

PROPOSAL 2

Proposal: First Third Ministry - A Priority for Our Region

Origin: Faith Formation and Education Committee

1. What is the issue?

The General Council, at its most recent meeting in August of 2025, named “First Third Ministry” (known in this region as ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults) as a priority for the denomination (in GCE04 Funding Strategic Growth Initiatives, WF37 National Youth Council, and GC45 Vocations for the Whole People of God). This action names and centres the ministry in ways that make it a priority in action and in our use of resources (both people and financial). Further to that, a national strategy is being developed to centre this ministry for the current triennium that will help both the General Council and the Regional Councils to attain goals that will enhance the ministry that is before the whole denomination in the report “Toward 2035.” We recognize the support that Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters has consistently offered in the past; most notably a full-time staff person devoted to a shared youth ministry with Bermuda-Nova Scotia and First Dawn Eastern Edge, a decent-sized budget to provide regional youth programming and support towards First Third Ministry events organized at the national level. We also recognize the unimaginable donation of volunteer hours and clergy’s unpaid overtime to ensure that First Third Ministry remains vital in our region. While this region has named priorities: 1. Three New Communities of Faith 2. Communicate/Invite/Renew 3. Support for Ministry Personnel 4. Education and 5. Toward 2035 we feel that this unwritten priority of First Third ministry should be named in a way that recognizes and ensures a continued intentional commitment. In keeping with larger church trends and goals, we recommend modifying the current strategic plan, updated in 2025, to ensure that our understanding of and the language we use to describe this vital ministry is in line with larger church language and goals. First Third Ministry is not just ministry activities for those who “do” this ministry. It promotes commitment to Faith, growing Discipleship, and a deeper understanding of Justice. A declared commitment to First Third Ministry also helps Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters with its mission to build trusting, respectful, and affirming relationships within the world.

2. Why is this issue important?

Actively naming and claiming a First Third Ministry offers a commitment to growth, the full integration of children, youth, young adults, their families and leaders into the ministry of the wider church, and because these age groups are already engaged in ministry, this will provide examples, activities, and guidelines for the rest of the region to consider and engage in when looking “Toward 2035.” By intentionally naming this often-overlooked cohort, we are ensuring that the voices of those in their first third of life and their families and leaders are able to contribute easily in meaningful ways and their contributions are sought and accepted as valuable to the church.

3. How might the Region respond to the issue?

Therefore, we believe that God is calling our Region to recognize the critical importance and vitality of these ministries in all aspects of its life and they need to be intentionally included by naming them in the current strategic plan.

This proposal recommends:

1). Naming, 'First Third' Ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults in the strategic plan by updating the priorities so that actions specific to First Third Ministry appear in each priority - a promise of mutuality in making this vision a reality.

2). Empower the Faith Formation and Education committee to review and update the priorities, following the pattern named—and bring them to the executive for full consideration and implementation.

3). The Nominations Committee, with help from Faith Formation and Education and the Regional Minister for CYAYA, will actively seek out people within the First Third of their lives to serve in all areas of regional ministry to ensure full integration of the updated Objectives and Actions.

4. What will be the impact?

Enacting this proposal will ensure that First Third Ministry will be considered crucial to the ministry of the region, recognizing and prioritizing it as ministry that provides discipleship, mission, and leadership.

5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity? Voices of Children, Youth, Young Adults, their families and their leaders are underrepresented in key areas of the region. This proposal seeks to invite First Third church members into all areas of the conversation, keeping their presence at the forefront of conversations.

6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the Region:

7. Who will speak to this proposal on behalf of the originating body?

Heather Donnelly, Chair of Faith Formation and Education

Catherine Stuart Regional Minister to Children, Youth & Young Adults