

Young People’s Connectional Network: Basic Information and Application Process

This information regarding the Young People’s Connectional Network is intended to be basic. It is designed to help church leaders become familiar with and share information about the group, especially during the application and selection process that will take place from May 2024 until August 2024.

This document has been translated using artificial intelligence into English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Kiswahili, and Russian.

For additional information, please contact Chris Wilterdink,
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Who We Are

The Young People's Connectional Network (YPCN) is a worldwide representative body of The United Methodist Church for young people. The work of the YPCN is outlined in the 1200 paragraphs in the 2020/2024 *Book of Discipline*. The YPCN is forming for the first time in 2024 following General Conference. The YPCN is an evolution of the previous denominational body for young people (the Division on Ministries with Young People or DMYP). Outlined below are some important changes.

The purpose of the YPCN is to advocate for the full participation of young people in all levels of The United Methodist Church, build global partnerships, and empower young people to make world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ. Our administrative order includes:

1. To advocate for the varied concerns of all young people;
2. To assist in planning and carrying out a quadrennial global young people's gathering;
3. To provide administrative oversight of grants for ministries with young people distributed in consultation with the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, and General Board of Higher Education and Ministry;
4. To promote grants for ministries with young people and the Youth Service Fund;
5. To recommend young people to nomination committees of general boards and agencies;
6. To collaborate with boards and agencies to provide young people with opportunities to listen, discern, and respond to their vocational call, whether laity or clergy.
7. To encourage the participation of young people in denominational, ecumenical, and inter-religious relationships and deliberations

**UMC 2020/24 Book of Discipline ¶ 1202*

Membership

The membership of the YPCN who have “voice and vote” is regional, with the regions defined as “the Americas, Europe, Africa, and the Philippines.” Two youth from each of those regions (8 total), two young adults from each region (8 total), and one adult leader from each region will be selected to serve a quadrennial term (4 years) on the YPCN. The selection process does allow up to four additional members to be invited to ensure inclusiveness and equity.

Membership on the YPCN with “voice and vote” is as follows:

- 8 youth (2 from each region)
- 8 young adults (2 from each region)
- 4 adult workers (1 from each region)
- 4 “balancing” members to ensure inclusiveness and equity
- 1 member of the Discipleship Ministries Board of Directors (chosen by their board)
- 1 bishop Selected by the Council of Bishops
- 26 total members with voice and vote

AGE CATEGORIES

- You are a "YOUTH" living inside the US if you are between the ages of 12-18 years old prior to July 31, 2024.
- You are a "YOUTH" living outside the US if you are between the ages of 15-24 years old prior to July 31, 2024.
- You are a "YOUNG ADULT" living in the US if you are between the ages of 19-30 prior to July 31, 2024.
- You are a "YOUNG ADULT" living outside the US if you are between the ages of 25-35 years old prior to July 31, 2024.
- You are an "ADULT LEADER" anywhere in the world, as long as you are directly serving in ministry with the age groups defined as "YOUTH" or "YOUNG ADULT."

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Have a government-issued ID and a current passport or the ability to obtain a passport. Some meetings are virtual, and some meetings are in-person. These meetings may be in the United States or other countries.
- Be an active member of a local United Methodist Church and able to confirm membership.
- Be willing to attend multiple meetings each year. Some are in-person and require travel. Others are online and require a working internet connection.
- Be willing to work between meetings to understand the needs of young people in your context and advocate for the inclusion of young voices in decision-making bodies of the UMC.
- The primary working language of the YPCN is English. Translation at meetings and in written documents will be provided, as necessary.

Additional Participants in YPCN

The YPCN will invite additional attendees to participate in its proceedings as resources and connection points throughout the UMC. These resource people will participate at the cost of their own sending agency, and they do not have votes.

1. Staff of Young People's Ministries
2. An Associate General Secretary from Discipleship Ministries
3. A representative from each of the following agencies and groups, chosen from within their own staff or own board of directors
 - A. General Board of Church and Society
 - B. General Board of Discipleship
 - C. General Board of Global Ministries
 - D. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
 - E. General Board of Pension and Health Benefits
 - F. General Commission on Archives and History
 - G. General Commission on Religion and Race
 - H. General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
 - I. General Commission on United Methodist Men
 - J. General Council on Finance and Administration
 - K. Connectional Table
 - L. United Methodist Communications
 - M. United Methodist Publishing House
 - N. United Women in Faith (United Methodist Women)

When Are Meetings?

The YPCN does get to set its meeting dates and times once it is organized. The schedule that follows is approximate. Meetings may be in-person or online using video conferencing services. YPCN members may also attend two large-scale events organized by Young People's Ministries.

Again, this is a draft meeting schedule. All dates are subject to change. There will be a virtual organizing meeting in late 2024. The first in-person meeting will be in early January 2025. The YPCN, once organized, is responsible for setting additional virtual meetings to accomplish its work. Those virtual meetings can be held multiple times per year. There will be no more than one in-person meeting per year.

- o Week of Sept 22-28, 2024, Virtual Informational and Organizing Meetings
- o Week of January 2-7, 2025. In-Person Organizing Meeting (location TBD) Set the remainder of quadrennium meeting dates.
- o Week of July 6-12, 2025, Virtual Meetings, Grant/Scholarship Work (late June or early July)
- o July 2026 Global Young People's Convocation, event, and meetings (location TBD)
- o June/July 2027 YOUTH 2027 (US youth event) and meetings (location and dates TBD)
- o Winter 2027 (or early 2028) Final meeting before General Conference 2028

How Are Members Chosen?

Anyone who meets the criteria outlined in the “membership” section may complete an online application to be considered for the Young People’s Connectional Network. The application window is open from May 2024 until the end of July 2024. The application should take between thirty to sixty minutes to complete. The application is published through Google Forms. Only one application per person is allowed. A valid email address is required.

Bishops, conference leaders, national youth organizations, and so on may have internal processes to identify and encourage specific applicants; or they may allow individuals from within their area to submit applications by themselves.

After July 31, the application window will close. A review team, made up of an international collection of current Division on Ministries with Young People members, will consider all completed applications. This team will also make invitations to join the Young People’s Connectional Network no later than August 30, 2024. Those invitations will be made using the email address listed on the application.

The applicant receiving the invitation may accept the invitation or decline the opportunity. Once the invitation is accepted, the bishop from the applicant’s episcopal area will be informed, and Young People’s Ministries Staff will begin collecting more information so that the applicant will be able to attend in-person meetings.

English Application: <https://forms.gle/EVWqSViY9GEveHDNA>
Portuguese Application: <https://forms.gle/2C6vSxbUpChPds5r8>
Kiswahili Application: <https://forms.gle/hD2zd1YrxHysF9t3A>
French Application: <https://forms.gle/5vKwwJr48n3VKvG28>
Russian Application: <https://forms.gle/SGg3STVeLkDb52Nb6>
German Application: <https://forms.gle/nfBRDdPiQEYpKWgf7>
Spanish Application: <https://forms.gle/k88WRd3o9Z7TBF1C8>

Timeline

May-July 2024: Applications open

July-August 2024: Review of applications and invitations to become members.

September-October 2024: Membership information collection, introductory meeting, begin visa process (if needed) for in-person meetings.

January 2-7, 2024: In-person organizing meeting in the United States

Future meeting dates to be determined.

Responsibilities and Expectations

- All members are expected to attend and participate fully in scheduled meetings, including online and in-person during their four-year term.
- This is the first time that the YPCN is organizing, so there is some freedom to determine how the group organizes itself. The YPCN will inherit existing bylaws from its predecessor organization, the Division on Ministries with Young People (DMYP).
- There will be multiple opportunities to participate in grant and scholarship reviews. The YPCN may elect to review these together or with a sub-team.
- Members participate and regularly inform ministry with youth and young adults, including every level of the church, within the home region. They build connections and networks in the connectional church.
- Members provide input related to ministry in their context that will help form the work of the YPCN. It is vital for members to serve as links between regions, to understand needed resources, and to share examples of what is working well in ministry with young people around the world.
- Members will communicate in a timely manner, using the preferred communication platforms identified by the YPCN.
- Members will determine and participate in completing the work of the YPCN during the current term.

Questions?

Contact Chris Wilterdink (Director of Young People's Ministries and the Executive Director of Congregational Vitality and Intentional Discipleship at Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church), cwilterdink@umcdiscipleship.org

The Young People's Connectional Network is just part of the work of Young People's Ministries. Feel free to explore <http://umcyoungpeople.org> to learn more about our organization and resourcing efforts, designed to support and challenge the church to be better in its discipleship and ministries with young people.