

RESET FOR RENEWAL

NOVEMBER 12-14



Event

Reset for Renewal was a virtual gathering to foster relationships, reclaim your own resilience and gifts for ministry and reconnect with the pulse of young people in the midst of today's world. Over the course of three days participants had the opportunity to meet and gather with like-minded individuals who are doing youth ministry a variety of contexts within the United Church of Christ and beyond. We offered a diverse group of keynote speakers that brought thoughtful and timely messages for participants as individuals, but as leaders who are called to disciple young people in difficult times.

Statistics

- 106 participants (not including national staff or tech team)
 - 6 denominations
 - United Church of Christ
 - Disciples of Christ
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 - United Methodist
 - Presbyterian Church, USA
 - Non-Denominational
 - All regions of the United Church of Christ represented
 - Ministry settings
 - 54.8% local church

- 26% other/combination
 - 9.6% campus ministers
 - 4.8% conference staff
 - 3.8% outdoor ministry
 - 1% national staff
- Registration Fees
 - 54 Full priced attendees
 - 29 Half priced attendees
 - 23 Fees waived
 - Grants received \$4,000
 - Income from registration \$6,767
 - Total income \$10,767
 - Total cost \$17,900

In the planning of this event the team was clear that we did not want registration to be a barrier to attending. Many organizations are moving to a sliding scale to encourage participants to pay what they are able. Although there was some apprehension this worked out well for us. Those that had fees waived were primarily presenters, members of the planning team and national staff. Of the 23 people that fell into that category only two were general participants.

The total cost of the event on our end was \$7,133. Given that for that amount, what we have collectively done is demonstrate that a connective event could be held online, impacting people from across all regions of the UCC, including UCC Board Members, we view this event as a success. The way that music and worship, small groups and plenary all functioned, gave a framework for what is possible for General Synod, and will help anyone participating imagine how we can do this collectively next summer. We believe this event was a more effective preparation for GS2021 than NYE, and I believe a collective conversation with the organizers and the GS organizers would be an appropriate next step. We plan to propose this to Karen Georgia after you have seen this report and replied.

Additionally—because the groups in planning have never worked together for a collective project in this way, the relationships and intentionality between them have been critically strengthened, offering leadership infrastructure for the next several years of youth and young adult ministry in the UCC. This will serve to support several key projects, including the Youth Ambassadors program and Fellows.

Testimony & Reflection

Reset for Renewal occurred during this unique time of a global pandemic, the uprising of white supremacy, a chaotic election season and a general dis-ease across the country. Participants openly wept as they processed the weight of their calls and position, shared the challenges in their personal lives and looked forward to a time when things returned to a regular routine that allowed face to face interaction with the youth in their lives. A formal survey is being created that will go out to all registered participants no later than November 20th. This will offer additional feedback on individual sessions,

growing opportunities for events like Reset for Renewal and insight into the topics that are most pertinent for those engaged in youth ministry.

A few quotes are offered below that highlight the joy and experiences shared together.

"Best conference EVER! Genuine and so full of the Holy Spirit Thank you all!" -Dorine DeCarli

*"It's been such a blessing to be with everyone. Just what I needed, right when I needed it <3" -
Kim Looney*

"This was what so many in our churches and other ministry settings were desperately in need of during this extraordinary time." -Lisa Hart

Impact

As Minister for Youth & Young Adult Engagement, this was the largest gathering where I could interact and get direct feedback on what is needed from youth ministers, outdoor ministry, and campus ministers. Even with National Youth Event planning, the 2019 General Synod and the travel I have done in the past two years, this event has offered the greatest clarity over what I am called to do, and a pathway forward with leaders invested in the same goals.

Learnings

TuttleCo, led by Chris Tuttle was our Digital Engagement Strategist and supported our event in the weeks leading up to Reset for Renewal and during the actual event. TuttleCo was able to streamline our process so that the Zoom experience was taken to the next level and executed with a level of professionalism that we at the National Setting have not yet experienced. With the support of Jennifer White, Project Coordinator for Digital Events, and her ability to interface with OPTIC as well as offer live support during the event, attendees were able to have a clear timeline, and utilize several software tools that create easy access to collaboration and data sharing. Additionally, we have gained a greater understanding of the digital capabilities of Zoom and can dream of a better program for the youth and young adults with General Synod. It is clear to me that TuttleCo or a similar company will be absolutely necessary for General Synod to be executed with excellence.

Additionally, Reset for Renewal illuminated a huge void for those engaged in progressive youth ministry. This year, there were no major conferences held for this target audience. Furthermore, the last time

UCC youth ministers gathered with intention, spanning the entire country, was in May of 2010. There is a hunger for the sharing of resources, the building of collegiality, access to the national office and the creation of events and content. This will need to be evaluated moving forward but must happen with greater frequency than every ten years.

Collaboration

Reset for Renewal was an opportunity to connect and form partnerships across the church. The event was a collaboration between the national setting and the Network for Wider Church Youth Ministry, with direct support (financial) from the Minnesota Conference.

During the event, small groups met regionally to begin working toward the 2024 regional youth events with one of them already having secured a location. Additionally, there was time for specialized ministries to meet (campus/education ministry, camps/outdoor ministry) to network and being working together.

Had Reset for Renewal not happened, it would have been unlikely that these groups would have gotten together and that I would have had the opportunity to lay the foundation which will allow greater collaboration and movement in 2021 and beyond. There were also several collaborative documents we utilized to gain and share contact information amongst each other, form ministry partners and share resources of what youth ministers are doing and implementing in this COVID-19 season that others may try.