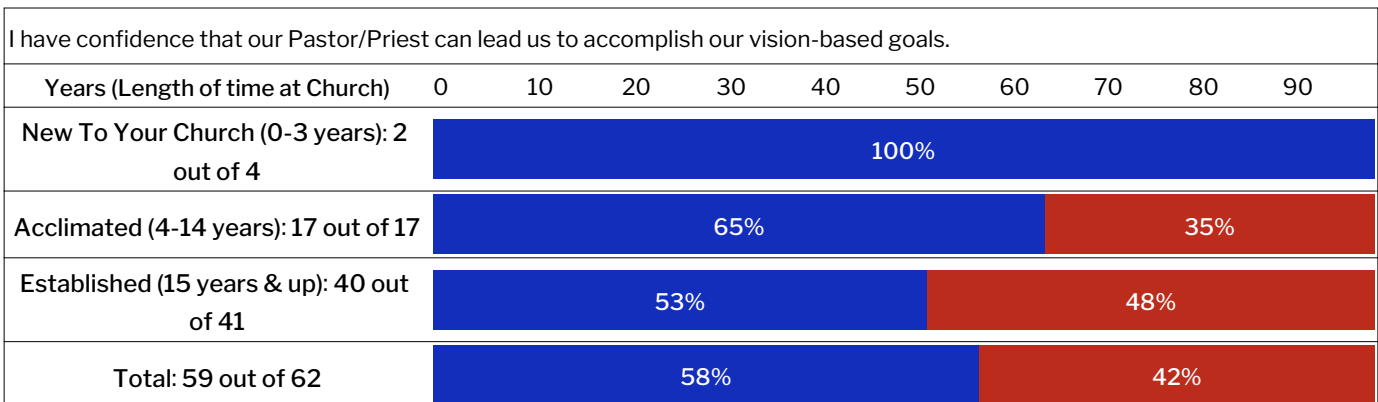
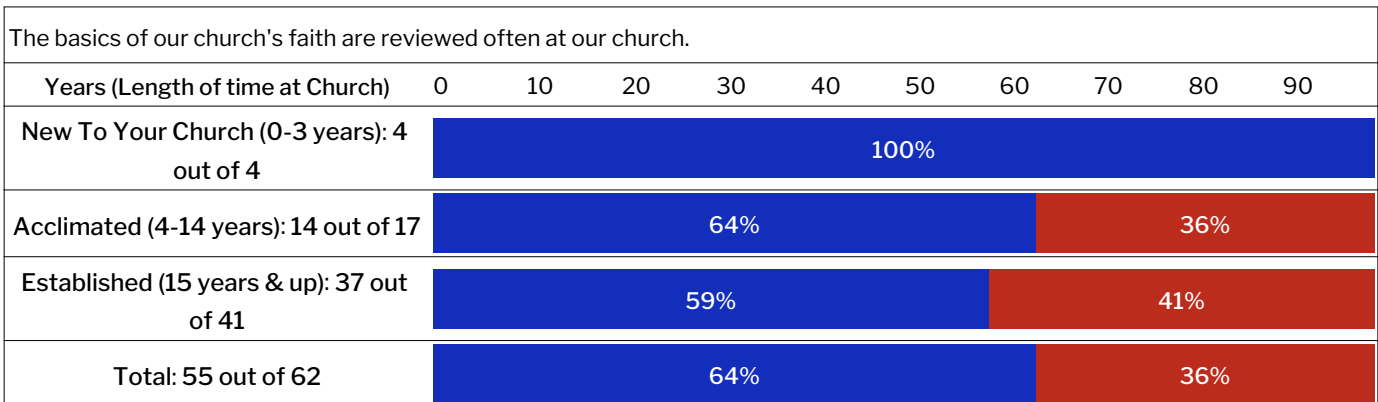
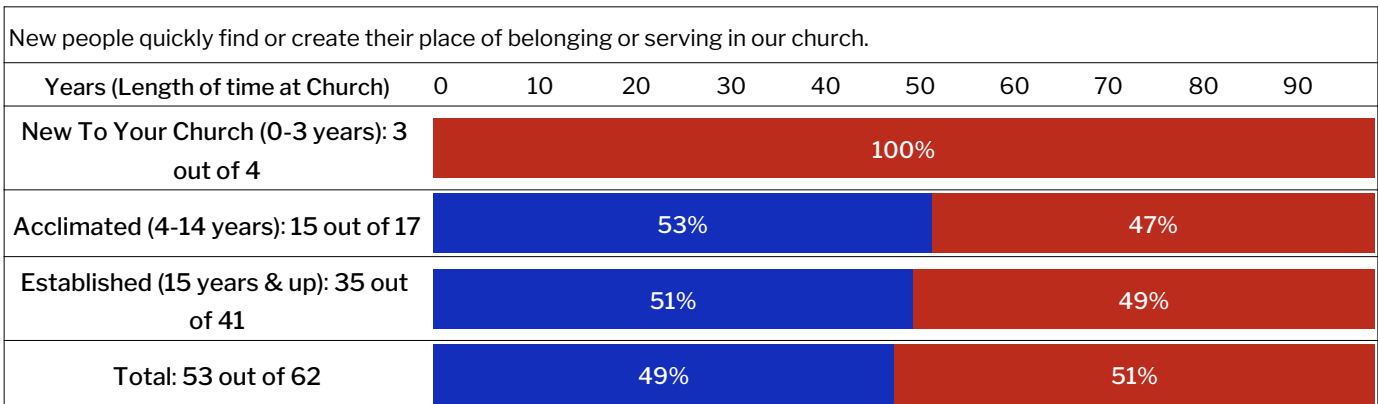
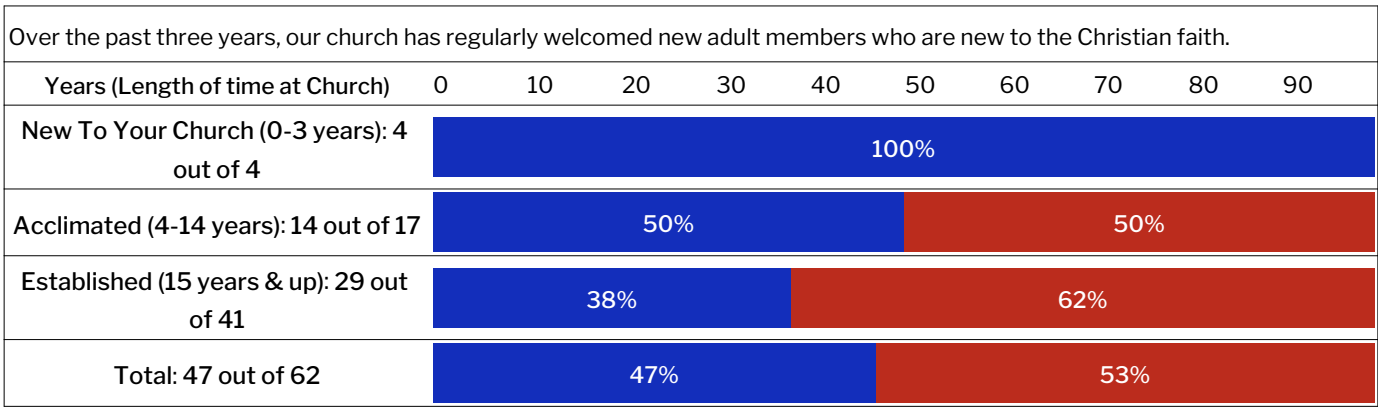
I value the ideas of young adults (ages 18-30), even when they have less experience than I do.										
Age	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
24 & under	100%									
25 to 44	100%									
45 and up	100%									
Total: 60 out of 62	100%									

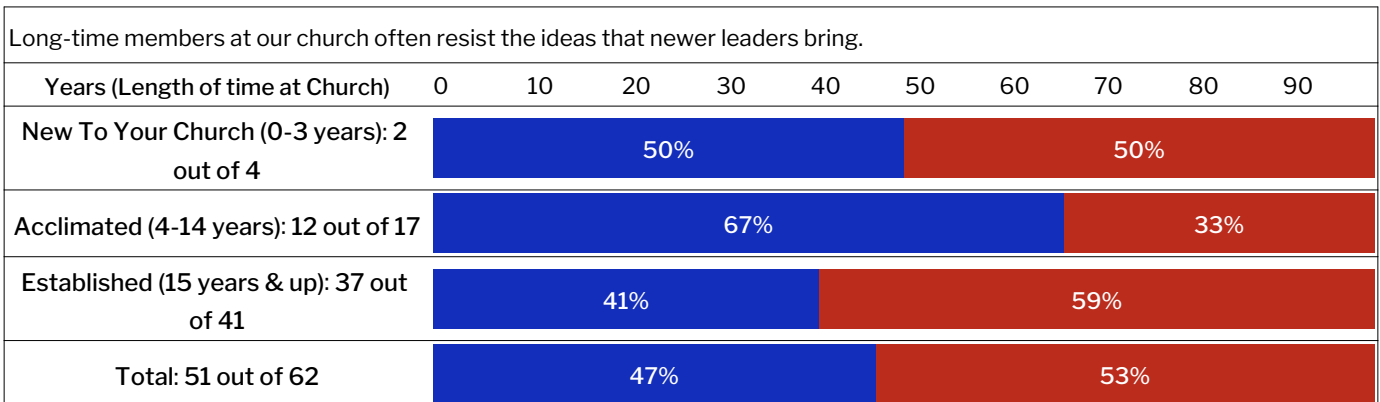
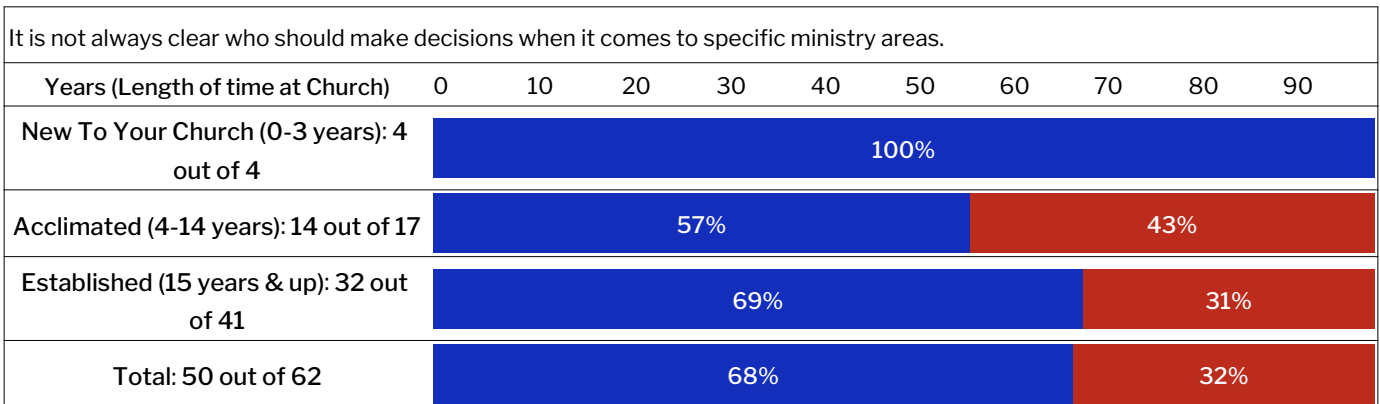
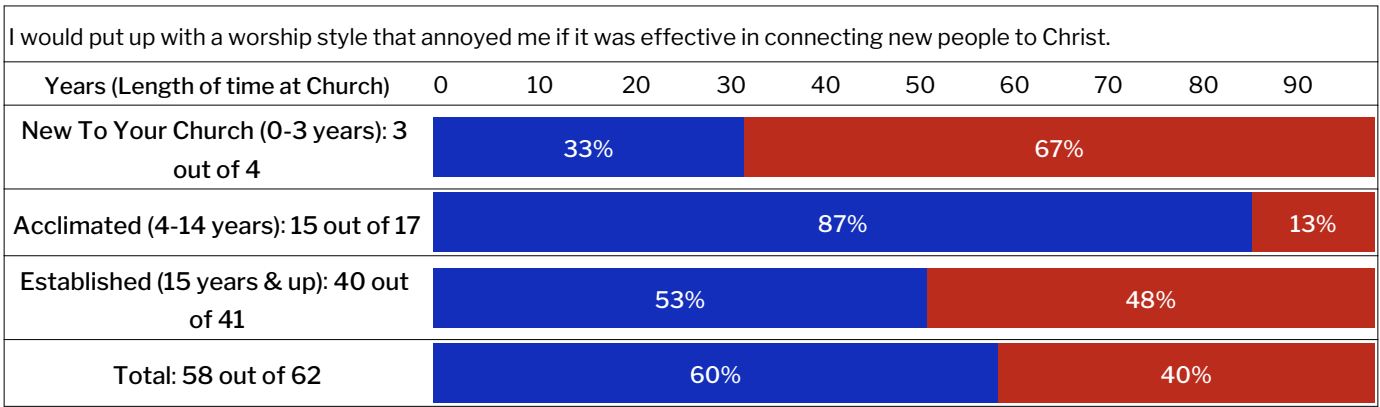
The opinions of our major contributors matter more than the opinions of other people.										
Age	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
24 & under	50%					50%				
25 to 44	100%									
45 and up	12%		88%							
Total: 53 out of 62	13%		87%							

Many of our most active leaders are new to our church in the past three years.										
Age	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
24 & under	100%									
25 to 44	100%									
45 and up	16%		84%							
Total: 55 out of 62	15%		85%							

Different Perspectives By Longevity at Church







Leader Tips

These tips were generated for leaders - paid and unpaid - at St. Paul's UMC given specific patterns of response throughout the survey. After you have read through each tip discuss their priority as a team and implement one at a time. If you experience any difficulty in the prioritization process or if you have more than 3-5 tips, we recommend engaging an experienced facilitator or coach.

Leaders at St. Paul's UMC display some readiness for leading the church on a robust ministry journey in the days ahead. There are also significant areas where leader growth is needed. The leader team that the church needs to multiply ministry is not yet fully in place. A good ministry coach could prove extremely helpful.

Tip 1: Act as champions for what's possible with God. In terms of casting a vision of what is possible with God, it is hard to fake hopefulness. Either you can see great possibilities or you can't; and in the latter case, pretending that you see what you don't see will rarely impress anybody. Pastors tend to report greater awareness of God's possibilities for their church when (1) they are well-rested, (2) when they are tending to their own spiritual life, spending time both in prayer and in the Word, (3) when they have forged a strong leadership alliance with key laity in their congregation and (4) when they have trustworthy and candid confidantes (both inside and outside their church system) with whom they can process their dreams and their doubts. A thoughtful resource on increasing hope in organizations and churches is *Putting Hope to Work: Five Principles to Activate Your Organization's Most Powerful Resource* by Harry Hutson and Barbara Perry.

Tip 2: Invite the Holy Spirit to move you beyond your fears. Within the most dynamic movements of God, it has long been known that you can't "out-give God" not as individuals and not as faith communities. Churches and people who take financial risks to orient their lives toward God's work in the world invariably report that their needs are met, very often in ways that inspire awe and wonder. If there is push back in your congregation over ideas that would result in a financial risk it might let you know that a stewardship alignment check is needed. There are many resources available for prayer and study, including *The Heart That Gives: Seven Traits of Joyful Stewardship* by Fr. Thomas J. Connery. To think about moving beyond fear in a broader sense, see *Weird Church: Welcome to the 21st Century* by Beth Ann Estock and Paul Nixon.

Tip 3: Model spiritual vitality as leaders! In cases where a church is not aware of the spiritual life and practices of its leaders, those leaders would be advised to enter into a covenant one with another around regular, specific, significant and bold spiritual practices. Put down on paper what you are agreeing to, and hold each other accountable to the practices and journey entailed in the covenant! After you have begun (1) living into such covenant, (2) holding one another accountable, and (3) you are succeeding in your practice of the commitments, and then you can talk about this endeavor very openly including the good, the bad and the ugly. Most folks in your church will find it encouraging and inspirational that their leaders are taking the faith seriously. Your leader credibility will rise in most cases, and more people will follow your lead, in terms of spiritual practices and other issues. When any spiritual practice involves more than 30 percent of your active participants, your church will pass a tipping point, where you will begin to change the nature of your common life. This will be invigorating in ways that words cannot express. Do not be surprised to see a few folks quitting their day jobs and literally changing professions to follow the contours of the Spirit movement in their lives! We commend to you two works by Elaine Heath: *Longing for Spring* and *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*.

Tip 4: As leaders, commit to your own personal spiritual journey and living out God's call personally. In order to lead, we have to get in front of the parade. If we are not prayerful personally, it will be impossible for us to competently lead a prayerful church. If we are not robust givers to support the church's mission on the lead team, our church will almost certainly have a lack of robust giving across the ranks. Your leaders would help your church immensely by covenanting together to a short list of core discipleship behaviors, and then holding yourselves accountable to this covenant on a regular basis. Spend a part of your leadership gathering time tending to this covenant and to your lives as a community of faith, first and foremost. When nominating persons for leadership, begin to insist on certain key indicators in their lives. Are they obviously and passionately committed to living out God's call on their life? Are they actively engaged in practices that deepen their faith journey? Are they giving? Are they engaged in a small group or a ministry team? Whatever you find non-negotiable in terms of the life of faith, make it non-negotiable for your

leaders. Also, in churches with high spiritual intensity, it is normal and natural for the senior leader to take work time to go on prayer retreats, where she/he does no work other than to listen and talk to God. Encourage your pastor to take the time to stay spiritually fresh and sharp. A good read for leaders would be *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders* by Reggie McNeal and Ken Blanchard. We also recommend (both for leaders and for the whole church) Phil Maynard's resources *Membership to Discipleship* and *Discipler*, two books that get folks thinking about intentional, relational, and accountable discipleship.

Tip 5: Rid your church of lone ranger ministry mentality (where a few people try to do too much of the work). When a particular project or ministry depends upon only one or two people, we fail to position the church or its people for growth. It is often difficult to break this habit! One of the first steps is for leaders to agree that they will let a particular project or initiative rest until a team can be rallied to lead it. A good rule of thumb is to wait to start (or stop) any ministry project until at least five passionate, committed people have enlisted to share in leadership. Those five should then recruit others from the margins of church life and from beyond! A helpful book on this subject is *Hero Maker* by Dave Ferguson and Warren Bird, showing how each leader and ministry team member can intentionally mentor at least one other person, so that the church's total ministry capacity is always expanding.

Tip 6: Focus on improving how staff and other key leaders team together to advance the church's ministry. In some churches the teaming is stellar within specific ministry systems (such as youth ministry, social justice ministry or music/worship ministry), and yet the staff/leaders of these systems do not function as a team beyond their departments. There are multiple reasons why leaders may have difficulty working together as a team and dynamics are notoriously fluid. Team retreats and or pilgrimages together to a teaching church or other multi-day seminar is helpful so long as space is allowed for the team to respond to the learning or the challenges posed and to get some work done together in response. Too often, these opportunities are mostly presentational time with too little time for the team to process the ideas together. Two resources worthy of group study are: *Sticky Teams* by Larry Osborne and *Multi* by Paul Nixon. For staff and senior leadership team development (paid and unpaid), consider: *Effective Staffing for Vital Churches* by Bill Easum and Bill Tenny-Brittian, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni, and (for large congregations) *When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations* by Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont. For pastors and laity joining forces early in a new pastoral call/appointment, we recommend *The Surprise Factor: Gospel Strategies for Changing the Game at Your Church* by Kim Shockley and Paul Nixon.

Tip 7: Difficulty in teamwork may be a symptom of the fact that you do not yet have all the right people in the right seats, a lack of clarity of purpose and commitment to teaming on the part of some team members, or just poor chemistry. No amount of strategy can make up for this. Make needed changes after praying, having crucial conversations and discerning which seat (or which bus) each leader is being called to fill. Such change calls for high capacity leadership. We recommend Brene Brown's book *Dare to Lead*.

Tip 8: Take seriously the feedback of others, especially those who have a long-term and nuanced understanding of the church and those (often not members) who represent the demographics you are seeking to reach in your mission field. There are few characteristics more empowering to a team than a senior leader's ability to listen deeply, adapt, learn, and make an occasional u-turn based upon feedback from others. Such flexibility lends itself to long-lasting partnerships and profound loyalty among team members. We would recommend senior leader(s) go public with some of what they are learning and that they work with other key leaders as they seek to translate that learning into visible action. By modeling a discipline of constant improvement you might be surprised how many people around you will want to make improvements in their lives and work. Focus on one habit change that would be the most powerful for your people to witness and stick with it for longer than 21 days. For examples of community surveys and listening processes that churches are using, go to www.epicentergroup.org/#/community-listening-tools. For a great read on how to design ministry based on community listening, see *Change by Design* by Michael Brown and *Discernment* by Beth Estock.

Tip 9: Pray (and work) to fall in love with the people God has placed all around you in your community. Every leader team is different-- and every community is also unique. It is essential that church leaders discern what kinds of people in a community energize her/him, and really work to develop relationships in those circles. Nothing will de-motivate a staff or team of leaders more than a senior leader who seems detached from the community. Leaders who dig in and fall in love with a community will often inspire their team and their church to do the same. Many people find basic community organizing skills and habits essential in

creating positive energy for the community. Several chapters in *The Power of REAL: Changing Lives, Changing Churches, Changing Communities* by Joseph W. Daniels, Jr. describe the process thoroughly. Also see *Change by Design* by Michael Brown (which is relevant to the task of designing ministry in line with community needs) and *Weird Church: Welcome to the 21st Century* by Beth Ann Estock and Paul Nixon. Tom Bandy's book *See, Know and Serve the People Within Your Reach*, used along with the Comparative Insite tool in Mission Insite will yield a plethora of promising directions to take ministry closer to the community's cultural sensitivities. (Most denominations have a contract with Mission Insite which makes the above tool free to use for congregations.)

Tip 10: Invest time and energy in developing your teamwork skills. Great teaming is essential at multiple levels in a church: within the staff group, between pastor/staff and unpaid leadership, and among unpaid people in the church who come together to accomplish ministry tasks. Pastors may wish to identify aspects of their work where they can reflect and plan with others (other staff, laity, a coach/mentor or ministry peers in other churches) in order to a. model teaming, b. offer high quality experiences and c. to make really smart decisions. Some teaming possibilities include: Bible reflection in preparation for sermons, planning special events that offer a "wow" factor for participants, community listening projects and group discernment about new ministry priorities. It is very important that we always include persons in our planning who represent the community that a ministry is being designed for. Non-members and young persons are often left outside the critical team conversations from which we design ministry. (And then we wonder why we fail to engage young people and community people in those ministries!) Some team-focused resources worthy of group study are: *Multi* by Paul Nixon and *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni.