

Young Adult District Advocacy (YADA)

By God's grace and through the Spirit's intercession, we come before you as young adult clergy, lay people, and those who have a vested interest in the UMC, unicorns in an overall dying denomination. We pray that we still might yet find a spark of life within the UMC so as to light our journey. In 1985, 1 out of every 7 elders were under the age of 35. In 2007, that number dropped to 1 out of 20. In addition, the percentage of total UMC members 18-29 years of age has dropped from 11% in 2007 to 9% in 2014. We say very plainly that the UMC needs more young adults and has much to lose if we continue with business as usual. Out of a commitment to the UMC and belief that we are called to be leaders in our denomination, we present to the Central Bay District the following expectations for the work of our team:

1. To flow from a commitment to authenticity in action, humility in word and thought, and creativity in the face of uncertainty.
2. To take upon ourselves the radical, boundary-crossing nature of Jesus Christ's ministry and accept roles outside of "normal" church structures so as to further spread the Gospel.
3. To act and to be held accountable, just as we will hold the Church accountable to this ongoing work of meaningful leadership and inclusion. We expect the district to seek our voices and engage intentionally with our recommendations, trusting our sources and experiences.
4. To speak loudly and act faithfully in the face of oppression and discrimination against our brothers, sisters, and siblings. As Walter Wink states in his book *Jesus and Non Violence*, "Neutrality in a situation of oppression always supports the status quo. Reduction of conflict by means of a phony "Peace" is not a Christian goal, and that may require an acceleration of conflict as a necessary stage in forcing those in power to bring about genuine change."
5. To encourage the Church in its deepening inclusion of race, sexuality and gender identity in recognition of the belovedness all people hold. We support anti-oppression and anti-bias values and expect the Church to do the same.
6. To call on the Church to embrace that which it has avoided for decades: an honest reflection of itself and its inability to shift to or influence culture.