



**YOUTH MINISTRY ASSESSMENT
REPORT FOR**

**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF HAWAII
HONOLULU, HAWAII**

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BACKGROUND

As unique as it is beautiful, the state of Hawai`i sits alone in the midst of the Pacific Ocean, a tropical paradise set apart and yet a key hub for commerce for the entire Trans-Pacific region and a much sought destination of tourism for the world. It was into this pristine setting that King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma invited the Church of England in 1862, establishing the presence of the Episcopal Church in Hawai`i. According to diocesan history, the royal family supported the establishment of the church through gifts of land and by founding the Cathedral of St. Andrew, Queen's Hospital, and St. Andrew's Priory School for Girls in Honolulu. The diocese celebrated its sesquicentennial, its 150-year anniversary of worship, service, and mission, in 2012. "Hawai`i is not like anywhere else," said one listening group participant, and Ministry Architects is not prepared to argue that point.

No other state, or diocese for that matter, exists on an island chain. No other state is further from the nation's capital. No other state has a royal palace or formerly existed as a monarchy. Each island has its own flavor. Each has its own melting pot of cultures. Each island makes its own contribution to the whole. Family is central. You have to talk story. And everyone yearns to be "local."

The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai`i consists of 36 churches on five of the state's eight islands. About half of those churches are located on the island of O`ahu, "The Gathering Place," where 80% of Hawaii's population of 1.4 million resides. The Episcopal churches are spread amongst islands as follows:

- O`ahu (The Gathering Place) - 21
- Hawai`i (The Big Island) - 5
- Kaua`i (The Garden Island) - 5
- Maui (The Valley Isle) - 4
- Moloka`i (The Friendly Isle) - 1

The Rt. Rev. Robert L Fitzpatrick came to Hawai`i in the year 2000 and has presided as bishop over the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai`i since 2007. He leads a staff of eight, including three ministerial and five administrative employees. The diocese has not had a position assigned to diocesan youth ministry since 2016.

Average Sunday attendance in the diocese is 3,000 worshippers. While overall membership of the diocese has decreased over the last ten years by 15%, according to the last available statistics (2017), the average Sunday attendance has decreased less so, at a rate of 10%. During this same ten-year period, giving has increased by 6% toward a diocesan budget of \$2.5 million, \$70,000 of which is designated for Camp Mokule`ia - scholarships, summer camp salaries, new program equipment - and diocesan youth ministry (\$10,000.00).

YOUTH MINISTRY OVERVIEW

Diocesan youth ministry in Hawai`i has ebbed and flowed over the years. If anything, it has been characterized as inconsistent. There has been diocesan youth ministry staff in place at times, and the general consensus is that the work of a youth ministry staff person was generally helpful. Historically, there were four major events: New Beginnings (a Cursillo-related spiritual growth retreat for middle schoolers), The Happening (a Cursillo-related spiritual growth retreat for high schoolers), a middle school retreat, and a high school retreat. Typical attendance at those events would be 30-40. But, due to decreasing revenue and a realignment of priorities,

the youth ministry position was cut in 2016, and the intent was that youth ministry in the diocese would take place in the local churches.

However, it became apparent that only a handful of local churches in the diocese were prepared and equipped for a variety of reasons to host this kind of ministry. In discussions around the diocese Bishop Fitzpatrick began to explore alternative ways that the diocese could sponsor an effective ministry with young people when, in a stroke of luck and inspiration, Darrell Whitaker applied for the open position as Executive Director of Camp Mokule`ia, the diocesan camp located on the north shore of O`ahu and the venue of choice for Hawaiian Episcopalians. Bishop Fitzpatrick quickly became aware of his new camp director's wealth of experience in both camping ministry and youth ministry, as well as his pursuit of excellence, and soon asked Darrell to add initial work on diocesan youth ministry to his portfolio.

In 2019 first steps have been taken in diocesan youth ministry:

- A database of youth, parents, campers, and adults related to youth ministry was initiated,
- Camp staff whose gifts would enable them to also contribute to the fledgling diocesan youth ministry were hired, and
- A diocesan-wide Youth Rally Day was held in April.

But there were still plenty of questions being asked:

- How do we best support a dispersed ministry?
- How can we bring together what people say they want with what is needed?
- How do we strengthen parishes so they are sustainable without staff?
- What do we do about program - sharing a Bible message as part of our mission, as a part of what we do?
- How do we get our youth interested?
- Is diocesan youth ministry the events we host or is it what happens in local churches?
- What are the trends in youth ministry that might carry us into the future that we should be considering?
- Are partnerships needed in diocesan youth ministry?
- How do we gather when there are only one or two to gather?
- How can we improve our camp, then youth ministry in the diocese?
- How can the camp best serve the mission of the diocese?

CAMPING MINISTRY OVERVIEW

At the same time the executive director and his staff were working to advance the ministry of Camp Mokule`ia, which had been to this point predominantly a hosting site. The camp board named a Program Task Force to serve as a sounding board related to the camp's expanding program as well as the early work on the diocesan youth ministry. The first traditional summer camp week was held in 2018 with 40 campers. This was followed in 2019 by 117 campers spread over four weeks of camp, three of which were at Camp Mokule`ia and one on the Big Island. In 2020 this will be expanded to four weeks of summer camp on O`ahu, two day camps on O`ahu, and day camps on both the Big Island and Maui, all while the camp still continues to serve the needs of hosted groups on the grounds of the camp.

Based on previous work with Ministry Architects, the executive director made an inquiry as to whether Ministry Architects could possibly be helpful in these circumstances, paying particular attention to unique Hawaiian culture and Episcopal thought and practice. After much thought,



discussion, and deliberation over a six-month period, Ministry Architects was contracted to help assess the situation, to project a vision for moving forward, and to lead the diocese in building a dynamic, effective, and sustainable youth ministry. What follows in this report are the findings from the listening sessions.

NAMING NORMAL

Normal for Church-Based Youth Ministry

As the diocese seeks to build thriving ministries with middle school and high school youth in churches throughout the state, the following norms can serve as a helpful baseline for normal. These norms are largely descriptive, not prescriptive, so there is no doubt that churches in the diocese will be able to identify quite a few exceptions to these norms.

1. **10% of the Worshipping Congregation**—In a typical church, the size of the youth ministry tends to settle at a number that is around 10% of the worshipping congregation. In other words, a church with an average worship attendance of 100 could expect an average weekly participation of around 10 youth per week.
2. **\$1,500 per Youth**—The typical church invests \$1,500 per youth active on an average week (including program budget, staff salaries, and benefits dedicated to the youth ministry staff). So it would be normal for a church that sustains the involvement of 15 youth on an average week to have a youth ministry budget of approximately \$22,500.
3. **1 Full-Time-Equivalent Staff Person for Every 50 Youth**—The trigger point for hiring a full-time staff person (or full-time-equivalent combination of part time staff people) dedicated to youth ministry seems to be the participation of 50 different youth on an average week.
4. **1 Adult for Every 5 Youth**—Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of “spans of care,” recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five youth on an ongoing basis. According to this norm, a church with 10 youth would require a minimum of 2 adults volunteering in the youth ministry.
5. **20% Ceiling**- Ministry Architects has also discovered that in many churches, the youth ministry has difficulty growing beyond a level that equals 20% of the weekly worshipping congregation. Very few youth ministries seem to be able to break beyond this 20% level.

The key principle here is that effective youth ministry depends more on appropriate investment than on great ideas.

Normal for Youth Ministry In a Diocese

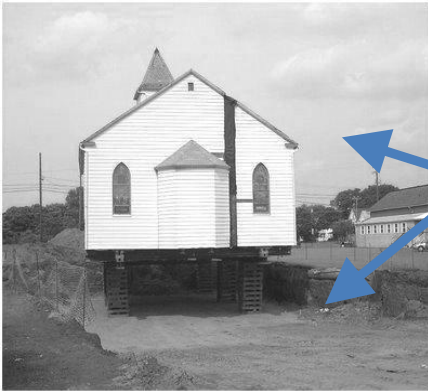
In short, there is no normal other than chronic ineffectiveness and shrinking investment from many dioceses. As a result, most mid-level judicatories are struggling to find traction in youth ministry. A growing number have no staff at all related to children, youth, and young adult ministry, despite the fact that the vast majority of churches are struggling mightily with these ministries.

Many full-time diocesan youth staff positions have become very part-time, and those who continue in full-time work find themselves with vastly expanded job descriptions (i.e., the once “diocesan youth coordinator” assumes responsibility for children, young adults, college ministry, and technology). What is clear is that few, if any, dioceses have identified a staffing model that actually moves the needle in youth ministry.

Those bright spots across the country are often expanding their reach by creative, collaborative, innovative partnerships, rather than by the tried-and-true, grind-it-out diocesan youth coordinator model.

Normal for Strategic Planning: The Parallel Priorities

As the leadership of the Diocese of Hawai'i begins to develop and live into a long-term strategic plan for youth ministry, it will face the challenge of working parallel priorities at the same time:



Laying the Foundation:
Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the diocesan youth ministry's *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,

Continuing to Do Ministry:
Maintaining the *current* youth ministry in a way that builds the enthusiasm of youth, their families, the staff, and the church at large.

Sustainable Staffing for Youth Ministries

We have repeatedly observed that the most stable approach to leading a ministry involves building a team with three different capacities:

- **The Architect:** A person or organization that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan. In diocese ministry, this person or team would be putting together the strategic plan.
- **The General Contractor:** A person or team who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint and ensures that the appropriate number of "laborers" is in place for each stage of the project. In diocese ministry, this would be a ministry manager.
- **The Laborers:** That wide assortment of people with specific gifts, charged with responsibility for particular aspects of the work. For example, a typical laborer in youth ministry might be a worship leader, an event planner, or a small group leader. In diocesan ministry, this would be the communication team, camp staff, volunteers, etc.

When a ministry leader attempts to play all three of these roles at the same time, as is usually the case in almost every judicatory program staff, instability, burnout, and mediocre results are the natural outcomes. A secret to the success of effective ministry teams is clearly defined roles for each team member. In the Diocese of Hawai'i, there is no one serving in the architect or general contractor roles at this time.

ASSETS

Strengths to protect in the diocese

The Rich Culture of Hawai`i

It is with great respect that the rich culture of Hawai`i must be acknowledged, from the Hawaiian connection to the oceans to the awe associated with being part of such a beautiful land, from the connectedness to all living things to the receipt of all created things as a gift, and so much more. The richness of the Hawaiian heart and spirit spills over into the richness of Episcopal traditions and out into the island cities, towns, and villages.

As a place of connection for early Pacific adventurers from Polynesia and other island homes who plied the seas for purposes of trade, so now Hawai`i provides a place of connection for people of many places: indigenous Hawaiians, Asians, Pacific islanders, North Americans, and others who come for many various reasons including to see the beauty, to learn from the sea and land, to engage the people, to retire, to relax, and to re-create. Many are captured by the land and the people and find that they have come to find a home.

A History of Diocesan Youth Ministry

While diocesan youth ministry in the past has ebbed and flowed and at times has been inconsistent, there have been pockets of success to which people look back and say, "There it was! This felt right to us." There are youth who identify life-changing moments and young adults who remember meaningful retreat experiences, snippets of time and space when it seemed that the diocese was doing something right with its youth. A clergyperson said, "We had good events at one time." It might never have seemed perfect, but there were some right things and some not-so-right things.

The hope is that the diocese can learn from both of those whether working to replicate or adapting what seemed right and correct those things that didn't work. At the same time the diocese will want to be open to innovation, particularly since Hawai`i is such a unique place. Youth ministry in this place is likely to be different from that in any other place in the world.

A Desire for Effective Diocesan Youth Ministry

One participant said about the diocesan youth ministry, "There's not one, but a desire by many for having one." The secret is out; every Episcopalian in Hawai`i wants to see effective youth ministry taking place. Individual members, youth, parents, local churches, the bishop, the diocesan governing boards, everyone wants to see the needle move. There have been healthy discussions taking place that have gotten the diocese to this time and place, and it will take much more of that conversation and much more real work in order to move that needle. A member of the camp's program task force said, "If we want to make it happen badly enough, we can make it happen."

In some sense the church feels that it is failing its young people, and it is not willing to just let that happen. The bishop, the clergy, parents, local church leaders, and diocesan officials are striding right into the problem because they want for Hawaiian teenagers what they have known themselves - a life-changing faith experience that is transforming the world.

A Vision for the Diocese

As the diocese goes striding into its innovative work in youth ministry, it has somewhat of a head start through the previous diocesan work to define its overall mission, to establish values by which it would operate, and to name three areas of focus that guide its current work: communication, spiritual formation, and `ohana. One parent said, "There is a real sense of community here. 'Ohana is not necessarily talked about, but it is expressed." It is under this tent

that the diocesan youth ministry may pitch its own tent. And while the youth ministry's foundational documents (mission statement, core values, and three-year goals) may differ to some degree, they will be able to reflect many of the same notions and intentions. According to Bishop Fitzpatrick, "Ohana and spiritual formation lend themselves to youth ministry."

The diocesan youth ministry has a head start because the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i has a good idea of its direction, a vision for its work. That doesn't necessarily mean that every Hawaiian Episcopalian knows what that vision is, nor does it mean that every person who knows it necessarily agrees with it. But it is a vision toward which the diocese can look and hope and dream and plan. It is a vision toward which a new diocesan youth ministry can look for guidance.

Untapped Resources and Partnerships

One asset the listening groups revealed was that there were a number of untapped resources and partnership opportunities that are as yet either unexplored, undeveloped, or under-developed. The first was the possible partnerships with other denominations that could be established. A listening group participant said, "The Lutherans join in." There are relationships that are already in place, for example, as Episcopalian youth attend the national ELCA (Lutheran) youth convention from time to time. And perhaps Lutheran youth are returning the favor by attending the triennial E.Y.E. (national Episcopal Youth Event). Why stop there? This is an avenue for partnership that could be explored from a variety of perspectives, including purposes of retreat experiences, local church youth group experiences, leadership training, and in other ways.

The other untapped resources were in relationships to other Episcopal facilities, particularly at some of the Episcopal-related private schools in Hawai'i. One participant said, "The Christian private schools offer a real opportunity." These facilities could be another resource that might be tapped for either diocesan youth ministry or even related to the expanding camping program.

Supportive Clergy

It was made clear in the listening session that the bandwidth of Episcopal clergy in Hawai'i is stretched pretty thin already and that most are not equipped or ready to do youth ministry themselves. They are highly supportive of the idea of developing a diocesan youth ministry because they seek spiritual development for their parish youth. One contact form respondent stated that the parents and church family's love for our youth was readily apparent.

The clergy see the gap in youth ministry as much as anyone. The lack of youth attendance in their churches is as apparent to them as much as anyone. They are as aware of the needs of teenagers and they want the Church to do something about it.

Some participated in listening groups, some submitted absentee input forms, some will be involved in the visioning work, and some will carry all the way through to seeing the planning come to fruition. The diocese has much to be thankful for in the clergy supportive of the effort in diocesan youth ministry.

Camp Mokule`ia

The camp on the north shore, Camp Mokule`ia, has been "the venue of choice" for Hawaiian Episcopalians since 1947. It is a place that they go to "experience God's Abundance, touch God's Creation, and deeply feel God's presence." It has also been the site of past successes in diocesan youth ministry and is now a place of expanding camping ministry. One clergyperson said, "I had a great experience as a camp chaplain this year." Based on "40 acres of pristine beauty," the camp was rejuvenated in the late 1980s.



Camp Mokule`ia, upholding Christian and Hawaiian values, is dedicated to maintain, develop, sustain and care for its natural resources, offer a safe gathering place for all who enter, and provide for Christian ministry through intentional service to spiritual needs of the Episcopal diocese and the community. (Camp Mokule`ia Vision)

Camp Mokule`ia seems to be the right place from which to launch the new effort in diocesan youth ministry.

A Sense of Something Bigger: `Ohana

Many Hawaiian words add to the vocabulary of people from other places, who often find that Hawaiian concepts have found a way into their thinking. Such is true of the concept of “`ohana.” In our understanding, `ohana is that sense of being part of a larger family, being part of something bigger, part of a larger community, maybe even a higher calling or a broader vision. Perhaps it even incorporates the idea of being part of something greater than oneself, being a part of family in the greatest sense. The clergy expressed this by saying, “`Ohana is the wider family and community,” and “`Ohana means being part of a whole.”

It is in this sense that the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai`i is approaching diocesan youth ministry, with the intent that no member of the diocesan `ohana gets left behind. Every Episcopalian in Hawai`i, including its youth will have the opportunity to both receive and share that faith with the world.

CHALLENGES

Obstacles to moving the diocesan youth ministry strategically forward

Geography: Doing Ministry on an Island Chain

The Diocese of Hawai'i is in a very unique position as it seeks to do ministry while spread across the island chain of the 50th state. While many dioceses are divided into regional groupings, often by way of psychological boundaries presented by major highways, rivers, or mountains, the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i is divided into regions by the Pacific Ocean, resulting in a significant separation of regions in the diocese. One clergyperson said, "Geography is a big deal, our greatest barrier." Of course, this is not an insurmountable separation, but it does present significant issues as the diocese seeks to carry out its work. This may be even more so as it relates to a diocesan youth ministry.

- **Travel** - In order for youth and their adult leaders to physically participate in diocesan-wide events, they must travel between islands. It's just a part of life in Hawai'i. But it presents concerns related to safety, logistics, and cost. And, of course, travel to the mainland is a whole other matter.
- **Financing** - The separation of islands increases the costs of diocesan-wide events and meetings, which can create a financial burden on individuals, churches, and the diocese. One form respondent said, "Being an island chain, it is financially difficult to bring all youth together."
- **Tendency to Focus on O`ahu** - Because 80% of the state's population, over 50% of the Episcopal churches, Camp Mokule`ia, and the diocesan headquarters are located on O`ahu, there has been a tendency to focus ministry efforts there. One group participant said, "Going to Oahu all the time is tiresome. We're an island chain."
- **Island Identities** - The separation of islands in the chain has given rise to distinct characteristics of each island. Factors of topography, population size, ethnic backgrounds, real estate development, and other influences have caused each island to have its own mindset and to see its own place in the whole of the state. One camp staff person said, "People on different islands will look for different things."

It is indeed a unique setting for doing ministry, but it also presents a tremendous opportunity to bring people together as a larger family to accomplish great things.

Called and Equipped Youth Workers

Another challenge the diocese faces is that there are not enough youth ministry volunteers in the congregations and therefore, that plays out in the diocesan programming. One person said, "Finding people who want to serve as leaders is a huge challenge." At the same time, a participant mentioned an even bigger challenge, "Finding someone who is *enthusiastic* about working with youth." Added to that is the lack of training for lay volunteers. A clergy person shared, "Adults don't feel empowered to teach the faith," while another one said that volunteers have a hard time "overcoming feelings of inadequacy." The laity do not feel equipped or prepared to lead youth ministry. So many of them already serve in other ways and are stretched as volunteers.

Lack of Critical Mass

One of the challenges that many churches face is the lack of youth in their congregations. In different ways, it was said many times in the listening sessions, "We just don't have the kids." One participant stated, "Only two or three churches actually have youth groups larger than five youth." A clergy person said, "We only have 3 or 4 youth at my church." Many churches in the diocese have no youth. There is a lack of critical mass of youth in the majority of the

congregations in the EDOH. Therefore, programming at the parish level, let alone the diocesan level, is very difficult. Many struggle with how to attract young people to the church and when they are there, how to plan a program for them.

Starting From Scratch

When asked about what they loved about diocesan youth ministry, one participant said, "It's hard to know because it has been awhile since we offered something." Even though there is a history of youth ministry, the camp executive director said, "We are starting over from scratch." No programming has happened for several years. In just the past year, the executive director has tripled the attendance at Camp Mokule`ia from 40 to 117 children and youth. The camp also hosted a Youth Rally Day in April in which 30 youth attended. This is great news! But there are no plans for any additional youth events for 2019. The only items calendared at this point for 2020 are camp sessions and sending a group of youth to E.Y.E. Essentially the diocese is creating youth ministry from a clean slate.

Needed Focus on Spiritual Formation for Youth

One clergyperson proclaimed, "If you're a priest, I sure hope you're working on spiritual formation!" While the desire to do something for youth of the diocese is on the minds and hearts of many, it is apparent that more needs to be done to develop an understanding of spiritual formation in the lives and faith of teenagers. How do you start? What are the steps? How do you help teenagers move along this journey of faith, and how will you know when they have arrived? While this journey is different for every person, because every person is different, there are some similarities in most every faith journey and some generalizations that can be drawn about faith development in teenagers, even in such a unique place as Hawai'i.

This is a challenge in which the diocesan head start in the focus on spiritual formation will be very helpful. And further work in understanding the spiritual formation of youth will likely produce dividends in how the diocese understands spiritual formation in general.

Terminal Uniqueness

Time is a precious commodity. Parents named this as one of the biggest hindrances to their youth being involved at the church level. One parent named it by saying, "Time will be a factor." Another obstacle named by a parent was, "There's lots of competition for kids, lots of private schools. It's hard to attract kids away from that." A clergy person shared, "Youth who were participating in children's ministries are now too busy with sports and other activities."

Many participants, either in the listening sessions or in the survey responses, suffered from a perception disorder called "terminal uniqueness," focusing intensely on the "unique" challenging factors facing youth.

- Multiple schools making it difficult for youth to feel connected
- Youth with packed schedules who are therefore unable to participate regularly
- Youth attending schools that demand high levels of performance, including multiple hours of homework each night
- Being a church full of dual income adults who don't have time to volunteer

The fact is that none of these challenges are even remotely unique to this diocese. The majority of these factors are present in almost every successful youth ministry in our country. The church and diocese needs to make the decision to not point to these factors as the reasons for a less than effective program.

Murky Vision

Seen in the questions above, there are a lot of different issues, ideas, and opportunities that present themselves as the diocese explores what to do in youth ministry. For some, diocesan youth ministry would be all about diocese-wide events. For others, it would all take place locally on the respective islands. For yet others, it would all be about following the latest trends or finding the latest youth ministry tricks in order to attract young people. The hopes and dreams are all over the map:

- I don't want to let the teenagers slip away.
- I hope these youth can learn life-long lessons and feel confident in their morals as children of God.
- They need to feel like God is always with them no matter where they go and what they choose to do.
- I hope they feel empowered and have courage to speak out about injustices and base their arguments on God's Word.
- I hope they can truly ask themselves seriously "What would Jesus do?" when making big life decisions.
- That they have a heart connection with the way and love of Jesus.
- That they find a group that supports their growth in Christ.
- That there are more activities.
- That the youth in the diocese would experience God's love at a deeper level of understanding so that they'd be willing to go out and tell someone who needs to hear it.
- That youth would jump at the opportunity to fellowship with one another.
- I hope for the youth to have more members.
- Interaction with all youth from varying backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and location, coming together as one Church and being able to grow as a youth community throughout the entire diocese - making connections that last their whole lives.
- I would like to see the youth becoming more leaders in their lives but with a tender and thoughtful way.
- I'd like to see them carry on the different ministries and have fun and be successful.

But every vision has to eventually find expression in strategic development, financing, staff structures, and organizational flow. And if the diocese is not clear on what the vision for diocesan youth ministry is, it will have difficulty applying the right financial, people, and organizational resources in the right places to get the job done.

Given the geography of the diocese, it is completely understandable how different visions for diocesan youth ministry have developed. And it is easy to see why providing a diocesan youth ministry has been such a monumental task over the course of years. But without a workable compelling vision, the diocese will not know how to plan, budget, staff, and structure effective ministry by, with, to, and for its young people.

Absence of Diocesan Youth Staff

It is clear from the listening sessions that clergy, young adults who participated in youth programs as youth, camp staff, and the bishop are feeling the absence of a diocesan youth staff person. "Not having dedicated staff" was named by many survey participants as one of the biggest challenges the diocese faces. Because the bishop was in great need of clergy assistance, the diocesan youth staff position was cut in 2016, and a canon was hired in its place. This has brought relief to the bishop's full schedule which was necessary. But it has left a gap.

The clergy feel the pressure to fill that gap but one clergy person said, “We all work very hard and we are all stretched very thin.” One parent acknowledged this by saying, “The clergy are doing as much as they can.” So there is currently no one to fill this gap. In the absence of diocesan youth staff, there has been an absence of diocesan youth programming. Conversations and planning for diocesan youth ministry began when the new camp executive director was hired. The challenge is that the executive director cannot add rebuilding a diocesan youth ministry to his already full plate.

RECOMMENDATIONS OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

1. Support the ministry of Camp Mokule`ia by staying in regular communication throughout this process and clarifying running lanes for collaborative and/or overlapping projects.
2. Build the ship before hiring its captain.
3. Combine the systems that ensure sustainability with a willingness to embrace disruptive innovation.
4. Focus *less* on the structure of programs and *more* on the structure of connections.
5. Cultivate an innovative ethos around youth ministry in the diocese, choosing to:
 - Prototype and iterate.
 - Give up on THE answer or THE model.
 - Resist returning to comfortable categories that have failed to produce desired results
 - Provide latitude for the development of communication channels and innovative programs that may not naturally fit into the diocese's current structure (the books, *Orbiting the Giant Hairball* and *Innovator's Dilemma* can serve as a reference point).

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a prayer team to undergird the strategic plan introduced in this document.
2. Confirm that youth ministry is a priority for the EDOH by reviewing this report and the visioning documents with the Diocesan Council, asking for their support of the work and committing to continue to keep this group aware of progress being made throughout the process.
3. Set apart the next three years (through August 2022) as a time of deliberate focus on building a vital, sustainable, robust youth ministry plan throughout the EDOH.
4. Recruit a Diocesan Youth Ministry Design Team (5-7 people) to serve as the team to implement these recommendations and be responsible for the work of the timeline. Consider this team transitioning to a standing youth committee for the diocese later in the process.
5. Establish the following as components that comprise the diocesan youth ministry (also presented in the table below):
 - a. Camp Mokule`ia
 - b. Diocesan-wide youth events
 - i. One diocesan-wide youth event on even years held on O`ahu
 - ii. One diocesan-wide youth event on odd years held on another island, rotating islands each time
 - c. A week-long summer event following this rotation:
 - i. E.Y.E
 - ii. Mission experience
 - iii. Ecumenical gathering or Province VIII event
 - d. Regional youth events held on each island

- e. Training for youth workers
- f. Church support: small church youth ministry, parent/family ministry, resources

Suggested Six-year Implementation Plan for Diocesan Youth Events

Year/Component	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Camp Mokule`ia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Week-long event (summer)	E.Y.E.	Mission Experience	Ecum./Prov 8 Gathering	E.Y.E.	Mission Experience	Ecum./Prov 8 Gathering
Youth event on O`ahu	X		X		X	
Youth event - other island		X		X		X
Regional youth event			X	X	X	X
Annual training for youth workers	X	X	X	X	X	X

- 6. Organize work into three phases:
 - a. Phase One: Laying the Foundation
 - b. Phase Two: Building the First Floor
 - c. Phase Three: Adding the Second Floor

PHASE ONE: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

- To unify youth, workers, and ministries throughout the diocese around a new, common, exciting vision, invite EDOH youth, youth workers, clergy, and other invested individuals to participate in a multi-session, onsite process of visioning (scheduled September 13-14, 2019) a new future for the youth ministry with Ministry Architects, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministry:
 - A ministry mission statement
 - A statement of values
 - A set of three-year revolving goals, and one-year corresponding benchmarks
- Include a copy of this report on the diocesan website.
- Provide quarterly reports to present to the Diocesan Council to demonstrate what is being accomplished.
- Calendar strategic presentation dates:
 - A presentation of the Assessment Report to stakeholders on September 13, 2019 (at the beginning of the Visioning Summit)
 - A presentation of an Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan to Diocesan Council (September 21, 2019)



- A presentation of an Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan to the Diocesan Convention (October 26, 2019)
- Invite the Design Team to participate in a Quick Start Summit (led virtually by Ministry Architects) in which the renovation process is launched and the pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The Summit tackles the items that need to be done first and builds momentum for the youth ministry renovation process.
- Calendar meeting dates for the next year for the Design Team.
- Establish data management for youth workers, ministries, and churches in the diocese. Create a pro-active process for collecting, maintaining, and updating contact information of all youth workers (regardless of position or paid status) in the diocese on an annual basis. Develop a robust, nimble database of 500 contacts who can easily be sorted by at least the following categories:
 - All paid youth staff in churches
 - All youth ministry volunteers who have participated in a diocesan youth program
 - Veteran youth workers willing to serve as mentors
 - All clergy passionate about youth ministry
 - All college students considering a call to ministry
 - All chaplains at the Episcopal private schools
 - All seminary students engaged in the call process
 - Everyone on the Rally Day registration list
 - All teenagers serving in leadership roles in their churches or diocese
 - All past diocesan youth ministry staff
 - All diocesan staff who touch youth ministry
 - All camping ministry staff
 - All Camp Mokule`ia participants
- Complete a census of churches in the diocese to identify which churches are doing what kinds of programs/events/trips with youth.
- Establish a system for capturing contact information for every youth who registers for Camp Mokule`ia or other youth events and for their parents.
- Begin to develop a resource projection of the staffing and budget resources needed to implement this strategic plan.
- Create a master diocesan youth ministry calendar, with programs and events scheduled 18 months in advance. Make hard copies of this available throughout the year and updated regularly as advance planning continues. Make an online version easily accessible to anyone in the diocese, ensuring that youth workers in particular are aware of this resource, thereby allowing churches the time they need to include diocese programs and events in their ministry calendars.
- Build a robust communications process for the youth ministry in the diocese, including:
 - A monthly email sent from the diocese with just youth and camping events, resources, etc., targeted to youth, youth workers and clergy

- Include monthly stories from local churches of effective youth ministry in the diocese.
- A plan to intentionally and regularly communicate with youth workers in ways and times beyond monthly emails (social media, website, text, etc.).
- The building of an audience of at least 500 stakeholders in youth ministry, easily sortable by area of interest and engagement.
- Targeted marketing plans to ensure achievement of participation goals for all diocese-sponsored, youth ministry initiatives.
- Intentional social media campaigns.
- Utilize the diocesan communications staff to help create and manage.
- As a part of the new communication plan and strategy, develop an online support system that moves the diocesan youth website and social media accounts from a space to just hear about events to a space which also allows and encourages individuals to find support, share successes and challenges, be known by others in the diocese, and receive ideas and feedback for their own ministry context.
- Establish an intentional recruitment process. Create a clear and complete list of volunteer needs. Create a “fishing pond” list of at least 30 possible volunteers to call on for volunteer positions at diocesan events.

PHASE TWO: BUILDING THE FIRST FLOOR

- Gather a group of stakeholders for a Spiritual Formation Summit to discuss the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing curriculum, milestones and special programming.
 - Develop a long-range scope and sequence as well as a set of core competencies for youth ministry programming.
 - Develop a clear plan for milestones and special events to shape the faith formation through the ages and stages.
 - Establish a process for how to choose curriculum
 - Develop a plan for sharing this information with all congregations in the diocese.
- Staffing and Funding
 - Propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan for the youth ministry that will provide the diocese with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of youth. The target date for a hire is 2022.
 - Research alternative ways for the diocese to receive additional funding to support programs and events, as well as help offset costs for diocesan programs and events for, and possibly assist in resourcing, individual churches. This will include considering exploring grants and scholarships available for the diocese and churches, reaching out to major donors for financial support, and examining ways to reduce expenses for diocese programs and events.
 - Propose a program budget for diocesan youth events, regional youth events, as well as the week-long events (E.Y.E., mission experience, Province VIII event)

- Support for Churches
 - Plan a series of training events for youth workers in the diocese. Focus training on key challenges, such as volunteer recruiting, communication, leadership development, and curriculum. Present alternative models and new prototypes for the future of youth ministry, particularly highlighting ways of programming beyond a traditional single-church, Sunday morning, youth group structure. Consider partnering with and promoting existing events which already exist in the diocese. A suggested schedule:
 - September 2020: Building a sustainable youth ministry regardless of the number of youth in your church
 - September 2021: Building a spiritual formation plan for your children and youth
 - Support youth workers, and their work within their individual churches, by teaching strategies and making resources available which help youth ministries become more fully integrated into the life of their congregation. This will include expanded communication practices, more active, visible roles for youth in worship and other church-wide events/programs, and their inclusion on leadership teams and the planning processes of the church.
- Create a game plan for establishing a model for regional youth ministry on each island. This plan will include identifying volunteer leadership on each island and developing regional youth ministry based on the needs of that particular island.
- As these connections are established and developed throughout Phase Two, continue to evaluate and ensure that the infrastructure is in place to support current needs, as well as future growth, on the diocesan level.
 - Draw on and apply the latest research on “Growing Young” churches that “disproportionately invest in the young.”
 - Establish a plan that will provide the volunteer capacity necessary to sustain the diocese’s youth ministry to a targeted number of youth and churches.
 - Explore new processes for sustaining healthy economic engines for youth ministry, in light of the fiscal realities facing churches today.

PHASE THREE: ADDING THE SECOND FLOOR

- Resources for Churches
 - Create a folder, in both hard copy and electronic/online forms, for all youth workers and churches in the diocese that includes an 18 month calendar for all youth and camping programs, contact information for diocesan and camp leadership, FAQs for those new to ministry, how to get connected to the diocesan communications, diocesan recommendations on safe-guarding practices, and information on Episcopal theology.
 - Develop a user-friendly, easily accessible, on-line youth ministry “resource hub” that provides churches with what they need to establish sustainable youth ministries, including (but not limited to):
 - Easily downloadable games, curriculum, videos, and music for youth leaders.

- A list of recommended vendors for catering, t-shirts, transportation, etc.
- A list of all the opportunities for service and mission for young people in and throughout the diocese
- A Resource Bank for sharing and exchange that includes:
 - Curriculum
 - Partnering on Trips and Retreats
 - Sports Equipment
 - A Meeting Space
 - A Youth Band
 - Web or Design Expertise
 - Youth Ministry Manual Templates
 - Parent Ministry Resources
 - Confirmation Resources
- Templates for all-things youth ministry including:
 - Release forms
 - Safe-guarding God's Children Policy
 - Job descriptions
 - Calendars
 - Sample youth group schedules
 - Major event notebook templates
 - Fundraising
- Youth Leader Training Modules (online)
 - How to grow a youth ministry
 - Leveraging Transitions (Elementary to middle school; middle school to high school; high school to college)
 - Cultivating Sticky Faith
 - Turning First-Timers Into Regulars
 - Leading Instead of Leaving: Secrets to Retaining Older Youth
 - How to Design and Launch a Pre-Teen Ministry
 - From Zero to Something: Reaching Youth When You Have None
 - Thriving small church youth ministry
 - How to start a parent ministry
- Design and implement a coaching program for leaders who do not yet have youth in their congregations but are committed to the next generation.
- Incubate connective structures for youth and youth workers considering a variety of these alternatives or others determined by the Design Team (all could be coached, tracked, and supported by Ministry Architects):
 - Camping Ministry Champion Team: two adults representing youth ministry, one adult representing campus ministry, and four teenagers from different churches

- Youth Leadership Cohort: A group of 10-20 high school students engaged in a two-year cohort that trains them in the fundamentals of Christian leadership and coaches them in investing back in their home congregations
 - A multicultural cohort of youth and adults from a variety of ethnicities and economic backgrounds
 - A study of the book “Growing Young” as a resource for congregations throughout the diocese
 - Collaborative clusters of churches doing youth ministry together
 - Support and connectivity structures specifically for churches with less than ten youth.
 - Support and connectivity structures specifically for churches with 11-35 youth.
 - Support and connectivity structures specifically for churches with more than 35 youth.
 - A summer collaborative youth ministry within an island.
 - A transportation co-op allowing churches with limited options for transportation to formally partner with churches that have vans that might be shared.
 - A short-term missions arm of youth ministry that offers groups of churches (both within the diocese and outside it) short-term mission opportunities, including housing, meals, and work projects within the diocese.
- Conduct a thorough search and hire new diocesan youth ministry staff based on the staffing model adopted in Phase Two.
 - Launch the well-planned regional youth ministry on each of the five islands.
 - Transition the Design Team to a more permanent leadership team (Diocesan Youth Council) including youth, to evaluate current diocesan wide offerings, including consideration of venues, speakers and worship leaders, themes, budget, calendars for schools and churches, and similar programs offered by other ministries/organizations. Based on this feedback, target, design, and promote future diocesan wide events 18 months in advance, and in coordination with other diocesan activities planned on the regional levels.
 - After a year of iterating and prototyping, reshape the structure of the youth ministry (as needed) to a structure that has proven over the previous year to be more effective in executing and promoting excellent ministry and building vital connections between stakeholders in the youth and camping ministries. Create a new timeline that outlines any changes being made.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The following provides the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i with a timeline that can serve as a beginning blueprint for the strategic launch of a sustainable youth ministry focus throughout the diocese. The timeline, organized by quarters provides a sequencing plan for implementing the recommendations of this report over the coming three years.

PHASE ONE: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

September - November 2019

Focus: Strategic Plan Details, Presentation to Diocesan Council and Convention

- A prayer team to undergird the strategic plan in this document has been recruited.
- The Diocesan Youth Ministry Design Team has been recruited (5-7 representatives) and the first meeting has been scheduled to take place.
- A shared folder has been created (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.) to house all documents related to this effort.
- A Vision Summit has taken place resulting in the following documents:
 - A ministry mission statement
 - A statement of values
 - A set of three-year revolving goals, and one-year corresponding benchmarks
- This report and the vision documents have been presented to the Diocesan Council asking for their support of the work and committing to continue to keep this group aware of progress being made throughout the process.
 - In coordination with the diocesan communications staff, a plan for distributing and making available this assessment report and the visioning documents in hard and electronic versions has been created and implemented.
 - A copy of this report has been added to the diocese website.
- Strategic planning dates have been scheduled:
 - A presentation of the Assessment Report to stakeholders on September 13, 2019 (at the beginning of the Visioning Summit)
 - A presentation of an Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan to Diocesan Council (September 21, 2019)
 - A presentation of an Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan to the Diocesan Convention (October 26, 2019)
- The suggested six-year plan has been adopted.
- A Quick Start Summit (led virtually by Ministry Architects) has taken place in which the renovation process is launched and the pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed.
- Design Team meeting dates have been set for the next 12 months.
- A master diocesan youth ministry calendar has been created and published, with programs and events scheduled 18 months in advance. Hard copies of this are made available throughout the year and updated regularly as advance planning continues. An online version is easily accessible to anyone in the diocese, ensuring that youth workers in particular are aware of this resource, thereby allowing churches the time they need to include diocese programs and events in their ministry calendars.

December 2019 - February 2020

Focus: Database

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- A game plan for creating a database of youth ministry stakeholders in the diocese has been created and integrated into the diocese's database, including:
 - All paid youth staff in churches
 - All youth ministry volunteers who have participated in a diocesan youth program
 - Veteran youth workers willing to serve as mentors
 - All clergy passionate about youth ministry
 - All college students considering a call to ministry
 - All chaplains at the Episcopal private schools
 - All seminary students engaged in the call process
 - Everyone on the Rally Day registration list
 - All teenagers serving in leadership roles in their churches or diocese
 - All past diocesan youth ministry staff
 - All diocesan staff who touch youth ministry
 - All camping ministry staff
 - All Camp Mokule`ia participants
- A census of churches in the diocese to identify which churches are doing what kinds of programs/events/trips with youth has been completed.
- A process for collecting data from all Camp Mokule`ia participants and adding them to the diocesan youth ministry database has been established.

March - May 2020

Focus: Communications and Marketing

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- Build a robust communications process for the youth ministry in the diocese, including:
 - A monthly email sent from the diocese with just youth and camping events, resources, etc., targeted to youth, youth workers and clergy
 - Include monthly stories of effective youth ministry in the diocese.
 - A plan to intentionally and regularly communicate with youth workers in ways and times beyond monthly emails (social media, website, text, etc.).
 - The building of an audience of at least 1,000 stakeholders in youth ministry, easily sortable by area of interest and engagement.
 - Targeted marketing plans to ensure achievement of participation goals for all diocese-sponsored, youth ministry initiatives.
 - Intentional social media campaigns.
 - Utilize the diocesan communications staff to help create and manage.
- As a part of the new communication plan and strategy, an online support system has been developed that moves the diocesan youth website and social media accounts from a space to just hear about events to a space which also allows and encourages individuals to find support, share successes and challenges, be known by others in the diocese, and receive ideas and feedback for their own ministry context.

June - August 2020

Focus: Volunteer Recruitment

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- An intentional recruitment process has been established that includes a fishing pond of at least 30 potential volunteers.
- A pro-active process for collecting, maintaining, and updating contact information for all youth workers (regardless of position or paid status) in the diocese on an annual basis has been created.
- A first draft of a resource projection of the staffing and budget resources needed to implement this strategic plan has been created.

PHASE TWO: BUILDING THE FIRST FLOOR

September - November 2020

Focus: Training

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- A training event for youth workers in the diocese has taken place that focused on equipping youth workers to build sustainable youth ministries in their own churches.
- Youth workers, and their work within their individual churches, has been supported by teaching strategies and making resources available which help youth ministries become more fully integrated into the life of their congregation. Expanded communication practices, more active, visible roles for youth in worship and other church-wide events/programs, their inclusion on leadership teams and the planning processes of the church have helped ensure this support.

December 2020 - February 2021

Focus: Spiritual Formation

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- A group of stakeholders gathered for a Spiritual Formation Summit to discuss the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing curriculum, milestones and special programming.
- A long-range scope and sequence was developed as well as a set of core competencies for youth ministry programming.
- A clear plan for milestones and special events was developed to shape the faith formation through the ages and stages.
- A process for how to choose curriculum was established
- A plan for sharing this information with all congregations in the diocese was developed.

March - May 2021

Focus: Staffing and Funding

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- All database information for youth and camping ministries has been updated by the end of the school year.

- A clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan has been proposed for the youth ministry that will provide the diocese with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of youth. The target date for a hire is 2022.
- Alternative ways have been researched for the diocese to receive additional funding to support programs and events, as well as help offset costs for diocesan programs and events for, and possibly assist in resourcing, individual churches. This will include considering exploring grants and scholarships available for the diocese and churches, reaching out to major donors for financial support, and examining ways to reduce expenses for diocese programs and events.
 - A program budget has been proposed for diocesan youth events, regional youth events, as well as the week-long events (E.Y.E., mission experience, Province VII event)
- An 18 month calendar of diocesan youth events has been created.

June - August 2021

Focus: Regional Youth Ministry

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- A game plan has been created for establishing a model for regional youth ministry on each island. This plan included identifying volunteer leadership on each island and developing regional youth ministry based on the needs of that particular island.
- As these connections have been established and developed throughout Phase Two, the diocese has continued to evaluate and ensure that the infrastructure is in place to support current needs, as well as future growth, on the diocesan level.
 - Draw on and apply the latest research on “Growing Young” churches that “disproportionately invest in the young.”
 - Establish a plan that will provide the volunteer capacity necessary to sustain the diocese’s youth ministry to a targeted number of youth and churches.
 - Explore new processes for sustaining healthy economic engines for youth ministry, in light of the fiscal realities facing churches today.

PHASE THREE: ADDING THE SECOND FLOOR

September - November 2021

Focus: Training and Search

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- A training on the Spiritual Formation Plan developed by the diocese has taken place and churches are equipped with an outline to create their own spiritual formation plans in their own congregations.
- A coaching program has been designed and implemented for leaders who do not yet have youth in their congregations but are committed to the next generation.
- A search for diocesan youth ministry staff has begun.

December 2021 - February 2022

Focus: Resources for Churches, Staff Hire



- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- The new diocesan youth ministry staff has been hired.
- Collaboration with the diocesan communications staff has occurred to create and produce a youth worker ministry folder in hard and electronic/online forms for all diocesan youth workers that includes:
 - 18 month calendar for all youth/camping programs
 - Contact information for diocese and district level leadership
 - FAQs for those new to ministry
 - How to get connected to the diocese communications
 - Diocesan recommendations on safe-guarding practices
 - Basic information on Episcopal theology.
- A user-friendly, easily accessible, on-line youth ministry “resource hub” has been developed that provides churches with what they need to establish sustainable youth ministries, including (but not limited to):
 - Easily downloadable games, curriculum, videos, and music for youth leaders.
 - A list of recommended vendors for catering, t-shirts, transportation, etc.
 - A list of all the opportunities for service and mission for young people in and throughout the diocese
 - A Resource Bank for sharing and exchange that includes:
 - Curriculum
 - Partnering on Trips and Retreats
 - Sports Equipment
 - A Meeting Space
 - A Youth Band
 - Web or Design Expertise
 - Youth Ministry Manual Templates
 - Parent Ministry Resources
 - Confirmation Resources
- Templates for all-things youth ministry including:
 - Release forms
 - Safe-guarding God’s Children Policy
 - Job descriptions
 - Calendars
 - Sample youth group schedules
 - Major event notebook templates
 - Fundraising
- Youth Leader Training Modules (online)
 - How to grow a youth ministry
 - Leveraging Transitions (Elementary to middle school; middle school to high school; high school to college)
 - Cultivating Sticky Faith
 - Turning First-Timers Into Regulars
 - Leading Instead of Leaving: Secrets to Retaining Older Youth

- How to Design and Launch a Pre-Teen Ministry
- From Zero to Something: Reaching Youth When You Have None
- Thriving small church youth ministry
- How to start a parent ministry

March - May 2022

Focus: Incubating and Prototyping

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- Connective structures have been incubated and prototyped for youth and youth workers considering a variety of these alternatives or others determined by the Design Team (all could be coached, tracked, and supported by Ministry Architects):
 - Camping Ministry Champion Team: two adults representing youth ministry, one adult representing campus ministry, and four teenagers from different churches
 - Youth Leadership Cohort: A group of 10-20 high school students engaged in a two-year cohort that trains them in the fundamentals of Christian leadership and coaches them in investing back in their home congregations
 - A multicultural cohort of youth and adults from a variety of ethnicities and economic backgrounds
 - A study of the book “Growing Young” as a resource for congregations throughout the diocese
 - Collaborative clusters of churches doing youth ministry together
 - Support and connectivity structures specifically for churches with less than ten youth.
 - Support and connectivity structures specifically for churches with 11-35 youth.
 - Support and connectivity structures specifically for churches with more than 35 youth.
 - A summer collaborative youth ministry within an island.
 - A transportation co-op allowing churches with limited options for transportation to formally partner with churches that have vans that might be shared.
 - A short-term missions arm of youth ministry that offers groups of churches (both within the diocese and outside it) short-term mission opportunities, including housing, meals, and work projects within the diocese.
- The regional youth ministry plan has been launched.

June - August 2022

Focus: Review, Reshape

- A report has been given to the Diocesan Council
- Preventative maintenance calendars have been finalized and implemented.
- Game plans have been put in place to sustain the processes and procedures implemented during the past three years.
- The Design Team has transitioned to a more permanent leadership team (Diocesan Youth Council) including youth, to evaluate current diocesan wide offerings, including consideration of venues, speakers and worship leaders, themes, budget, calendars for



schools and churches, and similar programs offered by other ministries/organizations. Based on this feedback, target, design, and promote future diocesan wide events 18 months in advance, and in coordination with other diocesan activities planned on the regional levels.

- After a period of time of iteration and prototyping, the structure of the diocesan youth ministry has been reshaped (as needed) to a structure that has proven over the previous year to be more effective in executing and promoting excellent ministry and building vital connections between stakeholders in the youth and camping ministries. A new timeline that outlines any changes being made has been created.

The *Ministry Architects* Team Serving The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai`i, Honolulu, HI



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Sara is a life-long Episcopalian having grown up in Memphis, Tennessee, the land of Elvis. She has been in professional youth ministry since 1993 serving Episcopal churches in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. While no longer in full-time paid ministry, she serves the children and youth at her own congregation in Louisville, KY where she currently resides. She's been part of the Ministry Architects team since 2006 as a Lead Consultant and the Search Manager.

Sara's husband Geoff works at the University of Louisville (go Cards!) and they have a teen daughter as well as two dogs. Butterflies are a significant symbol of her faith journey – you'll find them everywhere in her home. Anyone who guesses correctly how many there are gets a prize!



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Retired in 2015, after 32 years of pastoral ministry in the United Methodist Church, David is visiting a different church every week, a valuable experience for immersing himself in the styles and practices of the modern Church. In retirement, David also pursued his passion for camping ministry, having joined the staff of Camp Lake Stephens near Oxford, MS, as its Director of Development for a number of years. He currently pursues his passion for ministry, and for youth ministry particularly, through his expanded work with Ministry Architects. His lifetime work in youth ministry includes work in the local church as youth worker and pastor, at the regional level, and through his association with the camping ministries of Mississippi Methodism. David graduated from Millsaps College in Jackson, MS, with a B.A. in Sociology, then from Emory University's Candler School of Theology with a Masters of Divinity degree. David is married to Laura, and they have three children, Ben, Kathryn, and Mary Evelyn. He loves the outdoors, travelling with his family, playing golf when he shoots under 95, his awesome back porch, and a good cup of coffee.

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Bryant began working in youth ministry in 1996 in the United Methodist Church. He has been worship speaker for summer camps, taught seminars for youth workers, and written curriculum for the Florida United Methodist Camping programs. Bryant graduated from Florida Southern College with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology. In his free time Bryant enjoys all things technology, exercise, good movies, and blogs at thepostlu.de. He and his wife, Tonya, live in Kernersville, NC.