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# EPISCOPAL YOUTH EVENT EYE/EJE

## ASSESSMENT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021

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## BACKGROUND

The leadership of youth ministry for The Episcopal Church has come to a major fork in the road as they seek to reimagine the future of the Episcopal Youth Event ([EYE](#)). Founded in 1982, EYE has been the flagship gathering for youth in The Episcopal Church for the past forty years.

This international, triennial event over the past decade has engaged an average of 852 youth in 9th through 12th grades. Including the adult leaders, event staff and planning team, clergy, and workshop presenters, EYE total participation has ranged from 1,100 to 1,400 individuals during the events between 2011 and 2021. In recent years, the event has had a budget in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000, \$500,000 of which comes from registrations.

Inspired by EYE and fueled by a desire to diversify and expand the reach of this ministry, Evento de Jóvenes Episcopales (EJE), a Spanish language and Latin American cultural event modeled after EYE, was conceived. EJE19 took place in 2019 in Panamá City, Panamá engaging 220 total participants, 90 of which were youth and young adults, ages 16-26.

### History of EYE & EJE

Event	Location	Theme
EJE 2019	Panamá City, Panamá	El Camino del Amor
EYE 2017	Edmond, Oklahoma	Path to Peace; El Camino de la Paz
EYE 2014	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Marked for Mission; Marcado para la Misión
EYE 2011	Saint Paul, Minnesota	Come Together!; Reunámonos!
EYE 2008	San Antonio, Texas	Sown in the Heart of Christ
EYE 2005	Berea, Kentucky	Can you Catch the Spirit off the Beaten Path?
EYE 2002	Laramie, Wyoming	"Bring it to the High Plains, tell the people who I am"
EYE 1999	Terre Haute, Indiana	"You are many members yet one body"
EYE 1996	Terre Haute, Indiana	"I will pour out my spirit and your sons and your daughters will prophesy"
EYE 1993	Amherst, Massachusetts	Make way for the image of God; Abran paso a la imagen de Dios
EYE 1990	Missoula, Montana	I will with God's Help; Asi lo hare, con el auxilio de Dios
EYE1987	San Antonio, Texas	Open My Eyes
EYE 1984	Stillwater, Oklahoma	Claiming our Roots, Using our Wings
EYE 1982	Urbana-Champaign, Illinois	Youth: Unutilized Energy

The global pandemic interrupted plans for EYE20, while at the same time giving rise to questions surrounding the long-term future of the event. It is generally agreed that this pause in programming provided the opportunity to complete a more robust evaluation and perhaps a reimagining of EYE.

There is legislation from the 67th General Convention of 1980 that directs the Executive Council to support a youth-focused event, like EYE, to take place every three years to “capture the energy of the youth of The Episcopal Church.” Though EYE has an undeniably rich tradition, some have wondered if EYE, as currently configured, is a “sacred cow” that has become politically untouchable, regardless of its actual impact.

There are currently three staff closely involved in the design and planning of EYE: Bronwyn Clark Skov, Officer for Youth Ministry; The Rev. Shannon Kelly, Director for the Department of Faith Formation and Officer for Young Adult and Campus Ministries; and Wendy Karr Johnson, Officer for Programs and Events and Episcopal Service Corps Coordinator. Each of these staff have other responsibilities and expectations of their time, so EYE has the equivalent of less than one full-time staff member dedicated to its success. As a point of comparison, the General Convention Office, which also facilitates a global event every triennium, has a staff closer to ten full-time employees and/or contractors.

This report offers an assessment of EYE and EJE to serve as a starting point for a collaborative process for The Episcopal Church to consider what, if any, new approaches to the future of EYE should be instituted. The report also offers a preliminary timeline for effective execution and completion of this discernment process.

In February 2021, The Episcopal Church partnered with Ministry Architects to complete the following deliverables:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of EYE/EJE
- Develop an iterative strategic plan for the future of EYE/EJE
- Provide executive coaching for leadership through the implementation process

A thorough, multifaceted assessment process took place over the course of the past six-months, from February through August 2021. That process, its findings, and recommendations for the future of EYE and EJE are all included in this assessment report.

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment process began with a broad online survey sent directly to 484 people. It was simultaneously cast broadly across social media for EYE/EJE. Ministry Architects received 287 responses.

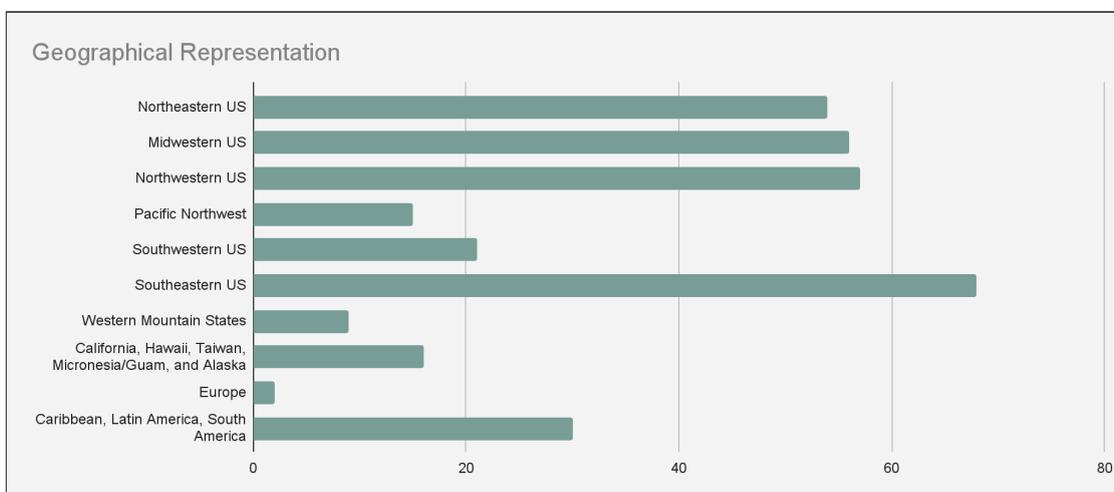
From those responses, 95 individuals indicated that they would like to share more about their experience. 62 of those individuals were contacted in writing for additional information via personal email, and the other 33 were invited to participate in a small group virtual listening session with a Ministry Architects consultant.

Several other key players (Bishops, Executive Council, and DFMS Staff) were also invited to participate in listening sessions. 30 people participated in 11 listening groups or 1:1 sessions. If the invitees were unable to attend, they were offered the opportunity to share their thoughts in writing via a Google form created for that purpose.

In total, **307 individuals** contributed to this assessment process.

An analysis of the assessment process participants revealed that 77% of survey respondents identify themselves as white/caucasian which is less than the denomination as a whole (according to [Pew Research Center](#), the makeup of the denomination is closer to 90% white/caucasian). 14% of respondents identify as Hispanic/Latino(a) and 7% black/African American. Over 25% of the survey respondents labeled themselves as “Bishop, Deacon, or Priest.”

Understandably, as seen in the graph below, the most representative region was the southeastern United States, where there is a dense concentration of Episcopalians.



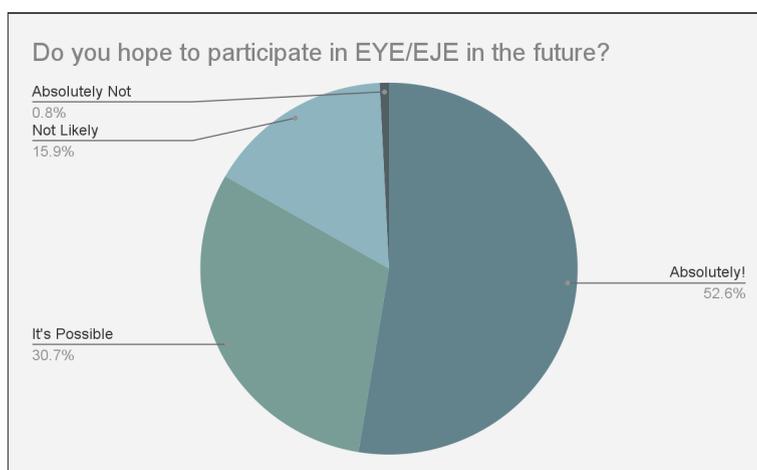
Just over a third of the respondents fall under the age of 35, and over half of the respondents are under age 50. The fact that over 50% of respondents have participated in the Episcopal Youth Event as a youth themselves speaks to the deep impact and successful longevity of the event.

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Based on the responses of 287 survey participants, here are some noteworthy highlights:

### DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS

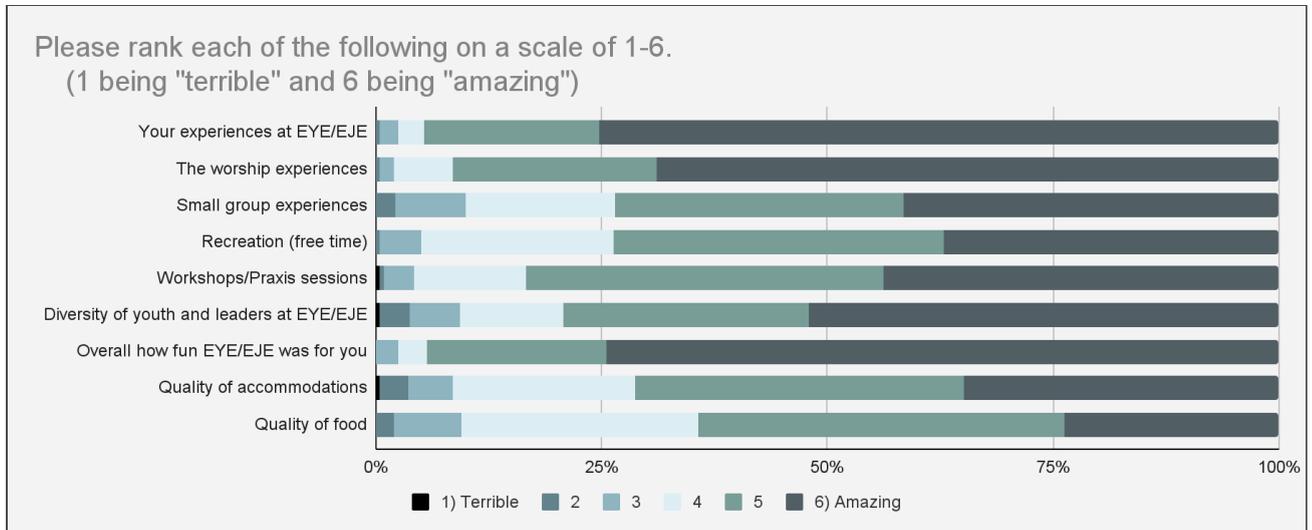
- 52% of survey respondents had been youth participants at EYE/EJE.
- 32% of respondents were in the 35-49 age range, while 27% were in the 50-64 age range.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents were both satisfied with their current church involvement and described themselves as a “deeply committed Christian” and an “enthusiastic Episcopalian.”
- Over 74% said they would likely invite others to EYE/EJE; the majority of whom also said they *have* invited others multiple times, and would be likely to participate in the future.



- Over 80% of participants said their EYE/EJE experience was paid for by their diocese.
- When asked about the \$1,000,000 budget, \$500,000 of which comes from registration fees, just over 50% of participants felt this allocation of funds toward EYE/EJE is appropriate.
- 8% of respondents “wouldn’t change a thing” about EYE/EJE, and only 6% felt they are “ready for change” on a scale of 1-5. The vast majority landed somewhere in the middle.



The following chart gives a clear overview of how survey respondents viewed the core components of EYE/EJE:



## OPEN-ENDED RESULTS

The survey also included five sections of open-ended questions. We have highlighted below the most common trending responses, with “\*\*\*” indicating a high frequency of a particular response.

### Do NOT Change about EYE/EJE

- Worship\*\*
- The diversity of participants
- Providing multiple ways to connect with others
- Connecting to the local community where EYE/EJE is being held
- Youth leadership

### Things to Change about EYE/EJE

- More diversity - in leadership, worship, and programming\*\*
- Better communication about the event
- More intentional time to create connections with other youth - both within and outside of their own diocese
- Content that helps young people live out their spirituality
- More accessible financially
- More representation from a wider variety of dioceses

### Perceived Purpose of EYE/EJE

- Empower youth to grow in and live into their faith\*\*
- Experience the broader Episcopal Church
- To connect young people to The Episcopal Church and to each other
- Fellowship with others
- To grow leaders

### **WHY or WHY NOT to Change EYE/EJE**

- The vast majority of responses simply indicated that change is a positive thing
- “I love the ethos of the event AND there is always room to grow and change.”

### **What is Remembered Most about EYE/EJE**

- The world and the Church are bigger than me - than who I know, what I've experienced, and what I think\*\*
- Fellowship and community
- Impact on my faith
- Worship experience

## EYE/EJE IN CONTEXT

It is no secret that hundreds of religious youth events are available to youth outside of The Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Youth Event, both denominational and non-denominational. While viewing these events as if they were targets for EYE/EJE to achieve is neither healthy nor desired, an awareness of the scope of these gatherings can provide a helpful baseline for realistically imagining what might be possible. Ministry Architects conducted research on the following denominations:

- Catholic
- Nazarene
- Lutheran
- United Methodist (UMC)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA)
- Presbyterian Church (USA)

The research into these the national and global youth events sponsored by the above denominations looked at five categories of comparison, each of which can help contextualize the current discernment process for EYE/EJE:

### Purpose

The overarching purpose of each of these youth events is to deepen the faith of the attendees in hopes that they will live into a vibrant, lifelong faith. In addition, many focus on broadening the connection of youth to their particular denomination as well as inspiring a lifetime of community service. The Lutherans have two important pre-events, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE), a faith formation and leadership development event primarily for youth of color, and the tAble, a gathering that brings together, blesses and empowers youth with disabilities. In addition, the United Methodists also focus on leadership training, increasing cultural understanding, exchanging ministry ideas, and forming legislation to advocate and increase the ability of young people to act as change agents in the UMC.

## Comparison of other Denominational Events, Schedules, and Attendance

Denominational Event	Schedule	Attendance	* Size of Denomination
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America - <i>Youth Gathering</i>	Every three years	35,000-39,000	4.2 million
The Presbyterian Church (USA) - <i>Triennium</i>	Every three years	4,000-5,000	2.5 million
The National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry - <i>National Catholic Youth Conference</i>	Every two years	23,000-25,000	58.9 million
The National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry - <i>Global Youth Conference</i>	Every four years	700,000	<i>As above</i>
The United Methodist Church- <i>Global Young People's Convocation</i>	Every four years	3,500-5,000	9.8 million
The United Methodist Church- <i>National Young People's Event</i>	Every four years	Average between 3,500-5,000. Very unsure of 2021 because of general conference in 2022 and denominational issues.	<i>As above</i>
The Nazarene Church - <i>Nazarene Youth Conference</i>	Every four years	8,800-9,000	893,000

\*Data gathered from the Association of Religion Data Archives 2010 census, the most recent census. These are the reported number of "adherents" which includes full members, their children, and other regular attenders. For comparison, the Episcopal Church reported 1.95 million adherents in this census.

## Funding

Generally, portions of each youth event is covered by the sponsoring denomination, with the remaining costs being carried by the individual attendees or their home churches or judicatory. Most commonly, the registration price for these events does not cover the lodging, food, and transportation costs, which are borne by the attendees, their home churches, or their mid-level judicatories. In addition to the scholarships offered by individual churches and mid-level judicatories, the Catholic church also offers scholarship opportunities on the national level.

The Nazarenes take a slightly different approach where the cost is determined by each district, and covers registration, travel expenses, lodging, meals, and any excursions planned. The amount covered by the district varies and the remaining cost is passed along to the individual attendee.

The United Methodists have experimented with using exhibitors and sponsors to offset some of their event costs, but that revenue has typically been disappointing. The Catholic church has also sought to weave exhibitors and sponsors into the fabric of its events.

## Format

While the look and feel of each event is unique to the culture of each faith tradition, there are considerable commonalities in format for these events, worship being the most obvious. Worship, in each of these traditions, expands the spiritual imagination of participants, giving many youth one of their only opportunities to worship together with a large body of other youth.

The “small group” model had been the most consistently popular model for breakout sessions, but some events have shifted to a more experiential model. For example, the Presbyterians set up a series of “Lens Labs” where youth are invited to explore the theme of the gathering through hands-on experiences such as writing poetry. The Lutherans have a 40,000 square foot space dedicated to interactive learning experiences with a variety of experiences that appeal to all learning styles and senses. Others offer service learning opportunities where groups of 20 or fewer connect with local organizations to serve for a portion of a day during the event.

## Leadership and Planning

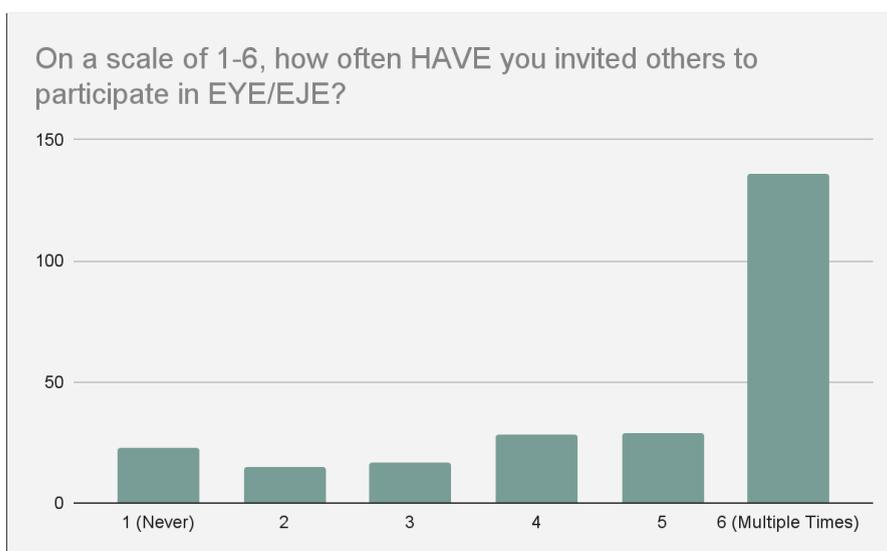
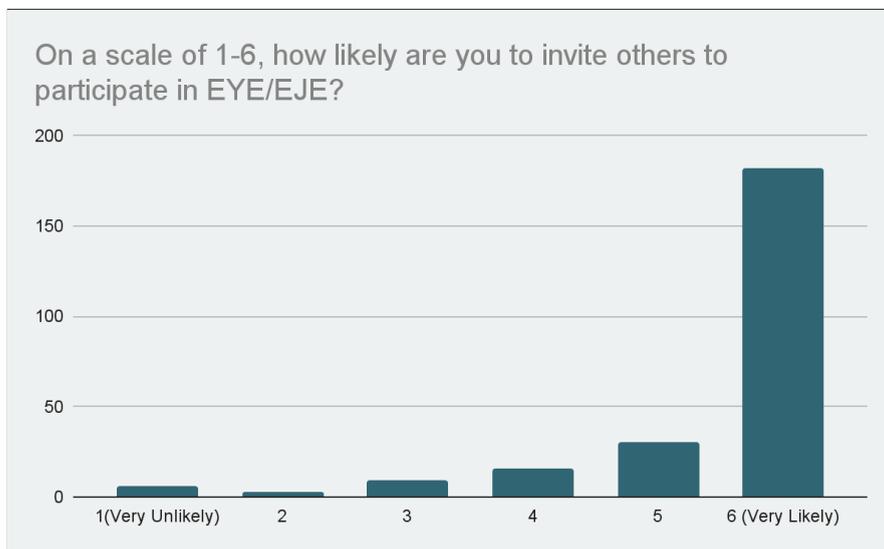
Teams of people will always be necessary to plan and execute events of this scale. Many denominations use a combination of adult leadership and youth leadership in this process. Often, the theme and location of the event is chosen years in advance, much like the Olympics. The Lutheran model includes an adult leader training that is held in the same location as the main event, giving the adults the opportunity to explore the area and build excitement for the event.

# ASSETS

## STRENGTHS TO PROTECT

### BELOVED EVENT

Without exception, the faces of listening group attendees lit up as they described their experiences with EYE/EJE. The most commonly referenced highlight of the event, in both the survey and listening groups, was worship. One participant said, “The music and worship was extremely powerful. I love traditional hymns, and I also love the upbeat music with praise bands. EYE brought both of those to the table.” The experience of worshipping alongside Bishops who were dancing in the aisles was memorable for many. Beyond worship, however, the event is not lacking in meaningful memories. A member of a past design team described the event’s impact on youth by saying, “EYE was a moment/experience that made their faith matter to them.” One way to measure the proclivity of an event is a participant’s willingness to invite others to participate (what the business community refers to as the “net promoter score”). It is easy to see from the graphs below, that EYE/EJE how much “buy in” participants in EYE/EJE have to this event.



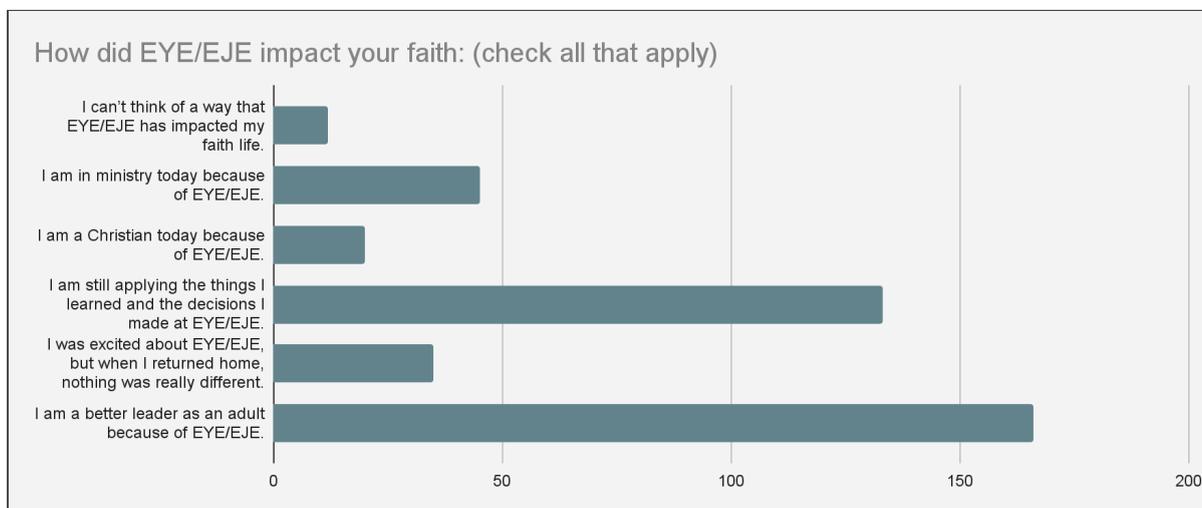
## PART OF SOMETHING LARGER

The Episcopal Youth Event and Evento de Jóvenes Episcopales have become known for helping youth explore that experience of being a part of something larger than themselves. Not only does the event introduce youth to the Church outside of their local church, but as one person noted, “It makes the church feel tangible, energizing.” Experiencing liturgical styles outside one’s previous personal experience opens the door to deeper faith and worship. Hearing different voices, what one person described as the “kaleidoscope of leadership,” creates the space for deeper understanding of faith. One person remembered, “The feeling of looking around at all these other Episcopal youth like me, and realizing I belong to something much larger than myself--it was a foundational moment in understanding what the Body of Christ looks like, and my place in it.”

## GROWTH AND EQUIPPING

The Episcopal Youth Event has been the leader in paving the way for denomination-wide practices such as safe church. The training done for the leaders has been described as some of the best training these leaders have received as ministry leaders. The emphasis on the spiritual formation done prior to EYE/EJE done in preparation for the big event was held in high esteem. In addition, many previous attendees described the lasting impact that EYE/EJE has had on their lives personally. One person said, “My very first EYE/EJE was transformative as a teenager. It carried me through many years.” Another stated, “EYE was where I really claimed the baptismal covenant as my whole life plan.”

The graph below shows how the survey respondents described EYE/EJE’s impact on their faith (please note that the numbers represent the number of survey respondents who indicated each answer):



## **EVENTO DE JÓVENES EPISCOPALES**

Outside of the context of EYE, the Evento de Jóvenes Episcopales (EJE) is beloved on its own. Providing an opportunity for youth who are unable to travel to the United States to participate in a youth event of this magnitude has expanded the impact of EYE especially to those in Central and South America. The listening group held for representatives from EJE was characterized by contagious joy and appreciation for this event. Communication surrounding the event is felt to be strong, and it was generally agreed that keeping the event in Spanish makes it more welcoming for the attendees. One person asked, “What can EYE learn from EJE?”

## **COMMUNITY**

Not only does the event allow youth from small ministries experience things on a larger scale, but the opportunity to partner with other parishes or dioceses for fundraising prior to the trip, has a way of building the sense of community before the event begins. Opportunities to interact with Bishops built a sense of deepened relational equity, while connecting to the local community gave participants a sense of being the hands and feet of Christ. Perhaps even more importantly, youth of diverse backgrounds have been able to find a place of belonging together. Remembering this, one previous youth attender said, “It was in the workshops where my queer identity had a seat at the table with my Christian identity for the first time.”

# CHALLENGES

## OBSTACLES TO MOVING STRATEGICALLY FORWARD

### LEADERSHIP

#### *EYE/EJE Leadership*

Perhaps the greatest need in the context of the leadership of this event is that it is not sustainably staffed. As a result, the event has, in the past, caused leadership to sacrifice their own health and well-being in order to execute this event well, resulting in exhaustion and burnout. With the Church's focus on diversity, it is notable that there are no persons of color on the staff who currently oversee this event or Episcopal youth ministry in general. Though the youth serving in the background has been recognized as an asset, others acknowledged that they would like to see a greater role for youth in up front leadership from the stage at the event itself.

#### *Church Leadership*

Without the consistent support of provincial, diocesan, and individual parish leadership, the scope and reach of EYE/EJE has been limited. Provincial leadership often dictates how engaged that region can be with EYE/EJE. One person stated, "If I'm in a well-resourced diocese, denominational support feels like a competition. In dioceses with smaller staffs and smaller budgets, they desperately need the help." In some cases, even if EYE/EJE are broadly supported, broken links in the collaboration chain between diocesan leaders and the EYE/EJE leadership leave much to be desired.

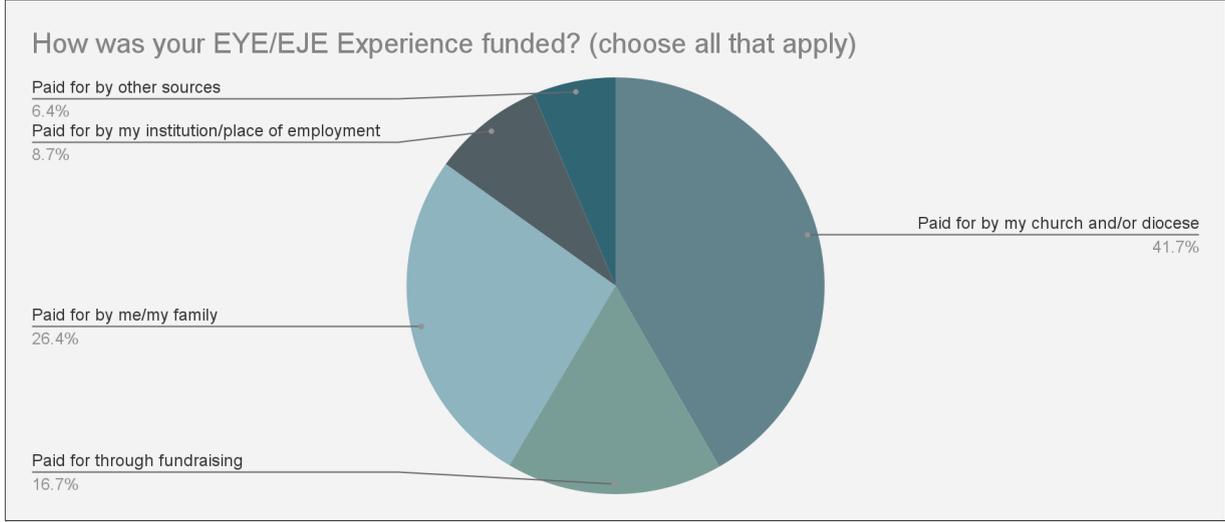
### INACCESSIBILITY

While part of the ethos of the event has been to keep things small, the result is an overall feeling of the event being inaccessible to many youth. Limiting the number of youth allowed to attend, based on the size of each diocese, has been a major factor in EYE/EJE only reaching a small fraction of Episcopal youth. The result is that smaller dioceses can feel marginalized in the process. Efforts to loosen these restrictions took place in planning for EYE20 that were not fully realized due to the pandemic-triggered cancellation.

Wondering about the limited number of slots available from each diocese, one respondent raised the question, "We want to increase participation, but we turn away 75% of applicants. How do we do that and keep the right diversity?"

It is important to note that when registration was opened for the 2020 EYE (which was ultimately cancelled), the number caps had been removed, allowing for each diocese to send as many participants as desired. Interestingly, it had no impact on the number of registrations received.

One person said, "We've got to get really focused on bringing the edges to the center, rather than just affirming the center." In addition, another stakeholder stated, "Youth Ministry doesn't have a great image of invitation; EYE brings in kids already involved. It targets the inner circle, and is not a welcome mat." Financial inaccessibility was also mentioned multiple times. One person lamented, "How do we go from just having empowered white rich kids?" The graph below represents how the experience is funded for participants:



**LASTING IMPACT**

While many previous participants in EYE were able to name the impact the event has had on their lives, questions remain. Currently, EYE is a distinct pinnacle of the Episcopal youth experience instead of being an integral part of a vision for the Episcopal youth ministry as a whole.

There is a desire and an opportunity to become what one listening group participant describes as the connective tissue between youth ministry and the rest of the church. One person wondered, “What happens after EYE, does it translate to the parish?” One youth is noted to have said "Here at EYE I am taken seriously and listened to. But back home, no one listens or cares."

A former adult leader expressed, “There was no follow up. There were hundreds of kids there who *could have* formed the next generation of leadership for the church out of that experience or been pointed to opportunities to deepen their faith, and stay in touch. Instead, we had a great time at summer camp, and went home with some photos--no participants list, no debriefings, no reunions. In this age of social media, it could be really good to engage with folks in that way--to get more insights, to help people reconnect, and maybe to bring someone back who hasn't been connected over the last years since they went to EYE, however long ago.”

**NO ROOM FOR INNOVATION**

Though there is little doubt that EYE and EJE have been deeply effective in what they have accomplished, some observed that, as a whole, there seems to be a lack of imagination about what these events could be or the potentially greater impact they could have. And as a whole, The Episcopal Church does not seem to have a clear process for experimentation and innovation related to the future of the church. Since today’s youth and young adults are more and more motivated to be agents of ministry, not simply consumers of it, not providing space for innovation and experimentation will come at a high cost.

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP**

Without a doubt, one of the greatest strengths of EYE/EJE is the focus on utilizing the leadership of the youth right now. While there is also a desire to expand the opportunity for youth in the future, the fact that they are ready to lead *right now* has not been dismissed. One of the former youth team members said, “EYE 2017 is a perfect example of youth-led ministry.” Building what one person referred to as “adult skills” through the process was appreciated as well.

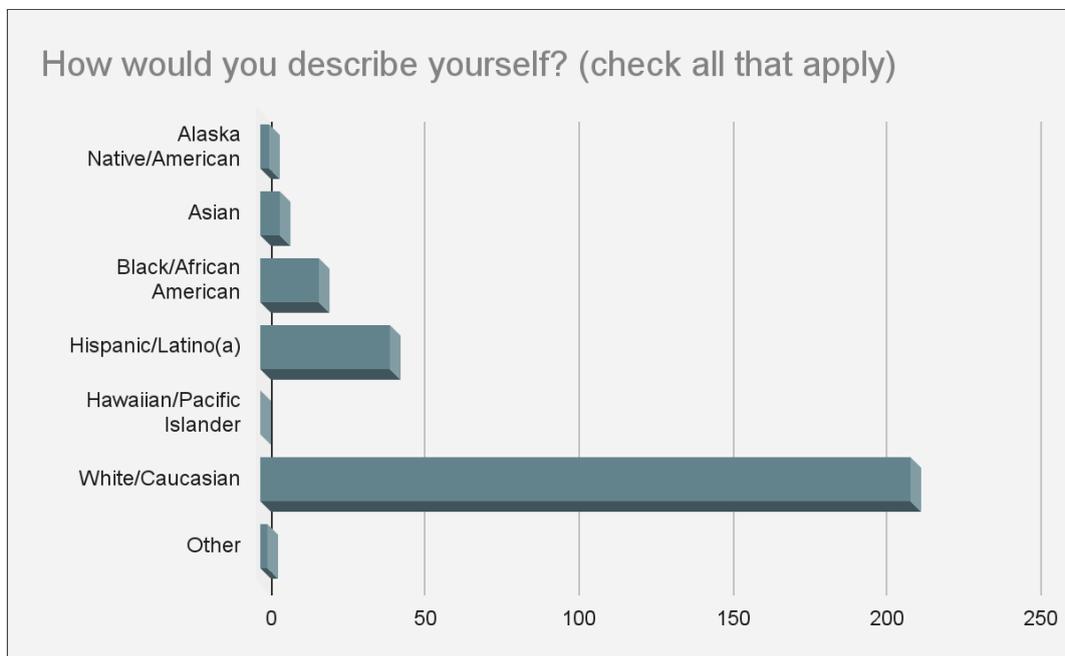
## COMMUNICATION

One of the most consistent challenges voiced through this process has been around the area of communication. Because communication to young people themselves is so dependent on an individual youth leader or priest getting information to them, and because there is not a strong database of such people, most of the communication relies on provinces and dioceses. The result is a pattern of very inconsistent communication to youth, parents, youth leaders, and parishes, resulting in less than desired number of young people getting to participate in EYE/EJE. This concern can be summed up in the words of one respondent who said, “We need to get the word out.”

Others described the invitation process as a version of insider baseball, in which the people who are in the know stay in the know and the people on the margins know very little about the event. Some wondered whether there might be a breakdown between the EYE planning team and the Communications and Public Affairs team. Regardless of where the breakdown originates, the common concern about the limited reach of current communication and marketing structures was repeated multiple times.

## REPRESENTATION

The staff and leadership for EYE and EJE have worked heroically to expand the racial and ethnic diversity of those who attend these events and have made significant progress on this front. Yet one of the most common concerns raised from respondents was the desire for greater diversity in leadership, worship, and programming. In addition, a number voiced a desire to see representation from a wider variety of dioceses. This diversity work, if taken seriously, will require an investment of time, money, and dedicated staff.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

*To achieve the desired vision for EYE and EJE, these events must be viewed as more than stand-alone, stop-and-go programs. These events, at their heart, are designed to support the ongoing, day-to-day lives of young people and their leaders. These efforts, sponsored by the Office of Youth Ministry, support and expand discipleship and evangelism, creation care and racial reconciliation, leadership and passion development, discernment and accompanying youth on their journey toward identity, belonging, and purpose. Since we can no longer assume that the local, diocesan, and provincial resources are present for young people in the same ways they were in the 1980's, we make the following recommendations:*

**Youth Leadership:** Create a structure for deep listening to and engagement with youth themselves.

1. Ensure that the event itself is deeply informed by the voices of youth and young adults.
2. Establish a greenhouse at EYE for the cultivation of young people's innovative ministry ideas and dreams that can inform EYE/EJE and grow beyond the event.
3. Establish a youth advisory team for EYE/EJE (beyond the core design team), of up to 100 youth who speak into the work of EYE/EJE, build fruitful connections with each other, and serve at the event itself (i.e. tech work, worship leaders, hospitality, etc.).
4. Prior to EYE, launch a youth-and-young-adult-led, ongoing podcast, aligned with other social media, with livestream updates during EYE/EJE, ongoing interviews, feature stories, etc.

**Connective Tissue:** Build connective tissue between EYE/EJE and other structures for youth formation and leadership cultivation in TEC.

1. Create space for youth and youth leaders to engage in collaborative relationships with bishops, expanding bishops' capacity to serve as advocates and allies for EYE/EJE and Episcopal youth ministry.
2. Establish a "community of practice" that connects various parish, diocesan, and provincial youth programming across the church.
3. Fortify the relationships between EYE/EJE and initiatives like Episcopal Service Corps, Young Adult Service Corps, Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers (ECCC), YACM (Young Adult and Campus Ministries), Gathering of Leaders, and young clergy cultivation initiatives, etc.
4. Maximize the opportunity provided by EYE/EJE as a doorway for deeper participation in the life of The Episcopal Church, and discernment of vocational call, lay or ordained.
5. Offer an annual Episcopal Youth Leader Gathering, which, in addition to more traditional training, can expand awareness of and leadership engagement in EYE/EJE and bolster peer connections among those adult leaders.

**Expanded Engagement:** Increase participation in EYE/EJE.

1. Expand initiatives to support EYE/EJE with prayer from congregations and other stakeholders.
2. Incorporate a plan to create, maintain, grow, and regularly update a robust database to consistently expand the conversation about Episcopal youth ministry.
3. Audit, expand, and innovate communication channels related to EYE/EJE.
4. Build allies who can encourage and secure time and space for highlighting EYE/EJE and the priority of youth ministry at annual Diocesan Conventions, and equip them with the tools they need.
5. Create promotion systems to increase the size of EYE and EJE to make more sense for an appropriate-sized venue, knowing the chronic challenge of finding a space for 750-1000 participants.
6. Network with Episcopal Schools across the church and Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers (ECCC) in the promotion of EYE and EJE.
7. Develop the conversation about expanding youth and young adult ministry in The Episcopal Church through the generous sharing of engaging content with that audience.
8. As much as practical, consider approaches to promotion and implementation that are not dependent on current provincial and diocesan structures.
9. Develop 40th anniversary resources, including a video, that celebrates the past and looks toward a new future for EYE/EJE, in time for General Convention 2022.

**Diversity:** Continue to expand the diversity of all involved in EYE/EJE, especially around race, ethnicity, language, gender expression, sexual orientation, social and economic status, physical and mental abilities, geographical location, and parish and diocesan size.

1. Develop, implement, and continually iterate an intentional game plan for expanding the diversity of presenters, speakers, preachers, adult mentors, musicians, youth, design team, young adult event team, and volunteers.
2. Provide training for adult mentors/chaperones on diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.
3. Expand the diversity of worship and liturgical style.
4. Expand the diversity of learning styles represented in workshops and speakers.
5. Offer video greetings from Episcopal or Anglican youth from around the globe.
6. Have a youth delegation from Taiwan, Europe, Central America, Guam, the Caribbean, and South America who play some part in the leadership of EYE/EJE.
7. Develop an intentional working relationship between the EYE/EJE leadership team and the work of Ethnic Ministries in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

**Sufficient Funding:** Expand funding for EYE/EJE, the structures that support these events, and the continuing agency of youth.

1. Develop a strategic, church-wide endowment and planned giving campaign for EYE/EJE and the youth ministry initiatives that support them, with the goal of raising \$20-\$40 million for this campaign.
2. Run a campaign that raises at least a \$20M endowment.
3. Offer a planned giving option for those who might want to include the younger generation of The Episcopal Church in their estate planning.

**Sustainable Staffing:** Provide staffing for EYE/EJE sufficient to achieve the desired results for youth and young adult ministry in TEC.

1. Expand the racial and ethnic diversity of the staff to reflect the beloved community of TEC.
2. Hire a full-time manager of EYE/EJE within the Office of Youth Ministry.
3. Hire a full-time, non-white Diversity Officer onto the EYE staff focused on expanding the engagement of a diverse range of young people and adult leaders.
4. Develop a plan for the transition of staff in a way that archives the collective memory of those transitioning out.
5. Develop a strategic staffing and recruitment plan to achieve the results of these recommendations.

**Empowering Initiatives to Expand Lifelong Impact:** Harness the impact of EYE/EJE to expand its long-term connection and impact

1. Send students home with a playbook to guide their own spiritual journeys for the coming triennium.
2. Equip all youth who will age out before the next event for their next stage in their journey by developing initiatives to sustain the evolving growth of young adults who are alums of EYE/EJE.
3. Offer optional multi-week, online cohorts for EYE/EJE alums to sustain fruitful connections and inspire the blessing of churches to which the EYE/EJE alums are returning, with the option for groups to choose to continue gathering on their own.
4. Send churches/leaders home with a guide for sustaining engagement beyond the event.
5. Experiment with regional events/training each year, with a specific focus on areas with limited participation in EYE/EJE, engaging people of color and others traditionally marginalized by the church.
6. Offer training to youth leaders in critical issues (e.g., mental health support/training, LGBTQ+/gender roles, suicide prevention support/training, etc.)
7. Provide for the continuation of the EYE/EJE greenhouse for cultivating young peoples' young people's dreams for innovative ministry.
8. Offer call and discernment resources at EYE/EJE with an expanded focus on possibilities for both lay and ordained ministry.

**Integration:** Build collaborative partnerships with a wide variety of gatekeepers, permission-givers, and amplifiers to accomplish the recommendations contained in this document.

1. Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers (ECCC)
2. EYE/EJE Council (separate from the design team)
3. Ethnic Ministries
4. General Convention
5. Presiding Bishop Search Committee
6. House of Bishops
7. Additional Prospective Partnerships
  1. Diocesan Youth Coordinators
  2. Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE)
  3. Asia-America Mini-Convocations
  4. Nuevo Amanecer
  5. Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF)
  6. FORMA
  7. Episcopal Communicators
  8. Integrity (LGBTQIA+)
  9. Trans Episcopal
  10. Companion Diocese
  11. Diocesan Conventions
  12. Standing Commissions
  13. Executive Council
  14. General Convention Deputies
  15. Bishops
  16. Anglican Partners
  17. Acts 8
  18. Seminaries and other formation centers for ministry
  19. Others

8. Deputies to General Convention voiced a desire to create a continuing resolution about EYE/EJE for General Convention, adjusting language that implies “capturing” or consuming young people’s energy, and replacing it with language focused on equipping and catalyzing youth with the tools, mentorship, experiences, opportunities, and support to live into their call from God in their lives.

## THE CONSULTANT TEAM FOR THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WITH EYE/EJE



### Mark DeVries, President and Founder

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Mark is the founder and president of Ministry Architects, the co-founder of Ministry Incubators and the Center for Youth Ministry Training, and the founder of Justice Industries. Mark served as the Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families at First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee from 1986 through 2014.

Mark is the author of a number of books, including *Sustainable Youth Ministry* and *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, and the co-author of *Sustainable Children's Ministry* and *Sustainable Young Adult Ministry*. Mark and his wife, Susan, co-authored a book on the first year of marriage (with their good friends, Robert & Bobbie Wolgemuth) entitled *The Most Important Year in a Woman's Life/The Most Important Year in a Man's Life*.

Mark is a graduate of Baylor University and Princeton Theological Seminary and has taught courses or been a guest lecturer at more than 20 different colleges and seminaries, including Duke Divinity School (Durham, NC), Princeton Theological Seminary (Princeton, NJ), and Vanderbilt Divinity School (Nashville, TN). He offered ministry training and consulting across the United States and in more than a dozen countries, working with a wide variety of Christian traditions and denominations.

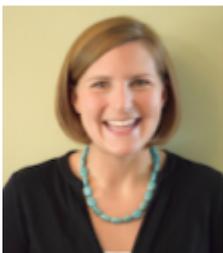
Mark and Susan have been married since 1979 and make their home in Nashville, TN. They have three grown children: Adam, Debbie, and Leigh, and four grandchildren: Parish, Nealy, Liam, and Jack.



### Bryant Johnson, Senior Consultant

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Bryant began working in youth ministry in 1996 in the United Methodist Church. He has been a 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 outdoors, technology, movies, and hosts The Sustainable Ministry Show. He and his wife, Tonya, and two kids live in Kernersville, NC.



### Mary Beth Abplanalp, Lead Consultant

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Mary Beth has always had a special place in her heart for young people and helping them find their identity in the Body of Christ. She started out teaching elementary special education before realizing her true calling to youth ministry. In 2011 she became the Children & Youth Minister at Christ Church Episcopal in Alexandria, VA where she first encountered Ministry Architects. She is currently serving at St. James's Episcopal Church in Richmond, VA as Director of Youth Ministry. Mary Beth graduated from the University of Mary Washington with a B.S. in Psychology and a M.S. in Elementary Education. She has ten years of experience working at and directing summer camps at Shrine Mont Camp and Conference Center of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. In her free time, Mary Beth loves to make homemade pizza, go on road trips, and hang out in the backyard! Her amazing husband Chris is an ICU nurse and an integral member of the youth ministry volunteer team. They live in Richmond, VA with their two sons, Andrew and Benjamin, and dog Bella.

## THE CONSULTANT TEAM FOR THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WITH EYE/EJE



### **Aqueelah Ligonde, Staff Consultant**

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Rev. Aqueelah Ligonde, an ordained PCUSA clergywoman, is an enthusiastic speaker, preacher, and leader with a passion for today's generation of youth, women, and leaders. She has worked with organizations such as Princeton Seminary Institute For Youth Ministry, Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, Urban Youth Workers Institute, and Youth Specialties. She has written various blog posts, articles, and devotionals. Her writing can also be found in the book *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry*, a book on the power of intergenerational relationships. She also co-hosts a monthly podcast called *The Sustainable Ministry Show*.

Aqueelah holds a Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL. For over a decade, Aqueelah served as the Associate Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens NY. Currently, she is a Staff Consultant with Ministry Architects, a coach with Ministry Incubators, and Transitional Pastor at Far Rockaway Presbyterian Church. She is also pursuing a Doctor of Ministry from Louisville Theological Seminary. She and her husband live in Long Island, NY.



### **Heather Kenny, Project Manager**

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Heather's passion for building teams and developing volunteers keeps her energized and expectant of what God wants to do in and through people. There is nothing more exciting to Heather than to watch a child develop their relationship with God, or a volunteer to realize the eternal impact they can have every day. She has served in family ministry for over 18 years and blogs at [www.leadingfromthedeepend.com](http://www.leadingfromthedeepend.com). She lives with her husband and younger son in Placencia, Belize, where they own and manage Placencia Beach Club with a dream of some day providing a high end vacation experience to people in ministry for little to no cost.