



QUADRENNIAL IMPACT REPORT

YOUNG CLERGY INITIATIVE

HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

LEAD ON. WE'RE WITH YOU.

"We have a young clergy shortage, but we do not have a call shortage. Young people are responding to God's voice in new ways and we're helping the Church adapt to meet new needs."

- Rev. Dr. Trip Lowery, GBHEM Director of Vocational Discernment and Candidacy

HOW DOES THE YOUNG CLERGY INITIATIVE FUND WORK?

The Young Clergy Initiative (YCI) Fund is administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) and is designed to increase the number of young clergy in the jurisdictional conferences. It does this by awarding grants to support experiences that help young people listen, discern and faithfully respond to God's call to licensed or ordained ministry.

PROJECT CATEGORIES

YCI grant proposals that receive funding generally fall into these five project categories:

- **Call Events:** retreats (1-3 days) to teach and inspire participants to think about vocation differently.
- **Educational Experiences:** short-term learning opportunities (4-12 weeks) to teach participants about call and vocation.
- **Internships:** short- or long-term programs (4-40 weeks) to give participants first-hand experience in a vocational ministry setting.
- **Mission Experiences:** short-term activities (1-14 days) to give participants awareness of service of others outside of a local church setting.
- **Small Group Experiences:** short-term communal opportunities (4-12 weeks) to give participants space to process their vocational discernment journey with peers.



\$10M Funds received and distributed

60% Participants new to the Church

70% Participants whose YCI project participation has strengthened their call into church leadership

30% Participants pursuing UMC ordained or licensed ministry as a result of YCI experience

70% Female participants

45% Participants identifying as non-white

213 Number of new young clergy (2012-2018)

18-35 Age range of "young clergy"



HOW IT WORKS

The Young Clergy Initiative was established by the General Conference in 2012 to be a three-quadrannium focus on increasing the number of young clergy in The United Methodist Church. It was created from the World Service Fund, which is an apportioned fund.

Today, YCI invites grant applications that encourage denominational innovation in recruiting and retaining talented young clergy. Programs may achieve this in a variety of ways, including structured conversations, call events, new resource development, unique training opportunities, research and more.

YCI evaluates grant applications based on how they will prepare young people to answer God's call, and in particular, how they plan to assist them in responding to the call to licensed or ordained ministry.

YCI grant applications are accepted from mid-January to mid-March annually. Download the application at explorecalling.org/yci.

GROWING YCI'S INVESTMENT & IMPACT

GBHEM encourages grant recipients to seek additional support from sources outside of the YCI. In the past, project leaders have secured supplemental funds from sources such as annual conference initiatives, special collections within local churches, theological schools, colleges and universities, districts, endowments and more.

Since YCI's inception, grant recipients have raised more \$12 million in addition to the YCI dollars they received.

By seeking additional funds, projects increased the scope of their work, broadened the impact of YCI grant funds and were able to create more sustainable programming. This makes the fund's impact more than double the General Conference's investment in vocational discernment.



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\$22
MILLION
INVESTED IN
YCI
PROGRAMS



UNDERSTANDING YOUNG CLERGY TRENDS

The YCI was created to bolster the number of young clergy in the Church and to address concerns that this population is shrinking. To do this, it is important to understand how the young clergy population has changed over time.

In 2019, the population of young elders experienced its largest decrease since 2000. In contrast, the number of deacons has been trending up since 2006*. Furthermore, the number of licensed local pastors has been trending up since 1990.

While it's true that the number of young elders has decreased, there's been consistent expansion in the number of deacons and licensed local pastors. These numbers suggest that we are seeing a change in the type of call that young clergy experience.

| | ELDERS | DEACONS | LLPS | TOTAL |
|------|--------|---------|------|-------------------------|
| 2012 | 930 | 84 | 472 | 1,486 |
| 2018 | 949 | 124 | 626 | 1,699 (+213 since 2012) |
| 2019 | 875 | 123 | 648 | 1,646 (-53 since 2018) |

Clergy Age Trend Report 2019 by the Lewis Center

* Because age trend report numbers are gathered from pension sources, deacon numbers do not reflect deacons employed outside the local church. Actual deacon numbers will be higher than indicated in the age trend report.

BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR A NEW GENERATION OF CLERGY

Over the last two quadrennia, we have noticed some common qualities that lead to success when engaging the next generation of clergy:

RELATIONSHIPS-FOCUSED: Strong programs connect participants with similarly interested peers and help build relationships that keep participants feeling affirmed and supported as they discern their call.

FORWARD-THINKING: Young people are often drawn to ministries that engage their communities in non-traditional ways. They are being called in unique ways to lead an innovative church into a variety of new contexts.

STRONG VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT CONNECTIONS: Regular communication among vocational discernment coordinators and program leaders helps to share successful strategies, build collective support for tackling challenges and discovering connection-wide trends.



PROJECTS

RAICES LATINAS INSTITUTE

The Boston University School of Theology organized the Raices Latinas Institute to help Hispanic and Latino/a students better discern God's call to ordained ministry. During its first year, with the help of YCI, the institute engaged 48 master's level students and facilitated space to nurture new generations of Latin religious leaders.

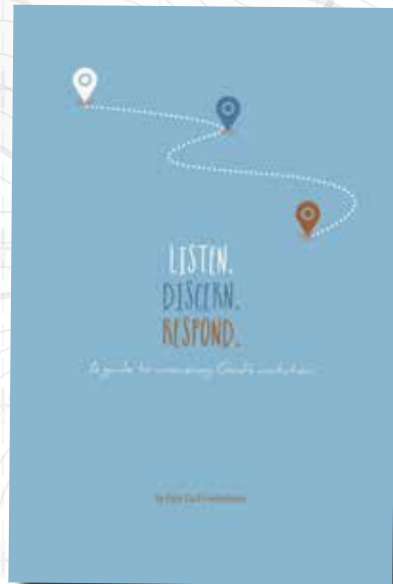
THE LEADING IN TRANSFORMATION CONFERENCE

As part of the work of Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century, the Leading in Transformation (LIT) conference establishes a national network of principled African American young adults to help them hear, discern and practice their call to ministry. This annual gathering, underwritten by YCI, strengthens the pipeline of effective leaders to serve within the Church and United Methodist-affiliated historically black colleges and universities.

THE DISCERNMENT JOURNAL

This new guide for answering God's invitation was designed and published by GBHEM in 2019. "Listen. Discern. Respond. A Guide to Answering God's Invitation" is an interactive journal offering more than 80 exercises to help uncover what their purpose and call might be. This resource, written and compiled by Rev. Dale Carl Fredrickson, helps readers listen to what God and others are saying, discern the meaning of what they are hearing and respond with faithful next steps.

This resource is available at www.explorecalling.org/journal for \$10 while supplies last. All proceeds support the future work of the Young Clergy Initiative.



TEXAS STATE'S UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY

The United Campus Ministry (UCM) gives Texas State students a chance to personally experience seminaries and ministry conferences while helping them understand the realities and possibilities of ordained ministry. Participants visited United Methodist-accredited seminaries, attended ministry conferences and spent time at Perkins School of Theology during Minister's Week.

DISCOVERU

DiscoverU, sponsored by YCI, was a week-long shadowing experience for young people ages 15-25 in the West Virginia Annual Conference. It was born from a conversation between passionate young people who wanted to see peers find their path of ministry.

Participants had the opportunity to follow a ministry leader from a different ministry setting each day – elders, deacons, those who are ordained serving in various areas, laity and others. The young people shared with a group of peers to debrief what they had learned that day and pray together.

PROJECT TRANSFORMATION

Project Transformation (PT) invites young adults discerning a vocational call to ministry to serve with children who are experiencing poverty and are at-risk for lower educational accomplishments. They use a proven model that has been successfully replicated in many other regions of the country. YCI has supported PT's vocational discernment and leadership development at sites in Tennessee, Texas and Georgia. Support has also been provided to the national office to help PT expand into new regions across the country. PT has grown to provide programming for more than 370 young adults and 3,200 children annually in 43 host churches and communities.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY

APPLY: Download the application at explorecalling.org/yci.

ASK QUESTIONS: Contact the GBHEM Office of Vocational Discernment and Candidacy at +1(615)340-7405 or explore@gbhem.org.

FIND RESOURCES: Explore all of GBHEM's YCI and vocational discernment resources and let us know about additional resources we can share at explorecalling.org/resources.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION: Tag @GBHEM and @ExploreCalling when you share your YCI success stories on social media with #GBHEMLeads.





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