

VCT Report to DenPres  
March 23, 2021 Assembly  
[VCT@denpres.org](mailto:VCT@denpres.org)



Rev. Paula Steinbacher  
Church of the  
Eternal Hills PC



Rev. Lemuel Velasco  
Divino Salvador



Daphne Rice Allen  
Peoples PC



Rev. Chris Spotts  
First Presbyterian  
Brighton

*Meet your*  
**Vision Construction Team**



Rev. John Yu  
True Light  
Community Church



Rev. Russ Kane  
New Hope PC



Kendal Mullins  
Wellshire PC



Rob Habiger  
Central PC



# Brightspot Hunting on March 23

At the 3/23 assembly we will listen to one another as we reflect on bright spots we have experienced in and around DenPres. Read to the end of this report to illuminate what a “Brightspot” is and why it matters!



**In this report there are...**

No Motions  
No Conclusions  
No Arguments  
No For or Against  
No Recommendations  
No Proposals  
No amendments

**The VCT simply wants to ...**



**...invite us all along for the ride.**

# We Meet Every Saturday 8am



DenPres Council approved  
January 5, 2020

*This timeline and tasks will be revised as  
circumstances and opportunities shift and  
emerge.*

## We Are Here →

March 23, 2021

### Chapter 3: Curate and Generate

Capture the BEST visioning that has been done to date. VCT will conduct further research and inquiry with Denver Presbyterians and beyond into God's vision and hopes for DenPres. VCT submits initial "big picture" drafts to council and assembly for feedback and further generation.

Council: March 2, 2021 @ 5:30 PM. Report from VCT on drafting.

Assembly: March 23, 2021 @ 5:30 PM. VCT Vision WorkPlay *tactical*.

Council: April 6, 2021 @ 5:30 PM. VCT Reports on Assembly tactical feedback.

Council: May 4, 2021 @ 5:30 PM. VCT Shared draft for feedback.

Assembly: May 25, 2021 @ 5:30 PM. VCT/Council Shares Vision Draft for Assembly.

*Key Question: Is VCT on a healthy track with vision and ministry plan?*



Please Pray for

**Vision**

...the capacity to "taste and see" what God is doing at the intersections between God's people and the world God loves so that others can "taste and see" it, participate in it, pray for it, be transformed by it.

*Corey Schlosser-Hall*

# Curating Previous Vision Team

**ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP:** understanding it, learning the emotional and leadership competencies of adaptive leadership, practicing adaptive leadership in congregations, NWCs (New Worshipping Communities) and other ministries is key!

**MANY VOICES:** The inclusion of many people from a variety of experience, background, ministry context, etc. is a valuable part of DenPres and our emerging vision.

## MATTHEW 25 Commitment



- Building congregational vitality
- Dismantling structural racism
- Eradicating systemic poverty

[www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/)

# Listening to Hopes of DenPres

## Feedback from Jan 26 Assembly

### Presbytery in 2031? – Key Themes

- **Diversity** – i.e “That the Presbytery is a true reflection of the diversity in this city and the world”
- **Stronger Community within Presbytery** – i.e “becoming a more supportive and collaborative network of churches, while resourcing and equipping congregations and new worshiping communities”
- **Relevance in our Communities** – i.e "To be seen as leaders in the Denver community; as healing agents working towards Beloved Community”

# Listening to Hopes of DenPres

Feedback from Jan 26 Assembly

## If the Holy Spirit could make 1 change tomorrow? – Key Themes

- **Trust/Unity/Acceptance/Listening** – i.e “Healthy racial understanding and acceptance of new ideas.”
- **Diversity** – i.e “Sense and live into the oneness that underlies all of us, across differences, races, cultures, and traditions.”
- **Mission beyond** – i.e “Growth of community engagement in our neighborhood.”



# VCT is Assessing “Where Are We?”



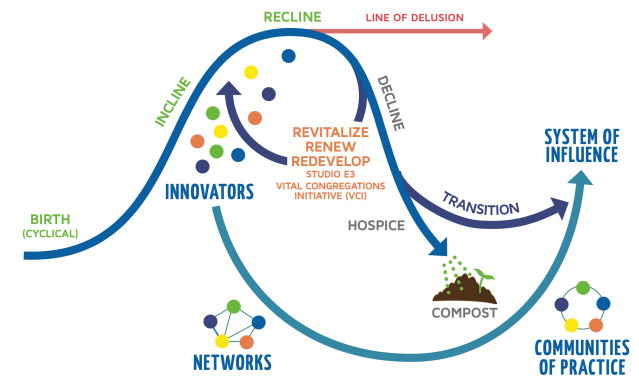
Denver Presbytery  
By The Numbers

What do **the numbers** tell us?

What do the **bright spots** of ministry tell us?



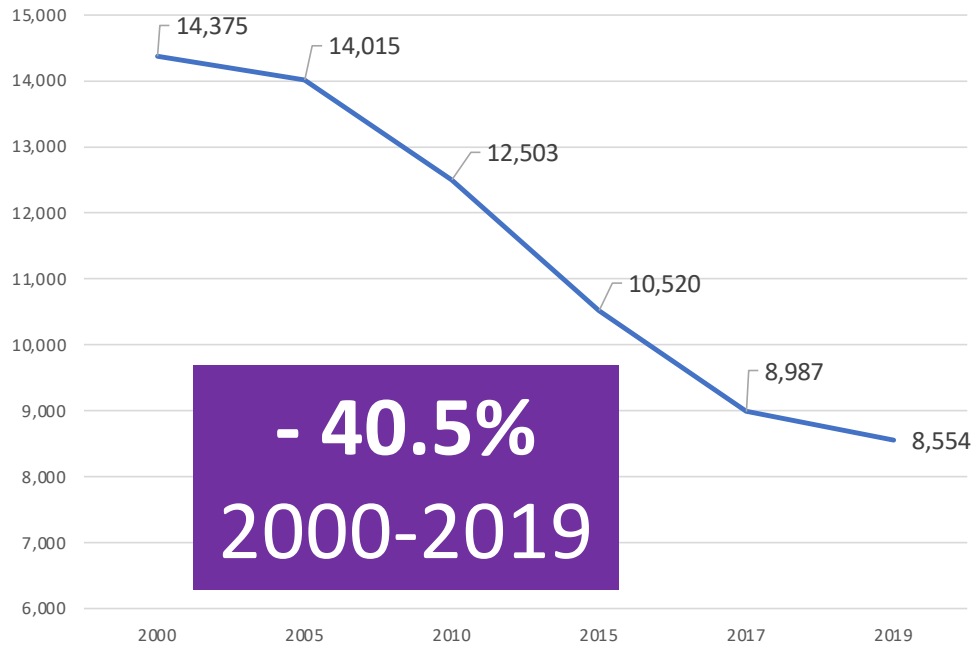
## TWO LOOP LIFE CYCLE FOR CONGREGATIONS



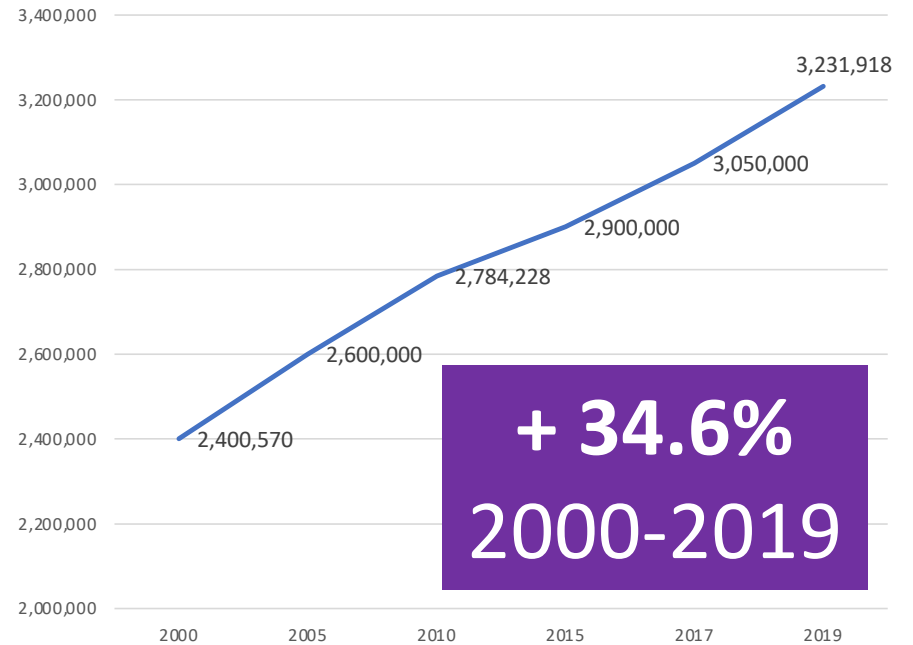
What does DenPres' place in the **life cycle** tell us?

# By the Numbers

## DenPres Membership by Year

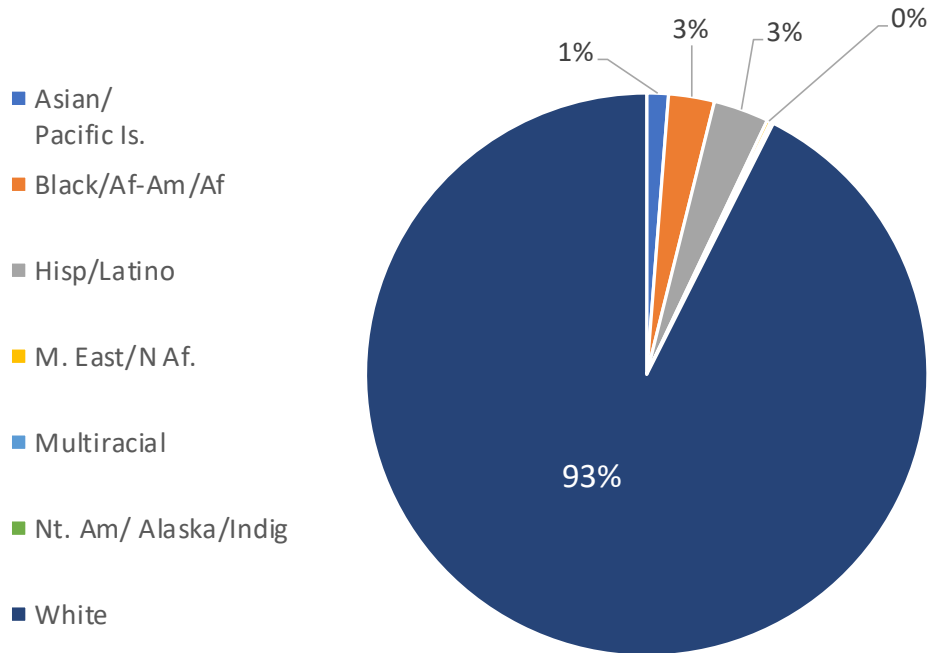


## Denver Metro Population\*

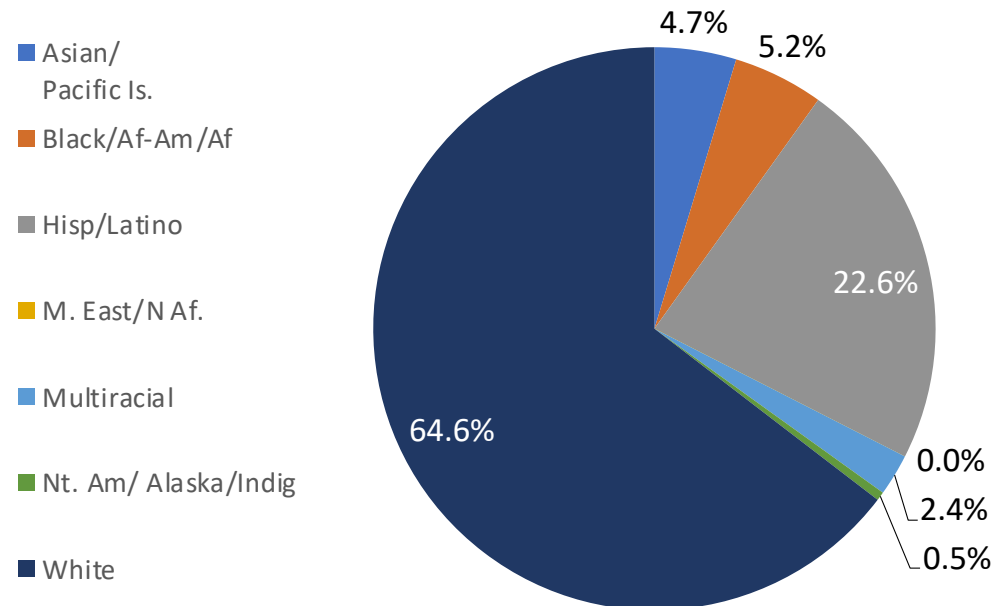


# By the Numbers

DenPres Racial/Ethnic Composition 2019



Denver Metro Racial Composition 2019



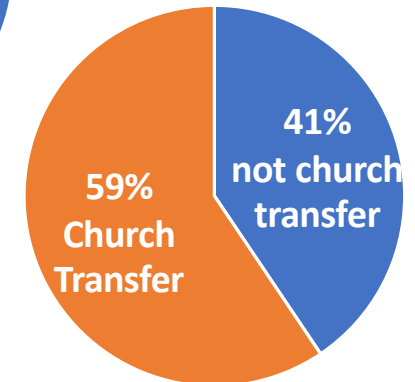
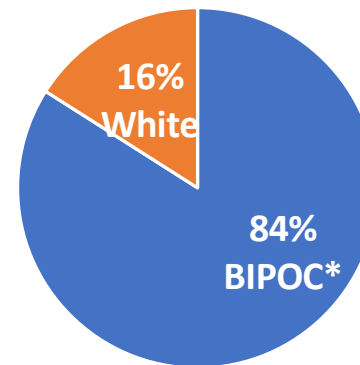
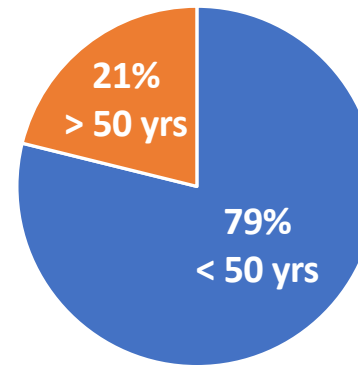
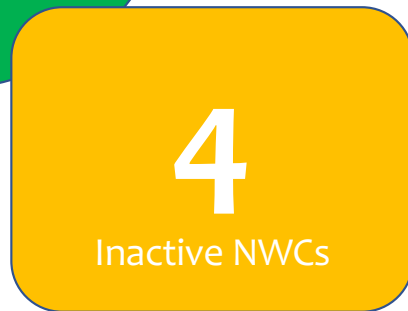
**While Denver Metro has grown in racial diversity 2000-2019, DenPres has not.**

# By the Numbers

DenPres Congregational Income All Sources



# By the Numbers NWCs\* in DenPres



\*NWCs = New Worshipping Communities

\*BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People of Color including immigrants.

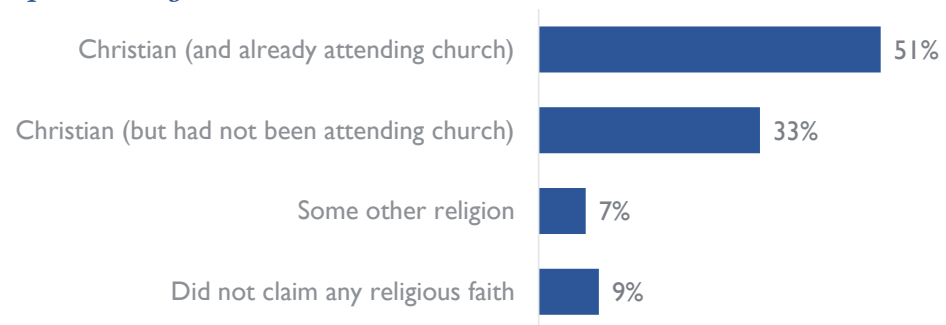
# By the Numbers NWCs in PCUSA

## CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND DISCIPLE MAKING

*New worshiping communities serve people in various stages of their Christian formation.*

**49%** of NWC participants were NOT attending a Christian church before participating in a worshiping community

*Participant backgrounds include...*



**34%**

of new worshiping community leaders describe their community as ***unchurched***

**33%**

of new worshiping community leaders say that the people in their community think of themselves as ***Presbyterian***

**73%**

of new worshiping community leaders think of their worshiping community as ***Presbyterian***

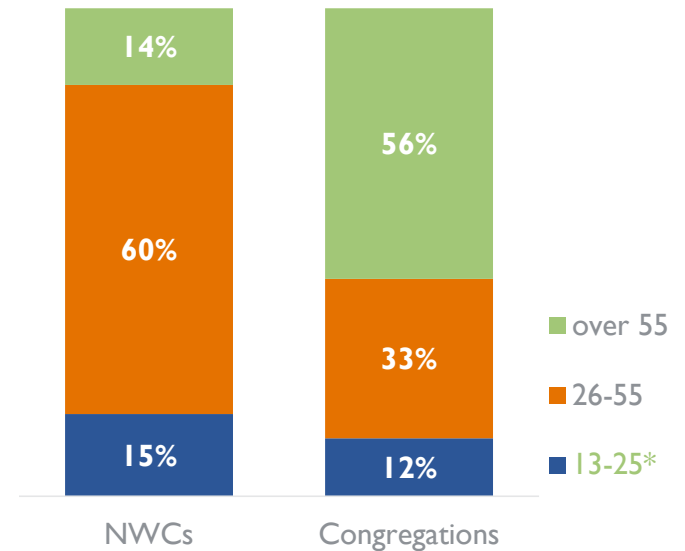
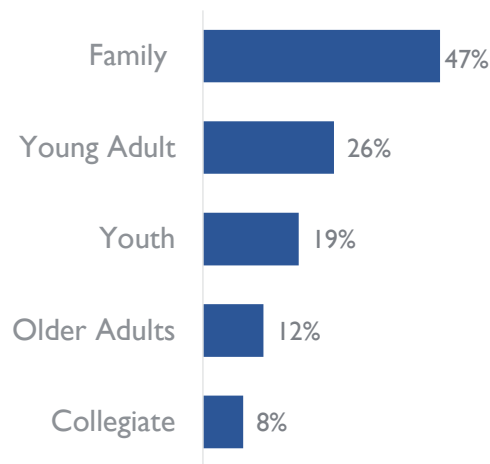
# By the Numbers NWCs in PCUSA

## NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

*NWC participants tend to be younger than PC(USA) members as a whole.*

**75%** of NWC participants are age 55 or under

*Percent of NWCs with an age group focus:*



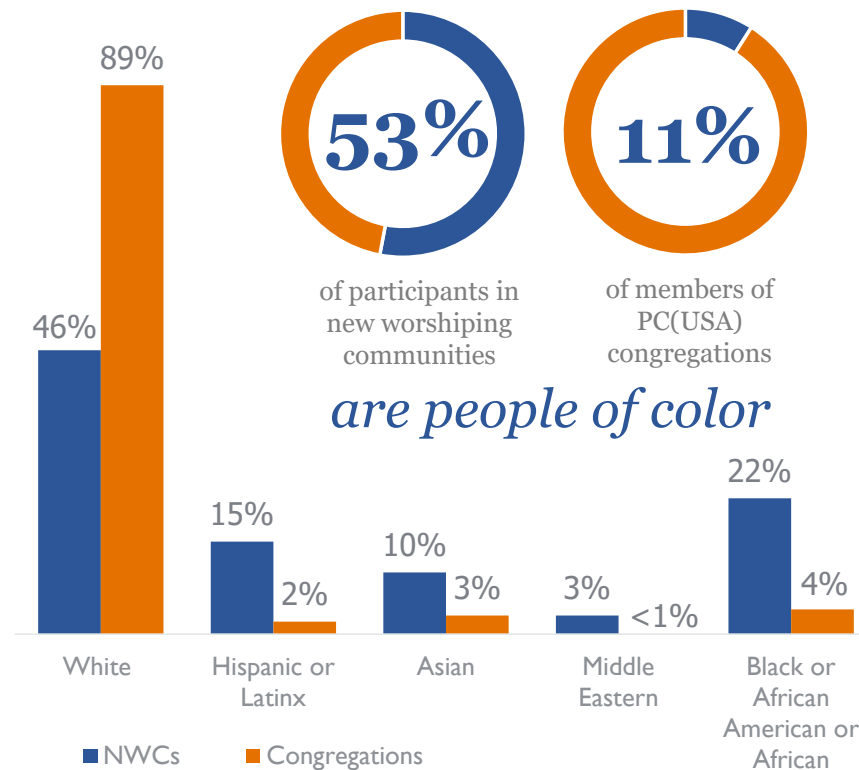
The largest age group in PC(USA) congregations is over 65. In contrast, the largest age group within NWCs is 26-45. This indicates that NWCs are attracting younger participants.

\* Since membership in PC(USA) is typically limited to those who have completed confirmation, which is usually in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, when most children are 13-14, analysis of new worshipping community participant age has been limited to those 13 and above. The 68% statistic includes the 11% of worshipping community participants under the age of 13.

# By the Numbers NWCs in PCUSA

## NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

*NWC participants are a more racially diverse group than PC(USA) members.*



In addition to having more overall diversity, NWCs are also more likely to have a diverse membership within any given community.

Only 4% of PC(USA) congregations have no single race comprising more than 79% of its membership. In contrast, 35% of NWCs are racially diverse in this way.



# By the Numbers – Some Observations

# of DenPres members has declined 40% overall

# of congregations is stable (50 in 2000; 47 in 2019)

Overall congregational income has remained stable and increased in some seasons.

## From 2000 to 2019

DenPres Racial Diversity has not changed (94% white in 2000; 93% in 2019) while Denver Metro is growing in racial diversity (71.9% white in 2000; 64.6% in 2019)

New life has sprung up in the form of NWCs in DenPres & nationally

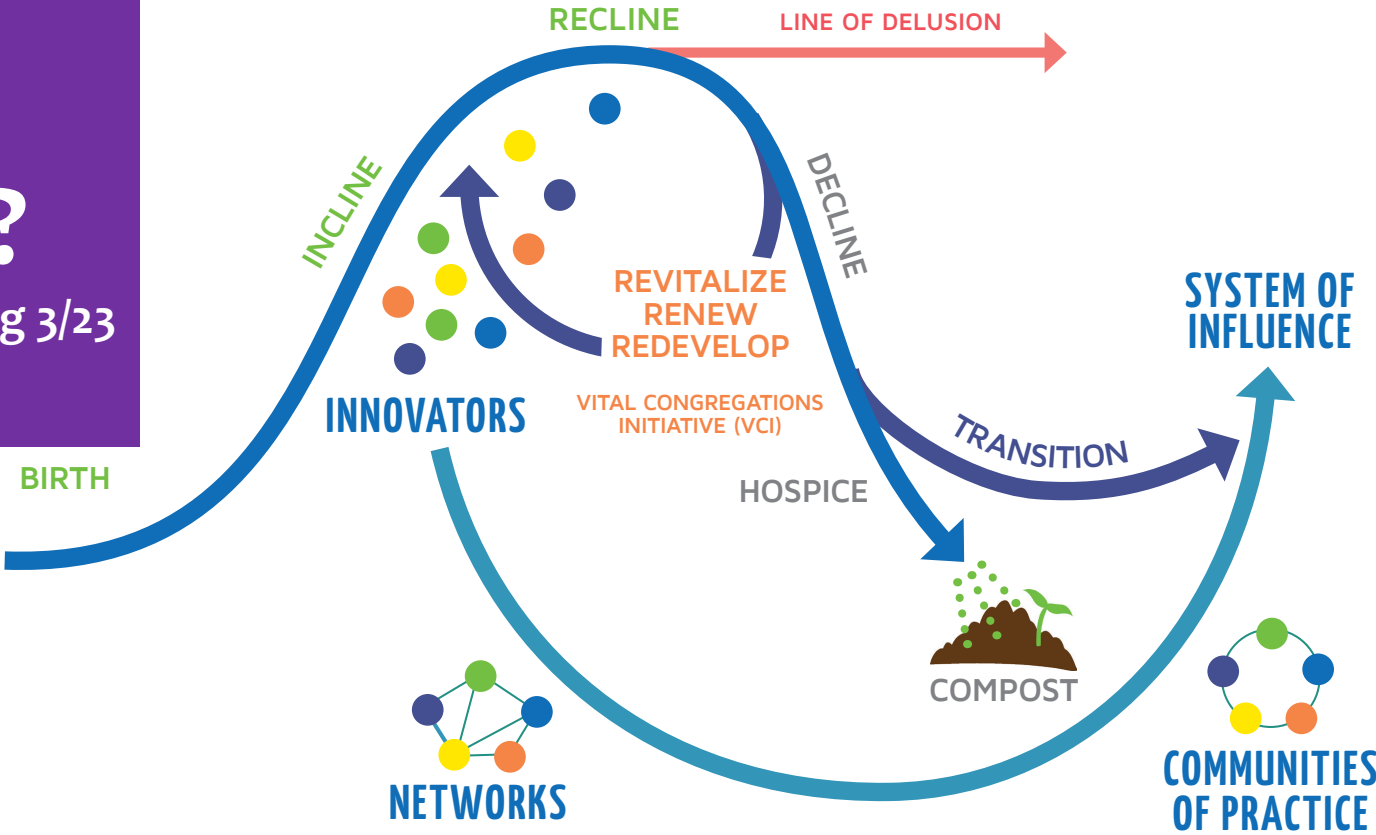
NWCs reflect the kind of racial, age and religious background diversity DenPres hopes for.

VCT senses we may not be **measuring** the right things. How might we shift what we measure?

# TWO LOOP LIFE CYCLE FOR CONGREGATIONS

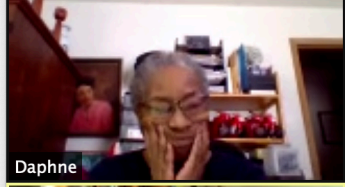
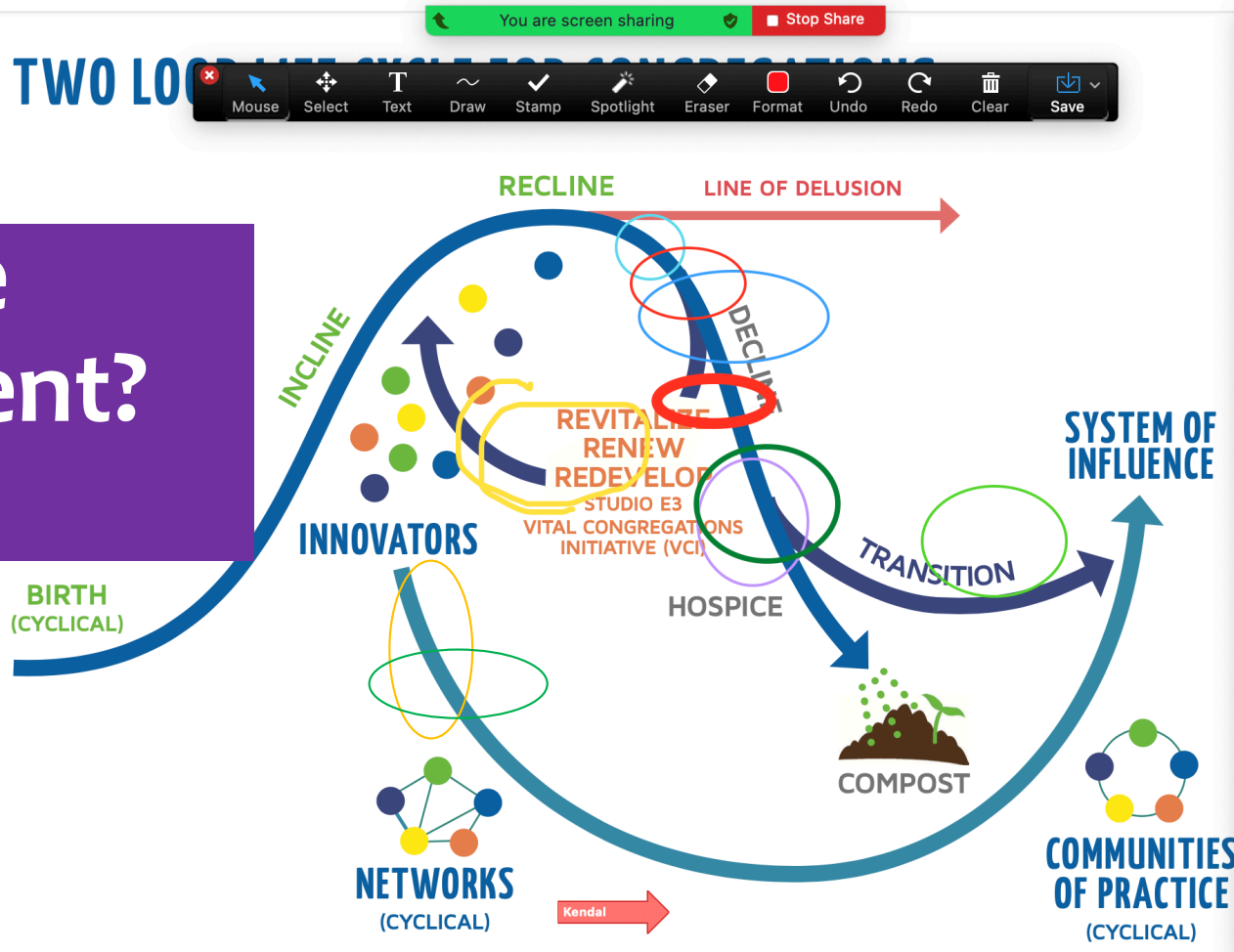
## Life Cycle Assessment?

Read about this at [DenPres.org](http://DenPres.org) 3/23 Assembly web page.



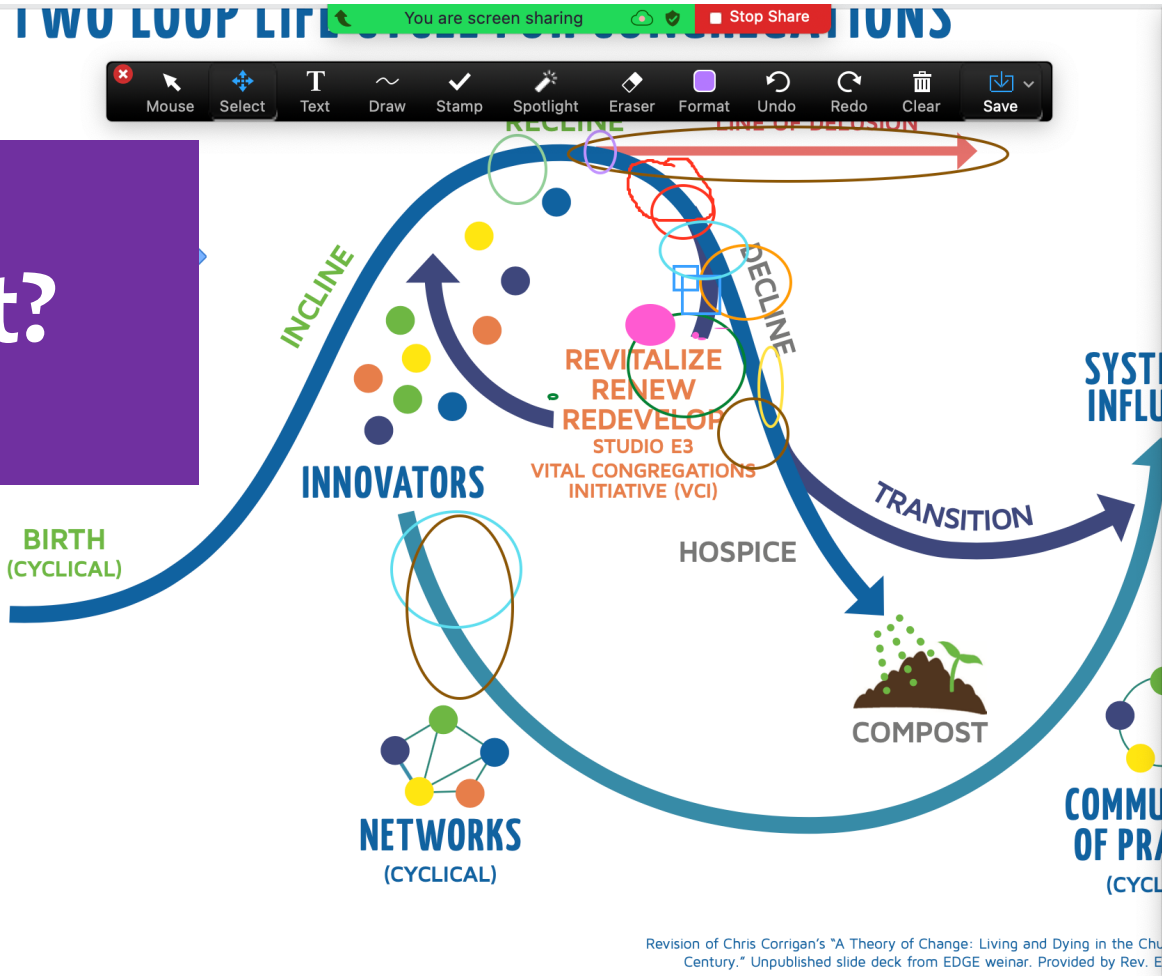
Revision of Chris Corrigan's "A Theory of Change: Living and Dying in the Church of the 21st Century." Unpublished slide deck from EDGE weinar. Provided by Rev. Erik Samuelson.

# Life Cycle Assessment? VCT



In Decline with pockets of innovation and potential for renewal if...

# Life Cycle Assessment? Council



In decline with pockets of innovation  
and potential for Renewal if...



# “Bright Spot Hunting”

**Bright Spot Hunting** can be better than problem solving because they create energy for moving toward life. They create curiosity, positivity, a pull force. They generate longer term positive motivation for moving toward another way.

**Bright Spots** are people, places, and ministries that are working well, doing well. Look for bright spots to become inspired and encouraged. Learn from brightspots lessons that will help direct our attention toward God’s abundant life happening in our midst.



**Telegu NWC**

**Children & Family Ministry  
with Allie Atchison, New  
Hope PC**

**Neema African  
Fellowship**

**Aurora First  
incubating several  
ministries**

**Church of the  
Eternal Hills  
Community Center**

**HR Ministry  
& “HR Chat” with  
Rev. Bill Sanders**



# Hunt for Bright Spots with VCT

**March 23 Assembly**  
VCT will host conversations to identify key bright spots in and around DenPres to light our way.