



Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

Young People's Ministry Strategic Plan Highlights

The Strategic Planning Process and Summary

Over the past 14 months, The Young People's Ministry of The Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church (BWC) has engaged in a process of developing a comprehensive strategic plan for Young People's Ministry in the conference. And a significant number of stakeholders throughout the conference have given input to this plan.

- In January 2018, Ministry Architects facilitated an initial listening session with 45 people engaged in a wide variety of ways in ministry to young people throughout the conference.
- Soon after this gathering, in May 2018, a Young People's Ministry survey was sent to all conference churches, with 157 people responding.
- In September 2018, Mark DeVries and Aqueelah Ligonde from Ministry Architects met with approximately 110 stakeholders in young people's ministry in 6 focus groups, collaboratively developing the contours of the strategic plan.
- Mark DeVries also met with groups of 35 stakeholders in October 2018 and January 2019 to invite much needed input on the various expressions of the values and goals for the Young People's Ministry.

The strategic assessment report, originally crafted in September 2018, has been revised several times as additional groups of stakeholders have spoken into the plan. The final version of the report includes these elements:

- Background on the Conference and each ministry within YPM
- A dashboard representing pertinent data from the GCFA statistical report
- Current assets within YPM
- Current challenges facing YPM
- Key principles of the strategic plan for YPM
- Visioning documents, including core values, 3-year goals, benchmarks, and strategies
- Recommendations for developing the structure of YPM
- Specific recommendations for youth ministry, young adult ministry, and campus ministry
- Recommendations for Annual Conference 2019
- A timeline for sequencing the execution of all recommendations

In addition to the conference vision and mission, the strategic plan has been informed by the following overarching, foundational priorities:

- We have made the choice to disproportionately invest in young people (aligned with the research of *Sticky Faith* and *Growing Young*) and in developing leadership.

- We will focus on building healthy connective tissue between expressions of Young People's Ministry as much or more than we focus on creating new programs. As a result, we will focus first on building the structures of connection between current expressions of Young People's Ministry in the conference. This includes:
 - Building the essential infrastructure for a vibrant, integrated, deep-impact ministry for young people in the conference.
 - Improving our database and strategies for communication.
- We will support innovation that enables the church to continue co-creating with God, aligning with Wesleyan discipleship and remaining relevant. This includes:
 - Cultivating an innovative ethos around student ministry, camping ministry, campus ministry, and young adult ministry in the conference providing latitude for the development of communication channels and innovative programs that may not naturally fit into the conference's current structure (The books, *Orbiting the Giant Hairball* and *Innovator's Dilemma* can serve as a reference point.)
 - Holding fast to the combination of healthy systems and a willingness to embrace disruptive innovation
- We will advocate the shift from seeing young people as recipients of mission to seeing them as partners and agents of mission and ministry themselves.

Anticipated Changes After Annual Conference 2019

The strategic plan recommends the following approvals related to the work of Young People's Ministry in the BWC and hope the Annual Conference affirms that as a part of the Discipleship Council Report:

- Transition the Interim Young People's Ministry Board to an official permanent board with a clearly defined composition of members including youth, young members and ex officio members representing campus ministry, RCM, ROCK (see job description).
- Transition aspects of the Conference Council on Youth Ministry to a Student Leadership Cohort that includes district youth coordinators and up to 30 youth from across the conference and their mentors.

Additionally:

- Pilot campus ministry training hub at UMD as an innovation for campus ministry.
- Create Task Forces to develop infrastructure and innovation in the following areas:
 - Training
 - Database
 - Young adult ministry
 - Youth ministry
 - Campus ministry
 - Grants and scholarships
 - Site-based retreat and camping ministry
 - Student Leader Cohort
- Affirm RCM to raise money for camperships each year to a maximum of \$500,000/year so that every child can afford to go to a BWC camp.

Progress Report

In the months in which the strategic plan has been drafted, some implementation has already begun to take place, including:

- Significant steps have been taken to update Arena with Young People's Ministry stakeholders
- A timeline and game plan for introducing a campus ministry hub at UMD have been developed and implementation has begun.
- Job descriptions for Young People's ministry task forces have been created and recruiting of task force members has begun.

Retreat & Camping Ministries Strategic Plan

Parallel to the Young People's Ministry strategic planning process with Ministry Architects, Retreat and Camping Ministries (RCM) engaged Kaleidoscope Inc., a camp and retreat center consultant, to evaluate the ministry's current operations and provide strategic plans for increased ministry effectiveness and sustainability. Kaleidoscope met with site stakeholders, RCM staff, and a working team of RCM staff and conference leaders to gather feedback on the sites, process site usage data, and explore potential areas for growth over the course of several months in the Fall of 2018. To view our ministry report and the comprehensive strategic plan go to bwcumc.org/RCMnext. Here are the highlights.

Long-Term Growth Drivers

- Focus summer camp program model to provide excellent, vital ministry maximizing the unique setting of each property.
- Expand the model for retreats to better serve adult and family groups.
- Develop intercultural proficiency in each location to connect people, history, program, property, and faith development.

RCM Strategic Analysis

Camp Harmison – Berkeley Springs, WV

- While thousands of people have experienced Christ in the beautiful and rustic setting of Harmison since it began operation in 1959, through analysis and prayerful discernment we discovered there is not a viable model for sustainable ministry and will cease operations in Fall of 2019.
- We are helping Camp Joy and others find a new home so they can continue their ministry in the Berkeley Springs area or at Manidokan.
- We are in conversation with the relevant parties to ensure the Harmison legacy is honored as we reallocate and focus resources to other sites.
- A celebration of Camp Harmison will be scheduled for the Fall.

Manidokan Camp & Retreat Center – Knoxville, MD

- While usage of Manidokan has nearly doubled over the past 10 years it is considered a small sized operation and is thus on the edge of viability.

- One of the major limiting factors is capacity. Overnight capacity should be increased to 200 (150 youth beds, 50 adult beds) from the current 112 year-round accommodations.
- The programming at Manidokan should focus on adventure and utilizing the 400+ acre property.
- Both retreat and summer camp groups should take better advantage of local attractions including Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, the C&O Canal, and Antietam Battlefield.
- The site must differentiate youth, intergenerational, and adult spaces to better meet the unique needs of those groups.

West River

- West River is the most used property in the BWC RCM and considered a medium sized and sustainable operation. However, the site has not maximized its potential.
- The sleeping capacity of West River is sufficient, but the quality of the accommodations must be improved and differentiated between adult and youth spaces to better meet the needs of those populations.
- The day camp program started in 2012 has sold out in recent years and should be aggressively expanded to 2 or 3 times the current size.
- The waterfront is a big draw for campers and guests so the programming at the site should take better advantage of that resource. Every camper and guest should have an opportunity to interact with the water, not just observe it.

Next Steps

Beginning in 2019 RCM will take steps to implement these recommendations including:

- Cease operation at Camp Harmison and reallocate resources to Manidokan and West River.
- Focus Manidokan adventure programming with 2 new rustic programs and visit several camps with successful adventure programs in our connection to glean best practices.
- Expand West River day camp by 50% in 2019 and develop plans for continued expansion of the program over the next several years.
- Create a development program for RCM.
- Align staff to free up time needed to focus on identified growth areas.
- Complete the long-range planning process with site master plans for Manidokan and West River.

Young People's Ministry Visioning Documents

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRY VALUES

DO NO HARM. DO GOOD. STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD.

1. **Courageous Love:** We have been called by Christ into an inclusive love that welcomes all, celebrates differences, and anchors difficult conversations in respect and kindness.
2. **Humble Urgency:** We have been invited to a work of incomparable importance, and we remain equally committed to doing no harm in our efforts to achieve this mission.
3. **Bold Innovation:** We are purposeful about creativity, invention, and experimentation in order to maximize the reach and effectiveness of each initiative designed to express the love of God.
4. **Faithful Openness:** We are rooted in God's love through Jesus Christ, who calls us beloved, and yet we are always learning more of the unfolding work of the Spirit.
5. **Restful Work:** We are eager to work hard for those things that matter most, while living in patient grace, including intentional rest.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRY GOALS

TARGET DATE: DECEMBER 31, 2021

ONE-YEAR BENCHMARK: DECEMBER 31, 2019

OVERVIEW: The following three-year goals and one-year benchmarks provide a clear, ambitious, tangible expression of the vision and values of Young People's Ministry in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. The three-year goals have been designed as "stretch" aspirations, while the one-year benchmarks are achievable next steps in moving toward the more ambitious, longer term goals.

This document was designed collaboratively, in multiple iterations, with the input of the Interim Young People's Ministry Board, a wide circle of over 100 stakeholders throughout the conference, and our consultant team from Ministry Architects. The "preferred initial strategies" following each benchmark are not meant to be limiting or prescriptive but to provide possible next steps that the Young People's Ministry Board can draw upon as they move toward achieving each of the goals and benchmarks below.

ENGAGEMENT

1. **Growing Local Church Youth Engagement:** By December 2021, 50 churches have increased the number of youth engaged in their churches to a new level of participation (From 0 youth to 1+, from 1-4 youth to 5+, from 5-15 youth to 16+, from 16-29 youth to 30+, from 30-49 youth to 50+, 50-99, 100-150, 150-200, 200-250+).
 - **1-Year Benchmark:** By December 2019, 15 churches have increased the number of youth engaged in their churches to a new level of participation (From 0 youth to 1+, from 1-4 youth to 5+, from 5-15 youth to 16+, from 16-30 youth to 30+, from 30-49 youth to 50+, 50-100, 100-150, 150-200, 200-250+).
2. **Expanding Young People's Engagement Beyond the Local Church:** Between January 2019 and December 2021, an additional 2,000 youth and young adults (both from within the church and from outside the church) have participated in regional, district, conference or denomination-sponsored ministry events, including ROCK, camps, retreats, multi-cultural events, social justice programming, and other events.
 - **1-Year Benchmark:** A baseline number has been determined for how many youth and young adults participated in regional, district, conference or denomination-sponsored events in 2018.
 - **1-Year Benchmark:** A cross-cultural small group with youth and/or young adults gathered in 2019.

- **1-Year Benchmark:** By December 2019, a listening campaign involving at least 25 youth per district has been completed, and the service or justice issue young people want to focus on for the next two years has been identified (in collaboration with the Advocacy and Action Board).
3. **Campus Ministry:** By December 2021, Over 500 college students are engaged through BWC connected ministries on at least 12 different campuses.
- **1-Year Benchmark:** By December 2019, over 200 college students are engaged through BWC connected ministries on at least 6 different campuses.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

4. **Young Adult Leadership:** At least 5 experiments in empowering young adults in leadership have been launched in the previous year (2021).
- **1-Year Benchmark:** At least 2 experiments in empowering young adults in leadership have been launched in the previous year (2019).
5. **Student Leadership:** By December 2021, At least 200 middle school and high school students participated in a leadership training event sponsored or referred by the conference in the previous year.
- **1-Year Benchmark:** By December, 2019, at least 60 middle school and high school students participated in a leadership training event sponsored or referred by the conference in the previous year (2019).
 - **6. Adult Leadership Development:** By December 2021, at least 250 adult leaders of youth participated in at least one leadership training event sponsored or referred by the conference in the previous year (2021).
 - **1-Year Benchmark:** At least 75 adult leaders of youth participated in at least one leadership training event sponsored or referred by the conference in the previous year (2019).

INNOVATION

6. **Innovation Systems:** A comprehensive process has been established for celebrating, cultivating, learning from and maximizing innovations in young people's ministry, launching at least 10 initiatives in the past 3 years, with at least 3 of those initiatives in place for over a year.
- **1-Year Benchmark:** At least one young adult initiative launched by December 2019 and a game plan and timeline for implementing a comprehensive process for innovations in Young People's Ministry has been created and approved.

7. **Special Needs Ministry:** All churches have been equipped to welcome families with a family member who has special needs. There is a church in every BWC district with an exemplar ministry for special needs children, youth, and young adults.
 - **1-Year Benchmark:** In collaboration with the Commission on Disability Ministry, all churches in the conference have been invited to complete a special-needs readiness assessment, and at least 75% of churches have completed it.
8. **Mental Health Resources:** All churches have knowledge about and ready access to robust mental health resources to help youth leaders at local churches address mental health issues, like anxiety, depression, and suicide, with their youth.
 - **1- Year Benchmark:** In collaboration with the Wellness and Service Board, a game plan has been drafted for supporting the mental health of youth and young adults throughout the conference and providing resources to churches to help youth leaders at local churches address mental health issues, like anxiety, depression, and suicide, with their youth.

Young People's Ministry Board Job Description

Purpose:

We nurture a culture, in and through the Young People's Ministry (YPM) Board, of loving, joyful, and hard-working teams serving together to create and sustain vibrant ministry with young people throughout the conference. The YPM Board coordinates, oversees, supports and contributes to the crafting of the vision of all young people's ministry within the conference (including, but not limited to, ROCK, campus ministry, the work of Young Adult Council, the work of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and camping and retreat ministry, and the work traditionally assumed by the Conference Council for Youth Ministry).).

Responsibilities:

- Speak into, endorse, support, and share a three-year strategic design and execution process for young people's ministry in the conference.
- Ensure that clear communication takes place between the various areas of young people's ministry in the conference.
- Coordinate and communicate a master calendar for all board-related young people's ministry programming in the conference.
- Meet at least quarterly and additionally as necessary, with agendas distributed one week before each meeting, with a calm, confident, and focused approach to each meeting.
- Ensure that new initiatives are aligned with the vision and strategic plan for young people's ministry in the conference.
- Engage others outside the Interim Young People's Ministry Board through task forces, chaired by Board members in the following areas:
 - **Training:** Designs and implements all YPM training, with a particular focus on ensuring engagement at training events aligned with participation targets
 - **Database:** Ensures the ongoing development and maintenance of an integrated YPM database, with an initial target of 10,000 YPM stakeholders with robust information for each
 - **Young Adult Ministry** (formerly Young Adult Council): Reaches, empowers, connects, and engages young adults (18-35) in faithful expressions of ministry, aligned with the mission, goals, and values of the Interim Young People's Ministry Board. Meets quarterly.
 - **Youth Ministry:** Evaluates the effectiveness of conference-funded youth initiatives including but not limited to the Student Leadership Cohort and our flagship youth retreat, ROCK. Evaluation allows these ministries to continue to innovate and evolve so ministries remain fresh, relevant and aligned with the mission, goals, and values of the Young People's Ministry Board. Meets at least twice a year.
 - **Campus Ministry** (many functions of Board of Higher Education and Ministry): Ensures that the conference's investment in Campus Ministry is maximized for developing and multiplying world-transforming disciples with college students. This includes connecting campus ministries to the Church at all levels, equipping boards of directors or local church committees who provides for planning and implementing a program of mission and ministry, and monitoring and evaluating campus ministry.
 - **Grants and Scholarships:** Monitors, ranks and recommends persons to receive mission innovation grants and scholarships to the YPM Board for a final vote.
 - **Student Leader Cohort** (many functions of CCYM): equips today's leaders from different church sizes, cultures and locations to grow and serve their various communities as lifelong, world-transforming disciples while serving in an annual

conference capacity and designing a conference-wide mission project for and by youth. Students return to their churches equipped and passionate about serving in and through their local church with an under.

- Comply with all requirements of the Book of Discipline related to young people's ministry.
- Assess strategic ministry needs and troubleshoot key pressure points efficiently and effectively.

Team Composition: 10 voting members (at least 4 of which are youth) selected by the Committee on Nominations using interest forms completed by youth and young adults and ensuring there is balanced representation from all areas (high school youth, campus ministry, Retreat and Camping ministry, and Young Adult Ministry)

Ex Officio (voice no vote): ROCK event coordinator, Retreat & Camping Ministry rep, Campus Ministry rep, two advocate advisers who hold leadership roles in the local church and have extensive experience with young people, and a Young People's Ministry staff rep

Time Commitment: Orientation meeting (7 hours), 3 quarterly meetings (3 hours each), task force work (+/- 12 hours a year)