

Fraser Presbytery

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Review

April, 2009

Table of Contents

- Summary of Findings
- Appendix 1 – Youth & Young Adult Ministry Job Description (not included)
- Appendix 2 – Questionnaire (not included)
- Appendix 3 – Summary of Questionnaire Results
- Appendix 4 – Comments from YAYA Board Strategic Planning (not included) 2009/2010

Committee Members:

Mary Turner, Trinity Memorial UC

The Rev. John Miller, Bethany Newton UC and YAYA Board Member

Jean Macdonald, Crescent UC

Summary of Findings:

The Committee wishes to advise that it has not been possible to complete, with any degree of integrity, a fair and balanced assessment of the success of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry in Fraser Presbytery (as opposed to the YAYA Minister), for the following reasons.

- There is no program description to describe the desired outcomes for this ministry.
- While there is a job description for the YAYA Minister, it does not provide specific outcomes, although to some extent, these can be inferred.
- The YAYA Board has developed a document entitled “Strategic Planning – Goals for 2009 – 2010,” but not until January 2009, and even then, the goals established tend to be process rather than outcome oriented.
- The questionnaire that was circulated to congregations asked questions only about vision and strategy. It did not address responsibilities and functions, and certainly did not address outcomes.
- Just over half of the congregations offered an opinion on this ministry

As a result of these short-comings, it has been difficult to make firm recommendations to Presbytery Executive or to the full Court. That said, we do offer the following observations.

Level of Involvement:

- Those congregations with a higher level of involvement with the YAYA Minister generally rated the program higher than those congregations with less involvement.
- Congregations that had Youth Council members participate in the congregation's response to the Executive's questionnaire rated the program more highly than other congregations.
- The YAYA Board, based on their own research, appears to be satisfied with the program.

These points, considered together, suggest that those who are in the best position to know are satisfied with the capabilities of the YAYA Minister, but they do not address the success or the quality of the YAYA Ministry Program.

Job Description Priorities and Use of Time:

The job description specifies that 50% of the minister's time is to be devoted to **congregational support**. From this, the committee infers that development of capacity in congregations to develop and operate strong youth programs was to be a priority. Based on the results of the questionnaire and submissions from the YAYA Board, it does not appear that 50% of the time was put into this function, and it is not clear to what extent the capacity of congregations to develop and provide programming for youth has been increased. The YAYA Minister did note (Appx. 4) that there was a poor response from congregational youth leaders to invitations to participate in training. Further, the committee notes that congregations need to be willing and active participants for this ministry to be successful.

Twenty-five percent of the YAYA Minister's time was to be devoted to the **Youth Council**, including planning and supporting the development of leadership and group building, participation in presbytery courts, and presbytery-wide activities such as the May Retreat. It is our impression that there has been an emphasis on these functions, but that a relatively small proportion of the youth of Fraser Presbytery has benefited. .

Cost-Effectiveness:

In spite of the short-comings of the review process, the committee is of the impression that the YAYA Ministry, as currently structured, is not cost-effective. The size of the presbytery (27 congregations), and the geography (approximately 100 miles, end to end), combined with the scope of the job description (capacity building plus direct service), makes achievement of any significant outcomes unrealistic.

Options for Consideration:

Consideration could be given to re-structuring the program in one of two ways.

1. Focus the position solely on capacity building in congregations.
 - Eliminate any direct work with youth and young adults, and focus instead on developing leadership capacity within congregations.
 - Focus would include training and mentoring of youth leaders, both paid and volunteer, and using a variety of approaches to achieve the goals

- To justify this approach, congregations should indicate their commitment to having their youth leaders participate in the process, and their willingness to actively recruit youth participation in their congregations.
 - Support for Youth Council and presbytery-wide youth and young adult activities would occur only as the result of cooperative effort among the youth programs in individual congregations.
2. Focus the position on a sub-set of the congregations in the Presbytery.
- The YAYA Minister would work intensively with four to six congregations, for a limited period of time (2 years?).
 - The Minister would work both directly with youth and with adult leaders (lay and ordered) to develop both a strong youth group **and** the ongoing capacity within the congregation so that the program would continue to thrive in subsequent years.
 - At the end of the specified period, the YAYA Minister would move on to another group of congregations.
 - In this model, there may be some parallels to be drawn to the Intentional Interim Ministry process.

In either approach, we strongly recommend the development of a program description with specific measurable goals to facilitate future evaluation of the program.

The committee notes that the YAYA Ministry constitutes only a part of the effort devoted to youth and young adults in Fraser Presbytery. If we are serious about ministry to youth and young adults across the presbytery, we propose a broader review that includes an enumeration of the number of leaders involved in youth ministry – both paid and volunteer their qualifications, the number of hours devoted, and a survey of the needs of congregations to increase their capacity for youth ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Turner
John Miller
Jean Macdonald

Appendix 3

Results of the Questionnaire to Pastoral Charges

Number of Respondents:

15 out 28 potential = 55/5%

Level of contact among responding Pastoral Charges:

Low = 8

Medium = 4

High = 3

Methodology:

We started by compiling the raw numbers of how many responses there were for each question on each point of the 6-point scale (? ,1,2,3,4,5).

For each question we then calculated the:

Mode = most frequent response

Median = the response in the middle of the range; the central tendency

Mean = the sum of all scores divided by the number of responses

We also divided the responses in to three categories, based on the level of involvement with the YAYA ministry indicated in the questionnaire, and recalculated the scores for just those which indicated a high level of involvement.

Assessment of the Vision

The first two questions are intended to assess the extent to which the vision for the YAYA ministry has been achieved. The answers reflect the opinions of those pastoral charges that responded to the questionnaire.

All responses:

#	Question	Mode	Median	Mean
1	Nurtured and led the vision for excellent, accessible, diverse & growing youth & young adult ministry in Fraser Presbytery	? (don't know)	3.25	3.0
2	Strengthened & developed excellent congregational youth & young adult ministry & leadership	?	2	2.6

Responses from High-involvement Pastoral Charges

#	Question	Mode	Median	Mean
1	Nurtured and led the vision for excellent, accessible, diverse & growing youth & young adult ministry in Fraser Presbytery	4 & 5	4.5	4.3
2	Strengthened & developed excellent congregational youth & young adult ministry & leadership	4	3	3.3

Comments re Vision Questions:

- We have not availed ourselves of this ministry
- We have not seen evidence (other than paper) of YAYA ministry leadership & animation at St. John's
- Have improved my confidence in youth ministry through interaction with YAYA minister
- Excellent communication. Not much work in regards to developing leadership for our youth leader
- Good support/resources/consultation for our work at First especially when asked
- We feel it is an important ministry if our United Church is to move ahead and grow.
- We are not involved with YAYA
- Virtually no youth/young adults in congregation
- Our youth group which was struggling since folded

Assessment of the Strategies

The second set of four questions was intended to assess the effectiveness of various strategies that designed to help achieve the YAYA ministry vision. The answers reflect the opinions of the pastoral charges that responded to the questionnaire.

All Responses:

#	Question	Mode	Median	Mean
A	Work directly with pastoral charges to assist them with strategic planning around the development of excellent youth ministry	1	1.5	2.3
B	Work directly with the Fraser Presbytery Youth Council to develop leadership and to be a strong voice in congregations and the Presbytery	? (don't know)	3	2.8
C	Work directly with young adults to nurture a community & place in the church	? (don't know)	4	3.4
D	Work directly with Fraser Presbytery to create a place for youth& young adults within its courts	2 and 4	3.5	3.25

Responses from High-involvement Pastoral Charges:

#	Question	Mode	Median	Mean
A	Work directly with pastoral charges to assist them with strategic planning around the development of excellent youth ministry	NA	4	3.3
B	Work directly with the Fraser Presbytery Youth Council to develop leadership and to be a strong voice in congregations and the Presbytery	4	4	4
C	Work directly with young adults to nurture a community & place in the church	4	4	4
D	Work directly with Fraser Presbytery to create a place for youth& young adults within its courts	4	4.5	4.3

Comments on Strategies:

- Help was asked for and not received; part-time participation in an event was discouraged
- Our perception is that Youth Council functions as a private club. There were some events for young adults – not clear whether this created any connections with home churches. Haven't seen evidence of work with Presbytery to create place for youth & young adults in courts
- In our recent youth ministry transition, the assistance we received thus far has been very helpful. Re broader questions – the nature of our culture (church and other) is such that goals regarding youth & young adult and court involvement may require systematic change.
- We don't have the membership of this age group in our congregation so we don't feel our opinions are very accurate or useful.
- We have 3 active youth groups at Agassiz/Rosedale
- Energetic in work with youth/young adults & other leaders in the church be attending events etc.
- Would be helpful for the Presbytery staff to experience & participate in our program in order to know how to resource/consult. Any contact has been at our initiative.
- The issue is that congregations do not have the financial and human resources to hire Youth Ministers. Getting volunteers to run our youth group is unrealistic & not effective. The YAYA ministry position cannot do this unless the local congregation is better resourced.
- The current review seems redundant. The YAYA Board is responsible for the review and has done it. FP Exec & Discipleship Team should honour and support the work done by YAYA Board and not ask for a second review. Because I highly value the YAYA ministry I have taken time to respond to this second review.
- After an initial conversation, there has been little/no YAYA time offered to St. John's in terms of growing youth ministry here. Mailings for YAYA events have more than once arrived a mere 5 days before the event. I have seen evidence [of youth/young adults] at FP meetings – numbers of youth are still small – cost effectiveness? The part of the job description...around congregational support has been really difficult to lift off the ground. The “we've always done it this way” part – including Youth Council and planning presbytery programs & events has taken more than 50%.
- I have concern around the expectations of the ministry description...a lot for one person to do. It looked like a two-person job because it actually has two focuses – youth and young adult. However having expressed this opinion I do not and would not support a division of this ministry if it meant loss of hours and wages. This ministry would have to be much stronger – i.e. more youth and young adult members to survive and grow under those conditions.