

DIOCESAN YOUTH COMMISSION

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF ATLANTA



Submitted by
Luke Netto,
Commission Chair

INTRODUCTION TO THE YOUTH COMMISSION

The Youth Commission was established to promote youth engagement and ministry within the Episcopal Church. As the youth-led governing body of the Episcopal Youth Community of the Diocese of Atlanta (EYCDIOATL), the Youth Commission provides input and ideas for youth formation and events ranging from the DYC Winter Retreat to Pride Eucharist and the Graduation Celebration.

We exist to provide youth the representation they deserve and to connect youth with clergy, laypersons, and church leadership.

The Youth Commission regularly engaged with the clergy, laypersons, and youth of the diocese to promote youth ministry and youth faith formation. With God's help, we are seeking to transform the way our generation interacts with the Church and with God and, in turn, how the Church relates to youth.



MISSION STATEMENT & PURPOSE

OUR MISSION

We exist to form disciples by sharing the inclusive and unconditional love of Jesus Christ in worship, servant leadership, and spiritual formation.

OUR PURPOSE

DYC shall be the organized voice for each student in the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta; shall provide exemplary leadership; shall prepare and promote spiritual formation and community building events for students in the Diocese; shall model healthy and effective leadership; shall foster an environment of servant leadership and community responsibility; shall advocate on behalf of students' spiritual, cultural, mental, and social welfare; shall plan, promote, oversee, and host the DYC Winter Camp retreat at Camp Mikell each January.





RESTRUCTURING & RECENT CHANGES

This past term, beginning in July 2023, the Youth Commission underwent a transformative restructuring to accommodate the goals and visions that youth have for our role in the diocese.

The Commission is now lead by a Chair and the Youth Missioner. Assisting in operations is our Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Outreach Director. Committees exist to address specific needs in the church and within EYCDIOATL including our social media needs, our diversity and outreach efforts, and event-specific planning committees.

While the Youth Commission previously focused on the Annual Council Overnight and the DYC Winter Retreat alone, the Youth Commission has now set ambitious goals to expand our role within the diocese. We are meeting regularly and have taken on positions of leadership within planning for various church-related events including the Pride Eucharist, the Episcopal Youth Event hosted nationally, and even working towards sending youth delegates to the Episcopal Church's General Convention in 2024.

Our new focuses include expanding EYCDIOATL outreach to underserved communities in Middle Georgia and individual parishes, promoting youth involvement in church activities diocese-wide, and bringing youth voices to the table when it comes to church operations.



OUTREACH

The Youth Commission has reviewed the ways we connect with parish across the diocese. We have concluded that we need to focus outreach on youth of color and youth in Middle Georgia.

In addition to parish visits, we established an Outreach and Diversity Committee to explore ways to reach out to youth of color. This committee recently begun its work and will report to the Commission on the ways that EYCDIOATL can be more inclusive to youth of all races, ethnicities, and geographic regions.

This committee will communicate with the Absalom Jones Center and the Middle Georgia Convocation especially to solve the problems facing our outreach.

PARISH VISITS

This year, the Youth Commission has begun visiting parishes across the diocese. We are doing parish visits to accomplish the following:

- a) Connect youth with greater diocesan events like Happening, the DYC Winter Retreat, the annual tubing trip, and New Beginnings
- b) Worship with other communities to gain insights into the youth ministry across the diocese
- c) Demonstrate to parishes the effectiveness of youth ministry in the diocese and encourage an expanded focus on youth within the realm of pastoral care





DYC THEME

The Youth Commission this term is operating under the theme “And yet...”. This theme is our guidance for activities and leadership. Read below for a statement from our Chair on this theme.

AND YET...

“And yet...” is an invitation to union with a GOD whose story is still being written. There is pain, and yet... GOD is love. We feel lost, and yet... we’re never beyond GOD’s embrace. “And yet...” recognizes that there’s a comma to the night, not a period. The transformative love of GOD is a ! and not a ?

“And yet...” is our invitation to a relationship with the GOD who is always there when it seems like no others are; the GOD who holds your hand and offers a hug when the world feels lonely; the GOD who pushes us towards our better and more confident selves when we feel worthless; the GOD who loves us even when we feel unloved or even unlovable. The world can be a desolate, defeating, and discouraging place, and yet... GOD's love is definitive, constant, endless, forgiving, inclusive, and all-encompassing.

We are called to both exude and enjoy GOD's great love for us, by rejoicing in the Earth He has made for us and by sharing GOD's love with those around us. Friends can make horrible mistakes, enemies can cause physical and mental harm, and families can crack and crumble, and yet our GOD is the Lord of forgiveness, the King of Peace, the Savior and Redeemer who reconciles us.

GOALS & PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We hope to further expand our outreach in the coming months and years through several projects including LGBTQ+ youth outreach in collaboration with the LGBTQ+ Commission of the diocese, mental health and wellbeing promotion in youth ministry, and the development of resources to aid in pastoral care for youth.

In addition, we plan on moving towards a more fiscally independent position so youth retreats and events can operate from a better foothold. As part of our outreach, we will be doing more parish visits in the 2024 year with particular emphasis on parishes with many youth parishioners but low turnout at diocesan events.

Our biggest event for the year, the DYC Winter Retreat, will be Jan. 12-14. We encourage all parish-level EYCs to join us at Camp Mikell as we have fun, let go, and let God!



**FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR
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