



From Maintenance to Mission

## **Suggested Guidelines for Congregations to Engage Shift Conversations**

Welcome to the Shift Conversation Process!

We are really excited that you've decided to join in this important conversation and believe this will be a fun and interesting process through which you will learn some new things about one another and make important decisions for the future of your congregation. We hope this guide is clear and easy to use but if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tisha Brown at [tbrown@wucc.org](mailto:tbrown@wucc.org).

Resources and information about the Shift initiative are available at [www.wucc.org/shift](http://www.wucc.org/shift). On that web page you can also sign up to receive additional Shift communication. We will be sharing what we are hearing from congregations around the conference and also seeking information and feedback from you.

### **What will you need to engage in the Shift Conversations?**

- Flip chart, easel and markers
- Someone to take notes of the conversation
- A computer and projector or other equipment to play the videos in your meeting space
- Open hearts, creative minds, and hopeful outlooks

### **What is a suggested Process for these Conversations?**

You will know best how to incorporate these conversations into the life of your congregation. Feel free to adjust this process and the questions that will be provided at the end of every video so that they work for you and your congregation.

We suggest:

1. Pastors preview the videos and questions ahead of time. Consider how best to present this to the leadership body of your congregation.
2. Meet with the Moderator of the Congregation. Preview the video/questions with him/her. Discuss the best method for presenting this to the leadership body. Discuss also whether or not you want to include the entire congregation in some way – through bulletin inserts, newsletter articles, small group meetings etc.
3. In preparation for the discussion, designate someone to take notes on what is shared so that there is a record of these conversations. We would love to hear from you about how this is going – what is working and what isn't – so that we can be responsive as needed. Send comments or questions to Tisha Brown.
4. Prior to each conversation, remind the group of these basic guidelines for effective group discussion:
  - All ideas, stories and perspectives are welcomed
  - Creativity is encouraged.

- Everyone who wants to speak should have the time to speak. The discussion leader's role is to make sure that time is shared among the full group and that no one voice dominates.
  - The discussion leader will help the group stay on topic and keep side conversations or tangents to a minimum.
  - Any disagreement should be focused on the idea not the person presenting the idea.
  - Remember, we are working together for the good of our congregation which means individual agendas may have to take a back seat so that the good of the whole community gets our full attention.
  - Other guidelines you use in your congregation that aren't on this list...
5. Our hope is that these conversations will build on one another. It may be helpful to review the notes from each of the previous sessions as a reminder of what has been discussed before addressing each new session.
  6. After each meeting you may want to encourage those present to have at least one conversation with someone in the congregation during which they discuss the question at hand.
    - These responses are brought to the next meeting and shared with the group.
    - Add these responses to the ones from the leadership board each month.
  7. You may want to consider sharing these questions and/or the videos in your congregation's newsletter or weekly bulletin to include the entire congregation in this conversation. Encourage folks to talk with one another about these questions throughout the month.
  8. At the end of the 4 conversations you will have a lot of stories, ideas and information. Designate a small working group of 2 or 3 people to meet and synthesize what they've heard. Identify the concrete strengths of your congregation, suggestions for areas of growth or change, creative ideas you may want to consider further, ideas about how to best approach change in your congregation, etc. Bring this synthesized body of strengths, ideas etc to the next meeting.
  9. Have a fifth conversation during which you discuss the stories shared and ideas generated by this process as they were organized by the smaller working group. The goal of this 5th conversation should be to identify one or at the most two things you are willing to consider trying in the coming year. Use 10/4 voting or some other process you're aware of to identify the one or two ideas with the most energy or enthusiasm behind them.

**10/4 Voting** is a simple way to determine the highest priority for ideas. Here is a quick description of this process.

- Make a list of all of the main ideas that have been generated.
- Each person present is given 10 sticky dots that they can "spend" on any idea.
- No more than 4 dots can be used on any one idea.
- All 10 dots must be used by each participant.
- Give participants time to reflect on their priorities and place their dots.
- Once the votes are done, add the total dots on each item to generate your top list of items to tackle.
- Assign a working group to develop strategies or plans for working on the top one or two ideas. If this group needs support or additional resources, contact [Tisha](#) or your Associate Conference Minister and they will help connect you with the appropriate support or resources.