

General Council Youth and Young Adult Survey

2019

The majority of respondents want to:
Take part in faith-based work towards peace, justice and equity; and
Work with global partners of the United Church of Canada

Questions Responses **264**

Here I am! Youth in the United Church of Canada

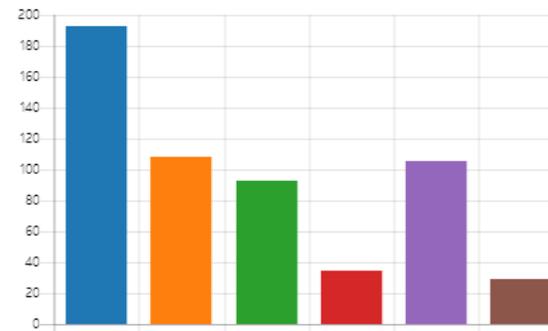
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|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 264 Responses | 44:44 Average time to complete | Closed Status |  Ideas |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--|

[View results](#)  [Open in Excel](#)

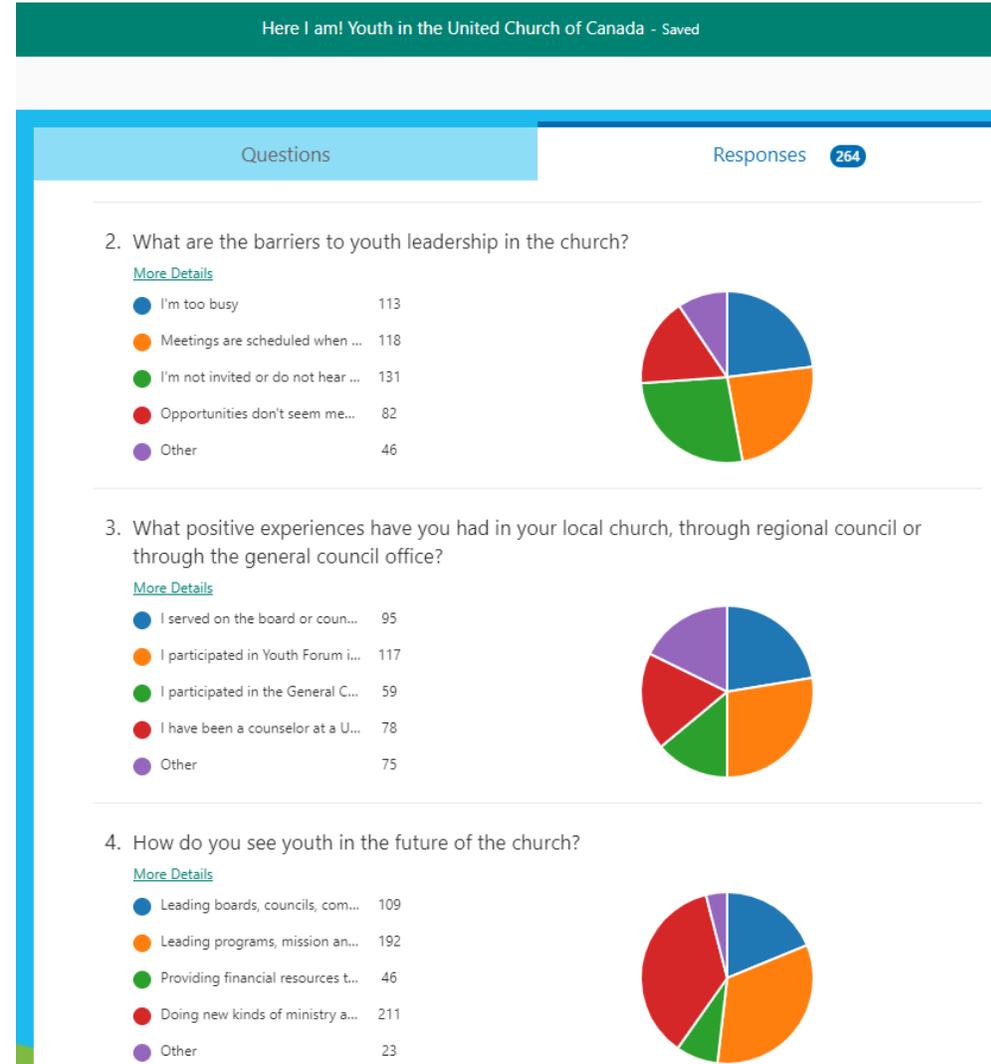
1. How do you want to engage with the United Church of Canada outside of your community of faith?

[More Details](#)

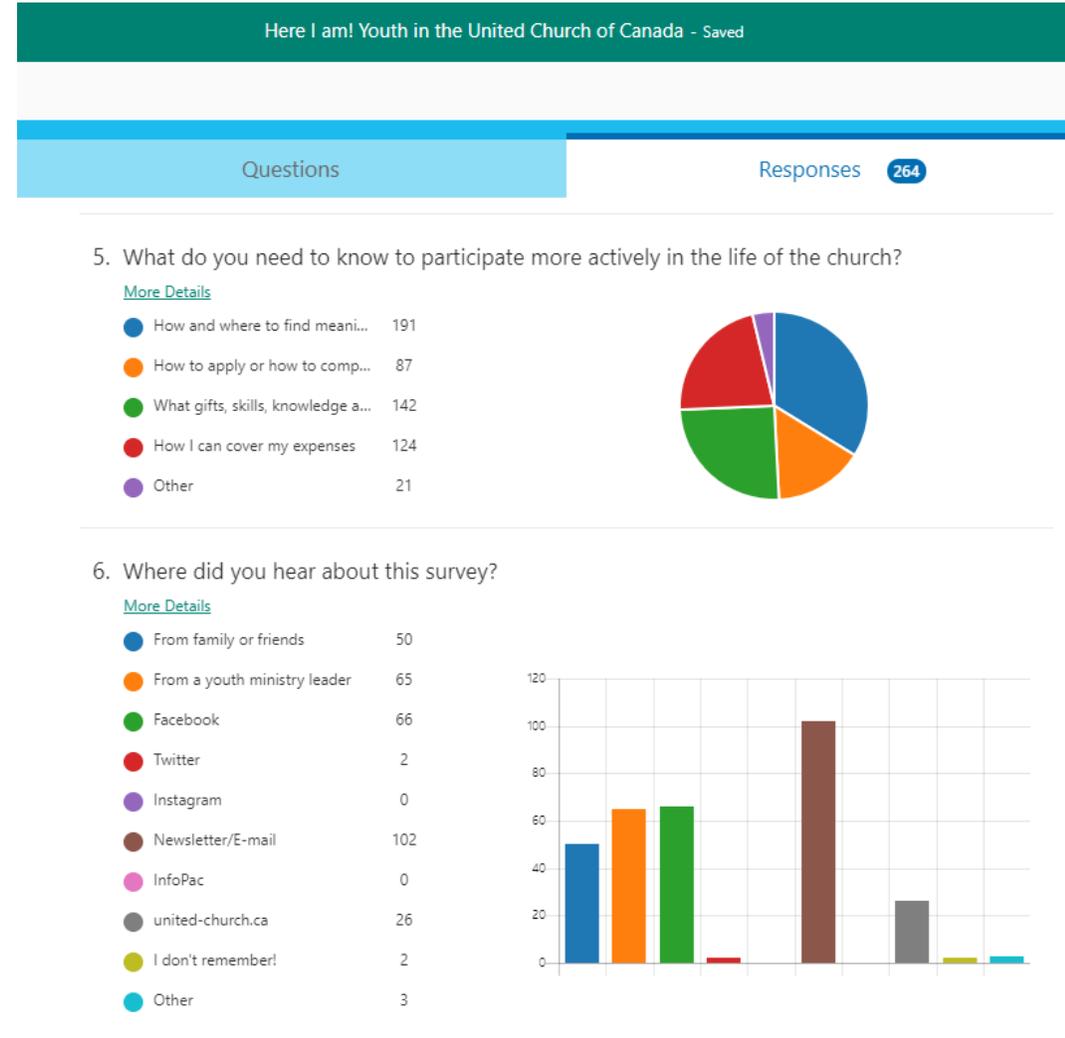
| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| ● Take part in faith-based work t... | 193 |
| ● Work with global partners of t... | 108 |
| ● Advise the General Council Ex... | 93 |
| ● Be an intern at the General Co... | 35 |
| ● Elect a youth Moderator to re... | 105 |
| ● Other | 29 |



Barriers to youth engagement are easy to change: Meetings aren't scheduled when they are available, or they don't know about available opportunities. In future youth imagine themselves doing new kinds of ministry and mission through local and global community partners



There is a desire for meaningful participation, but lack of communication is a real issue.



Most participants were in our target age range; Most live in cities.

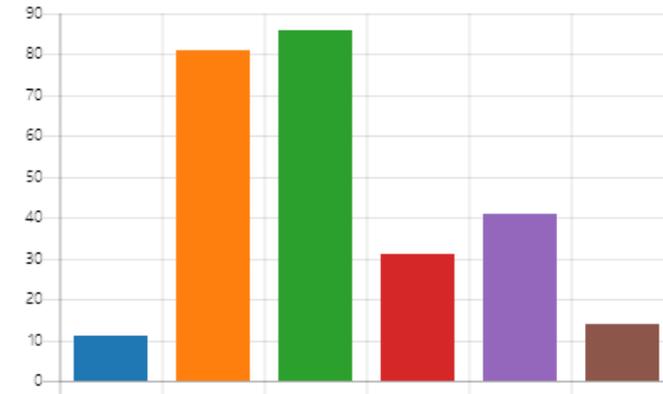
Questions

Responses **264**

7. I am ...

[More Details](#)

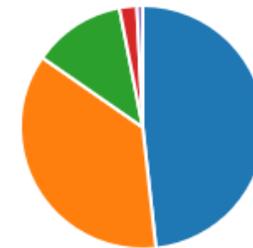
| | |
|----------------------|----|
| ● 13 or younger | 11 |
| ● 14-18 | 81 |
| ● 19-24 | 86 |
| ● 25-28 | 31 |
| ● 29+ | 41 |
| ● I'd rather not say | 14 |



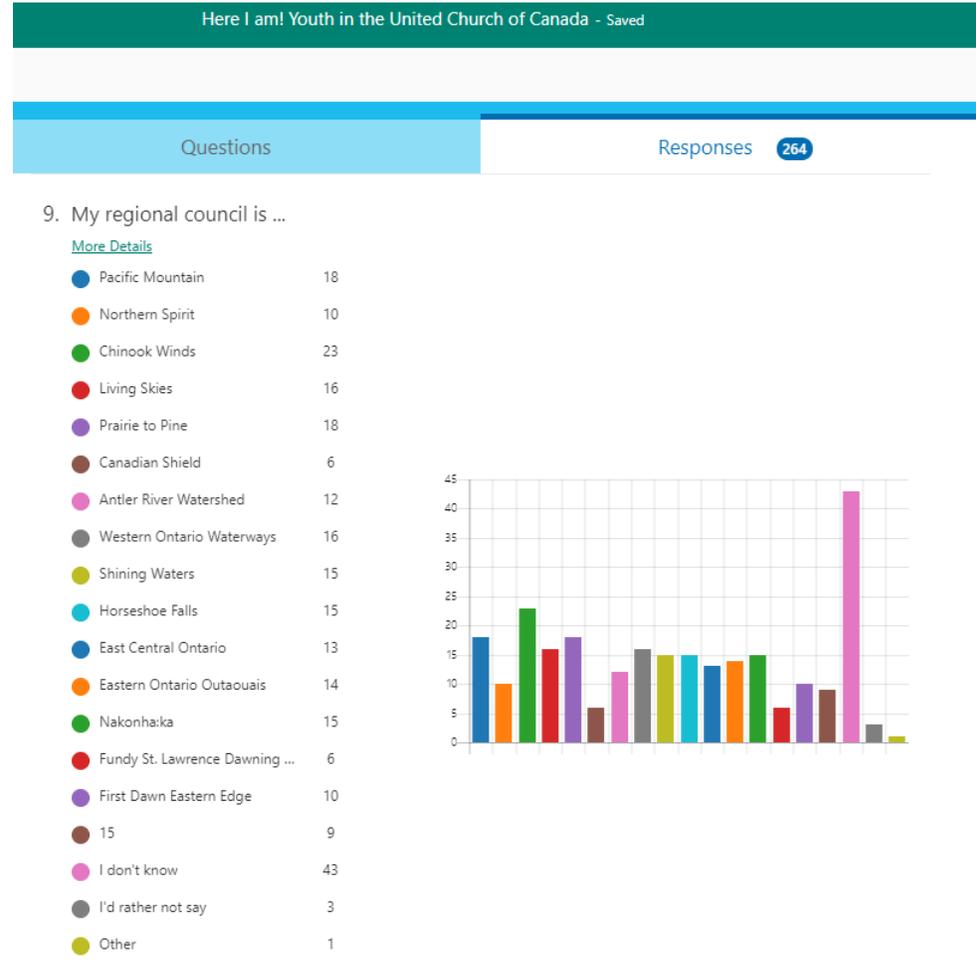
8. I live in a ...

[More Details](#)

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| ● big city | 126 |
| ● town or small city | 95 |
| ● rural community | 32 |
| ● regional or remote community | 6 |
| ● I'd rather not say | 2 |



Maybe it's a good thing that they don't know what Region they are part of – it may mean we reached beyond the “church nerd” demographic!



They had

There's nothing on this survey about faith formation for youth. to quote former moderator Jordan Cantwell "there's lots of safe justice making communities we can belong to but the thing that makes the church different is that it's rooted in the story of Jesus Christ."

I think too often the attempts to include youth are done in a patronizing way or in a way that doesn't allow them to impact and influence real change. For ten years youth have been trying to get a voice at General Council, and frankly all they've received is this survey in a decade. Regional councils and General Council have to be willing to allow youth into the power structures of the church and make concessions on the time and location of meetings to allow their voice to be heard. A youth moderator and a youth advisory council don't mean anything if they are never heard. The things I learned in the church came from adults who were willing to listen to me and were willing to be challenged on the fact that we don't always have to pour the same old wine into the same old wineskins. It's not hard to include youth, but the fact is we keep trying to reinvent the wheel.

much

Tokenism affects more than just youth. Canada is a multicultural and inclusive country but church services at least where I live in Vancouver do not reflect the diversity I see every day. Churches here are ethnically segregated. Church is something you do on Sunday as a routine because it's comfortable. Devoted young people will not invest in an institution that caters to the majority of middle and upper class seniors that are looking for comfort. Young leaders want progress and change. Change is uncomfortable. If Jesus was alive, I believe he would be with those on the margins of society, not those who ignore the people on the margins. The United Church of Canada with its roots in Anglo-Saxon traditions does not speak to those that the church should appeal to. The United Church of Canada says all the right things about progressive theology and inclusion, but actions speak louder than words. It is only when the church accepts that fundamental change is needed to progress that active involvement from young people will occur. If the current leaders of the United Church of Canada believe that our legacy rests on the amount of real estate we own, then the church is doing its job. If The United Church of Canada reflects on its own history and the history of other church denominations and actively tries to learn from past mistakes, while genuinely inviting previously unheard voices from the community to participate in the decision making process then true change can finally start taking place.

Church is not a place of entertainment but rather a place for worship. We need to pray for youth to stay in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit not try to get them to come to church because of Movie nights and stuff.

more

It's frustrating to see that life-changing and aw-inspiring moments that happen collectively in young peoples lives happens so sporadically (summers/annually/every 3 years, etc. -- Rendezvous, summer camp, youth forum, GO Project). We need to focus on making these moments happen in small, but still impactful ways constantly in church spaces. We wish the church would put more support, resources and practices into place to support local change.

This survey is so important, and we would welcome anyone who wants more information to come to the GO office with all of our staff as this conversation was heated for an hour. There is so much passion for young people to be in the church, but we're already all so tired.

Much of the survey focuses on peace and justice work. That is important, but there are many organizations that focus on that. What makes the Church unique? I think the Church needs to do a better job explaining the basics of the Christian faith and why it is relevant and how it can come to life. Even though the revolution in scientific knowledge has taken out a great deal of the assumptions of the Christian faith, people are still interested in spirituality. For example, I have heard people talk about the 7 chakras, which I believe are part of the Hindu tradition. Why are people who look for spirituality not looking at the United Church? The Church is a Christian organization, and if Christianity has anything to offer people and is persuasive and compelling, then the Church needs to make that case. The United Church will either make that case or it will die. There are 2 relevant questions that need to be answered: what was on the minds of the writers when the biblical texts were written, and why is that relevant in today's context?

to say

Thank you for this survey!

I want more visibility of youth opportunities--so we can meet each other, connect, and form networks!

I'd love to discuss further the idea of providing mentorships for youth and young adults as part of increasing participation if there is interest in this. It could be piloted in one region and brought nation-wide and to GC.

Why are there no questions here about engaging in my own faith and spirituality?
Ignoring that whole facet of my being makes me NOT want to do United Church stuff.

I live in both Sudbury and Ottawa so am part of both a large city and a northern community and 2 regions.

I would love more chances to engage and bring disabilities access to church.

The UCC no longer speaks for me, or to me. If you want me to engage more, I have to feel like
a)I am valued and b)That our God is God; it isn't 24-7 Social Justice.

Until the National Church stops being the radical side of the NDP there is little hope except at the local church level. My home church welcomes all political points of view. We minister together to help others as Jesus followers

Not all good,
not all bad, but
all real.
Many of their
frustrations are
due to lack of
respect in their
local faith
communities.

Things need to change in the church for the sake of youth and young families. Older members of the church are trying to maintain status quo, but really they are part of the problem by not realizing the church needs young families to sustain our legacy. Clergy need to encourage changes in creative ways and not fall back on "the way things have always been".

You have creative ideas, thank you.

Sorry if my comments seem negative, but people my age are less interested in meetings, and will participate in "justice issues" individually, but really need to have an experience of God. The United Church seems uninterested in this, except for "contemporary worship" which my grandparents favour because it seems what they call relevant, even if shallow compared to the spiritual questions raised in my video games.