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NEWSLETTER JUNE 2026 EDITION

YAYA CONNECT

Authentic Ministry - Intentional Learning - Resource Giving



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THE YAYA LEADERSHIP LOUNGE

A Leadership Exchange for Those Serving Youth and Young Adults

Youth and young adult ministry is sacred, meaningful, and transformative work but no one should have to do it alone. Pastors and ministry leaders are continually navigating changing cultural realities, congregational expectations, limited resources, difficult questions, and the evolving spiritual and emotional needs of young people.

The YAYA Leadership Lounge is a monthly virtual gathering created for pastors, youth directors, young adult ministers, volunteers, mentors, educators, and others who serve alongside youth and young adults. The Lounge will offer a welcoming and inclusive space for leaders to connect, exchange ideas, discuss real ministry challenges, share resources, and encourage one another in the work.

This is not another formal meeting where participants are expected to arrive with all the answers. It is a collaborative space where leaders can bring their questions, experiences, successes, challenges, and emerging ideas. Together, we will listen for what young people are teaching the church, explore faithful and creative ministry practices, and imagine communities where every young person can experience safety, dignity, belonging, purpose, and the liberating love of God.



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Grounded in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, the YAYA Leadership Lounge monthly virtual meet up space will allow youth and young adult ministry leaders to connect, share wisdom, and encourage one another. Join us beginning Wednesday, July 29, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Central Time, and every last Wednesday of the month.

Register Here

Scripture Anchor: "Encourage one another and build up each other." — 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Suggested Practices:

- **Arrive and breathe:** Take three grounding breaths and become present to the community.
- **Share a joy and a challenge:** Name one place of growth and one place where support is needed.
- **Exchange a resource:** Bring one ministry idea, tool, prayer, or practice to share.

Discussion Questions

- What are youth and young adults asking from the church right now?
- Where are young people experiencing belonging, and where are barriers still present?
- What support would help you lead in a healthier and more sustainable way?



JUNE BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

How We Learn to Be Brave by Mariann Edgar Budde: A thoughtful resource for leaders helping young adults explore courage, conviction, and how to move faithfully through uncertain seasons with integrity.

The Deeply Formed Life by Rich Villodas: A grounding resource for leaders seeking to nurture young adults in emotional health, spiritual depth, community, and a faith that feels rooted in real life.

YOUNG ADULTS WITH/IN DISABILITIES: A CALL TO LISTEN, LEARN, AND BUILD TOGETHER

A new initiative through Young Adult Leadership Development is helping center the lived experiences, wisdom, and leadership of young adults with/in disabilities. This work is rooted in an understanding of disability that looks beyond diagnosis alone and pays attention to the barriers, systems, and assumptions that shape daily life. It also reflects a commitment to making sure young adults with/in disabilities help guide the work, rather than simply being included after decisions have already been made.

Through a Research and Design Team and a community survey, this initiative is gathering insight that can help shape more faithful, accessible, and justice minded programming for young adults living with physical disabilities, chronic illness, sensory disabilities, neurodivergence, mental health conditions, communication disabilities, and learning disabilities.

This effort is an important reminder that accessibility is not just about accommodation. It is about belonging, leadership, and making room for the full humanity of every person in the life of the church. Churches and leaders can learn more, access congregational resources, and help share the survey at www.nbacares.org/disabilities.

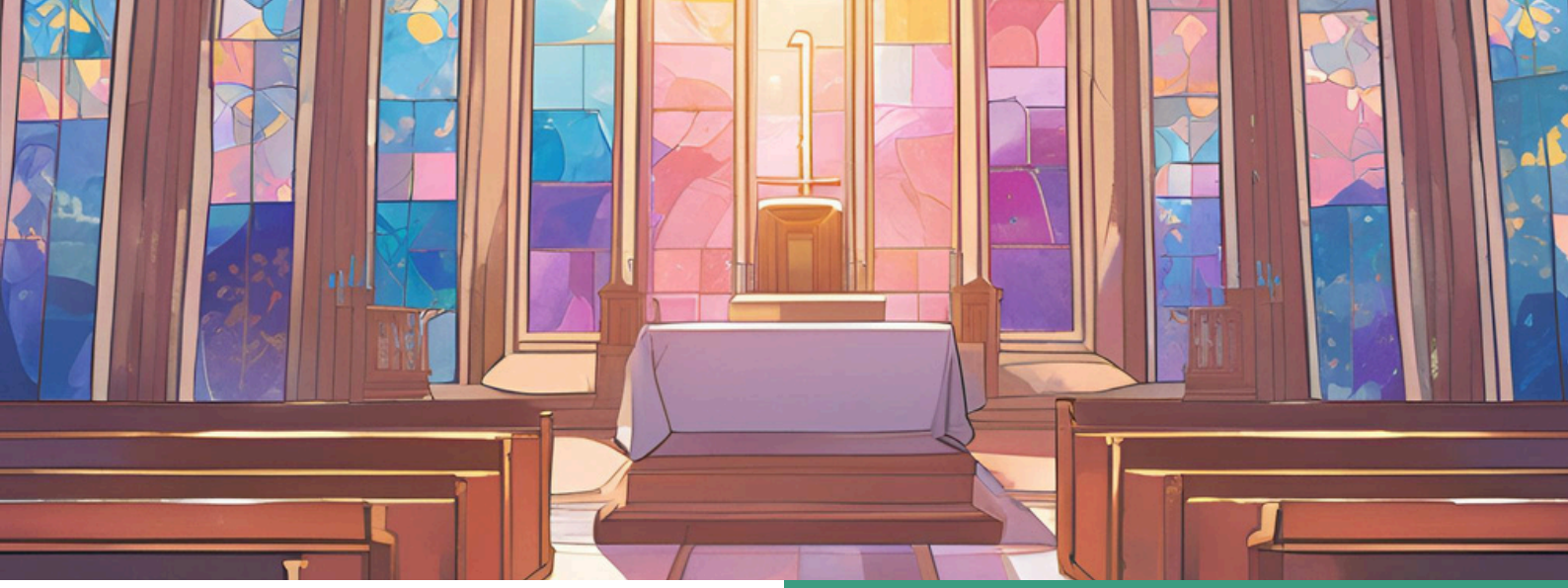
Scripture Anchor:
1 Corinthians 12:22–26; Luke 14:13–14; Micah 6:8

Suggested Practices:

- **Resource Sharing:** Visit www.nbacares.org/disabilities and share the survey and church resources with your congregation or ministry network.
- **Listening First:** Reflect on how your church makes room for the voices and leadership of people with/in disabilities.
- **Accessibility Check:** Review one part of your ministry life and ask what barriers may still be keeping people from full participation.

Discussion Questions:

- What does "nothing about us without us" mean in the life of the church?
- How can congregations move from awareness to meaningful accessibility and inclusion?
- What would it look like to center disabled young adults as leaders, not just participants?



TERM OF THE MONTH: VOICE

Plain definition: Voice is the expression of who you are, what you believe and what matters to you.

Why it matters: Voice matters because many youth are taught to stay quiet, not ask too many questions, or not take up too much space. Some silence themselves because they fear being judged, ignored or misunderstood. Over time, that can make it hard to trust your own thoughts or believe that what you have to say matters.

Your voice matters to God and it matters in community. Voice is not just about speaking loudly, it's about speaking truthfully. It's about naming what you feel, what you notice, what you hope for and what you refuse to accept. For youth, finding your voice is part of becoming. It is part of learning that you are not here just to blend in or go along with whatever is happening around you. You are here to think, question, create and speak with courage and care.

Voice also matters because communities grow stronger when young people are truly listened to. Churches, schools and families are healthier when youth are not just talked to, but heard.

Scripture Anchor: Jeremiah 1:4–8; 1 Timothy 4:12; Proverbs 31:8–9

Suggested Practices:

- **Story Sharing:** Share a time you felt heard and a time you felt silenced.
- **Speak the Truth Practice:** Name one thing you care deeply about and why.
- **Affirming Voice Circle:** Let each person speak one truth about themselves without interruption.

Discussion Questions:

- What helps you feel confident using your voice?
- When is it hardest to speak up?
- How can we create spaces where every young person knows their voice matters?

GRADUATING TO LIFE: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S NEXT

Not knowing what's next can feel especially heavy in young adulthood. This is often the season when people are expected to make major decisions about work, school, relationships, housing, finances and purpose sometimes all at once. It can feel like everyone else has a plan while you are still trying to make sense of your own life. That kind of uncertainty can create pressure, self doubt and the fear that you are falling behind.

Not knowing what's next does not mean you are failing. It means you are in a real season of transition. Young adulthood is full of change and clarity does not always come as quickly as people want it to. Sometimes the next step takes time to come into focus. Sometimes growth happens while you are still waiting, questioning and trying to decide what matters most.

This is why it is important not to confuse uncertainty with lack of purpose. You do not need to have every answer to move with intention. You do not need a perfect plan to take one faithful next step. What matters is staying grounded enough to listen, honest enough to admit what you do not know and open enough to trust that your life is still unfolding with meaning. God can still meet you in the unknown and guide you with wisdom even when the full picture is not yet clear.

Scripture Anchor: Proverbs 3:5–6; Isaiah 30:21; Jeremiah 29:11

Suggested Practices:

- **Naming the Unknown:** Invite each person to share one area of life where they feel uncertain right now.
- **Pressure Check:** Reflect on where expectations about career, success, or timing are creating stress.
- **Faithful Next Step:** Encourage each person to name one small, realistic step they can take without needing the whole plan.

Discussion Questions

- What feels most uncertain in this season of young adulthood?
- How does pressure about timing or success affect your decisions?
- What helps you trust that your life still has direction when the future feels unclear?