

Faith, Worship, and Ministry

YOUTH INITIATIVES REPORT

Youth Initiatives has had another excellent and very successful triennium, initiating new projects, deepening partnerships and meeting our four-fold mandate.

This mandate of Youth Initiatives at the national level is:

1. **Visioning** as an ongoing process to respond to the evolving needs and opportunities.
2. **Training** in current and sound practice of youth ministry, theological grounding and skills for ministry.
3. **Networking**: finding creative ways to create and sustain networks that seek to connect all those committed to youth ministries and youth initiatives at the local, regional, diocesan and national levels, including our partner the ELCIC.
4. **Gathering** - on multiple levels - youth leaders and youth with a view to facilitating all of the above.

Vision 2019 includes the following commitment to Youth Initiatives:

The General Synod will serve God's mission by implementing the recommendations of the Youth Initiatives Working Group, for the strengthening of the church's engagement with young people as servants of the mission of God, and for the renewal of the whole church as partners in God's mission.

CANADIAN LUTHERAN ANGLICAN YOUTH GATHERING

TIME and LOCATION: Every 2 years, (even years) in August. Hosted in various locations across Canada. In 2014 the Gathering was in Kamloops, BC and in 2016 it will be in Charlottetown, PEI. 2016 marks the fourth national youth gathering that we have done jointly with the ELCIC.

WHO: This event is for Anglican and Lutheran Youth from across Canada, ages 14 – 19, and their leaders who accompany them from their home congregation or diocese. Approx 700-900 people attend each gathering. Each year, Anglican participation increases. The event is planned by a team of Lutheran and Anglican volunteers appointed by the Program Committee for Youth Ministry (PCYM, ELCIC) and the Youth Secretariat of the ACC. The planning team is supported by both Anglican and Lutheran staff members.

FINANCIAL: The event is self-sustaining. All participants (youth and leaders) pay a registration fee which includes the event and most meals. They are also responsible for their travel and accommodations. Special projects within CLAY seek additional funding from grants and approved sponsorships.

PARTNERSHIPS: CLAY is done in partnership with the ELCIC. The ELCIC provides the administrative and financial oversight for the project. ACC contributes planning team members, active promotion to Dioceses to encourage participation and consultation in site selection. It should be noted that in 2014 and 2016 the event will be at two locations that the former Lutheran Youth Gathering (CLYG) has never been held because of a lack of local Lutheran congregations and local volunteers support. Also, the chair of the planning team will be an Anglican for the first time for the 2016 gathering.

Additionally, at each CLAY gathering the National Youth Project is announced which youth groups and congregations participate in over the course of the intervening two years. Past projects have included Habitat for Humanity, raising funds to support overseas partnership projects and the latest Water project in Pikangikum. Within the ACC, our involvement and promotion of these projects is coordinated through the PWRDF justgeneration.ca initiative.

OUTCOMES: The significance of the CLAY gathering is partially in its size, and the opportunity for Anglican youth to see that they are connected to a larger body of youth (and the Body of Christ) across the country. For the young people who participate in the learning, worship, community and spiritual formation that happens at CLAY, it gives them a grounding in their home community (youth travel with a group from their geographical location). Many local initiatives in youth ministry have emerged out of attending CLAY together. Many youth stay connected to their congregation and the wider church because of their participation in CLAY. For some, it is the place where they first discern a call to some form of ministry.

STRONGER TOGETHER

TIME and LOCATION: Annually in the autumn, at various locations throughout Canada. 2 days, plus a designated travel day on either side. Historically this event (and the Youth Secretariat meetings afterwards) have been in rural locations such as diocesan camps or small retreat centres. It has become part of the culture of Stronger Together and fosters a sense of community, spiritual renewal, inspiration and connectedness to each other and to the land.

2011: Camp Columbia, Thetis Island, BC

2012: Kingsfold Retreat Centre, near Cochrane, Alberta

2013: Galilee Retreat Centre, Arnprior, ON

2014: St Benedict's Retreat Centre, West St Paul's, MB

2015: Loyola House, Guelph, ON

WHO: Youth Initiatives staff, Youth Secretariat members, Diocesan youth staff (full time or part time) or chair of Diocesan Youth Committee or significant volunteer who has an active and diocesan-wide mandate as part of their role, however small. Basically whoever is the 'go-to' person in the Diocese for youth initiatives or youth ministry concerns (note: many dioceses do not have any person in this role either as volunteer or staff)

FINANCIAL: Stronger Together is supported by General Synod budget and (travel costs) by the Dioceses of individuals who are attending. Some travel assistance is available from the General Synod for Dioceses with limited resources.

PARTNERSHIPS: The ACC is the host for this event and the ELCIC is invited to attend and send the members of their Program Committee for Youth Ministry and Synod Youth staff. The PCYM and the Youth Secretariat also schedule their annual face-to-face meeting to coincide with the timing of Stronger Together so as to save travel costs.

OUTCOMES: Since the very first Stronger Together, the two main pieces of feedback we receive on these events are: ‘this is so important to me – I don’t feel like I am alone!’ and “I really hope we are going to do this again next year, I learned so much for my ministry”. Diocesan youth ministry leaders have a very isolated role as they are often the only ‘go to’ person in their diocese or region who is trying to advocate for and sustain a wide-ranging commitment to youth ministry. Stronger Together provides connection with peers and mentors. It also provides formation for people who are new in their role as diocesan youth staff (there is a high turnover in this role). At every Stronger Together we have had at least 4 or 5 new people in their roles, whether staff or chairs of youth ministry committees)

GENERATION.ANGLICAN.CA and *The Community*

TIME and LOCATION: On-going web-based information resource

WHO: The Youth Initiatives staff consistently contributes to the communication output of our National Church. Working within the parameters of our youth mandate the youth initiatives staff write for both Generation.ca and The Community while maintaining a social media presence. Through various blogs and articles we are able to bring not only updates on Youth work across our country but present timely and thought provoking articles for discussion. This benefits youth leaders, clergy and youth themselves.

PARTNERSHIPS: Generation is now partnered (in look and in content) with *The Community* in the interest of generating more wide-ranging conversation about youth ministry across the church. The work also helps to connect the work of ministries in various parts of the country and share ideas. For example, we were able to present a full series through The Community that highlighted Ottawa bloggers taking part in the Montreal Missions Internship in the summer of 2015.

OUTCOMES: Generation has helped to connect and maintain connections between people who have participated in national youth events. Creating and maintaining a presence through social media has increased the ability to stay in contact with other youth leaders, church leadership and the youth.

YOUTH AT GENERAL SYNOD

TIME AND LOCATION: Prior to General Synod and during Triennium through CoGS meetings

WHO: Youth members of General Synod and Youth members of CoGS

PARTNERSHIPS and OUTCOMES: Youth Initiatives staff have worked with the Youth of General Synod for the last triennium. A program was created in 2013 in conjunction with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada to bring the youth of both the General Synod and the ELCIC National Gathering together for the day prior to the Joint Assembly meeting in Ottawa. During the youth time and the week of Joint Assembly, youth initiatives staff helped strengthen a network that worked not only for our National Church but with our full communion partners as well. Youth also planned and led the “Event on the Hill” for the whole Joint Assembly – a morning prayer event on Parliament Hill to draw attention to the Right to Water initiatives and Aboriginal rights.

Currently, after meetings with the current youth members of CoGS and continued communication with past members we will be creating a new program for General Synod 2016. This gathering will once again focus on meeting other youth from across Canada, learning the process and procedures of General Synod, education for advocacy work and meeting with the Primate. This program will continue to build networks of both leaders and youth into the next triennium, and foster the skills and vocations of young leaders within our church.

TRAILBLAZING: ON-LINE THEOLOGICAL FORMATION FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

TIME and LOCATION: Web-based education resource that provides theological training and skill building for youth ministry leaders.

WHO: Aimed at youth ministry leaders (volunteer or paid) in the Anglican Church of Canada and the ELCIC.

The number one challenge identified by diocesan youth ministry staff was how to provide training and formation to congregational youth leaders. This kind of resource can be followed by an individual in a remote location, or can be source material for a group learning experience at a diocesan or regional training event.

The Youth Initiatives team helped TO develop the site and prototype it at Stronger Together in partnership with the Ask & Imagine youth theology program staff and faculty from Huron University College.

PARTNERSHIPS: The development of the program happened through 2013 – 2015 as a partnership between Huron University College and the Anglican Church of Canada/Youth Initiatives. As of 2016, the ACC provides web hosting and some technical support – the project is now administered by Huron University College/Faculty of Theology. It remains a training platform that youth ministry leaders can access across Canada.

OUTCOMES: The aim of Trailblazing is to create a cadre of thinking, reflective youth ministry leaders who understand thoroughly both how to and more importantly ‘why’ we do youth ministry and sufficient theological grounding to do more than simply grab resources off a shelf to build a program.

There are over 140 subscribers/learners across Canada and many Dioceses report that this is a vital resource in providing training to youth leaders, particularly those in remote locations.