The Keystone Connection

A Message to the Conference

September 15, 2026

Members and Friends of Keystone Conference,

Grace and peace to you.

As we continue settling into life as the newly formed Keystone Conference, many of us are discovering just how much we still need to learn about who we are and who we are becoming. One of the biggest questions in front of us is about our youth. Where are they in our congregations? How many are active? What are they experiencing, needing, and hoping for? And how can we support their growth in faith, identity, and community?

In my role as Coordinator of Faith Formation for Youth, my focus is youth theology and youth culture—how young people understand God, themselves, and the world they're navigating. To serve them well, we need a clearer picture of the youth across our conference. I would love to learn from you:

How many youth are active in your congregation? Where are they located within the conference? What are their spiritual and social needs? What support do you need as leaders walking alongside them?

Many of you already know that we are preparing upcoming youth culture seminars this fall, focusing on fandoms, trad wives, and the manosphere. These sessions are designed to help us understand the digital worlds shaping our young people's identities and relationships. They are just one part of a larger effort to build shared learning and shared ministry across the Keystone Conference.

Another common question I receive is about confirmation. Several of you have expressed interest in a conference wide approach, something that honors the identity of each local church while giving our youth a chance to learn, connect, and grow together. With that in mind, I'd like to explore the possibility of launching a Conference wide confirmation program beginning in January 2027 and culminating around Pentecost 2027. The plan would include online sessions led by Conference staff and guest teachers, integration with home congregations for mentorship and local engagement, and a retreat experience for all confirmands.

Before we move forward, I want to hear from you.

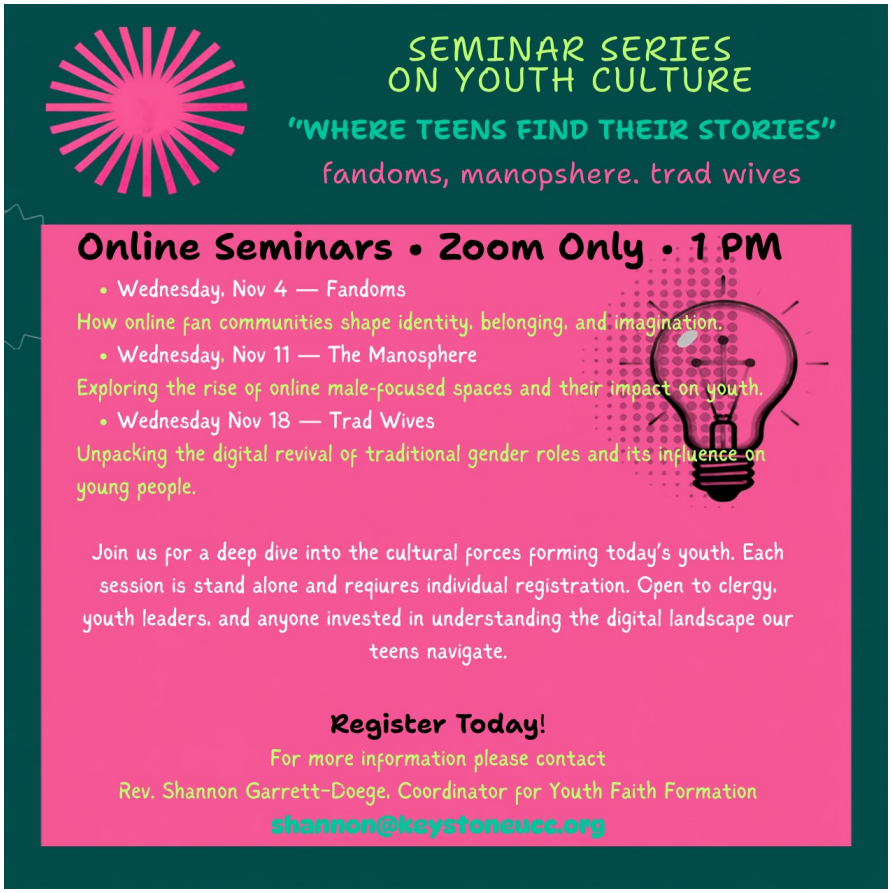
I will be hosting a Zoom conversation to gather information about the youth in your corner of the Keystone Conference. This will be a space to share what you're seeing, what your youth are asking, and how the conference can support their relationship with God, their neighbor, and themselves. Go to keystoneucc.org/

events to register to receive the Zoom links for two dates September 23, 1:00 p.m., and October 13, 10:00 a.m. You can attend one session or both. There is no cost for these informational sessions.

Thank you for the ministry you offer, for the care you give to your youth, and for your willingness to help shape this new chapter in our shared life. I look forward to learning from you and imagining together what youth formation can look like in the Keystone Conference.

With gratitude,
Rev. Shannon M. Garrett-Doege,
Coordinator of Faith Formation (Youth)
Keystone Conference, United Church of Christ

Register for one or more "Where Teens Find Their Stories" webinars on keystoneucc.org/events



Fall Conference Meeting
November 14 2026
Online Attendance Only

Registration link: click "Fall Meeting" on the homepage of keystoneucc.org

Delegate Information:
All authorized clergy holding standing in one of our Associations will be entitled to vote.

Churches will also have the following delegates:
Membership up to 100—2 delegates
Membership of 101—300—3 delegates
Membership 301—500—4 delegates
Membership over 500—5 delegates
1 Youth delegate (ages 14-17) with voice but no vote.

** Our quorum requires that 30% of our churches (152) be represented!

The only agenda item will be the APPROVAL of the 2027 Keystone Fall Budget