

2025 Report to the NELCSA Synod regarding Youth Work in the Northern and Central Circuit

by Julia Bingießer

Dear siblings in Christ,

As the representative for the youth work in the Northern and Central Circuit it is important to mention that the structure for youth work is very different from the KZN Youth.

If we talk about Youth Work, we include children's ministry as well as teenagers and young adults. This means it's a wide age span (from 2-27 years) that we approach with our programs.

In both the Northern and Central Circuit, the Youth Work is decentralised with each congregation organising youth work on their own. There are however part-time and full-time posts for youth work financed by the individual congregations. These are Tshinyi Mavhusha in the North Rand congregation, Isabeau Weyer in the West Rand congregation and Julia Bingießer in the Johannes congregation. *(For an oversight, please find the reports on the North Rand congregation and the Johannes congregation at the bottom.)*

In other congregations lay leaders/co-workers are responsible for the youth ministries.

There is a variety of activities offered in the different congregations from Children's Church ministries to regular children's and youth groups or camps/sleepovers.

One of the ongoing challenges remains the question of children and teenagers being so occupied with school and extra-mural activities that it becomes difficult for them to participate in church activities too. However, this appears to be more of an urban phenomenon as there are more options to choose from than in the more rural areas of the circuits.

There are plans for a potential youth meeting of Central and Northern Circuit youths in 2026. They haven't been finalised yet.

Although there is no oversight in youth work, there are bi-lateral combined activities between congregations such as the confirmation camp of the Johannesgemeinde and Kroondal congregation or when the West Rand congregation supported the Midrand congregation in their journey to more youth work.

This is one of the blessings we experienced this year! *(Please find the report attached.)*

It is an honour to work with the young members of our church.

Their perspectives challenge and expand the way we see and experience church and it's a wonderful opportunity to walk a while with them on their journey of becoming Christians and informed and responsible members of the holy church.

The Revival of MLC Youth Ministry

"Encourage young people to embrace their calling and trust in God's guidance, even when feeling inadequate." [Jeremiah 1:7-8](#)

Background

Our journey with MLC youth ministry has been a challenging yet fulfilling one as it gives testimony of God's faithfulness.

MLC youth ministry has faced several challenges for some time, and this eventually resulted in its existence gradually fading. The congregation showed great concern regarding youth and MLC congregational council was urged to act. In the last quarter of the year, council took a decision to disband the youth structure, with an aim of rebuilding and reviving the ministry with a new vision and renewed commitment.

Steps Taken

- A Council Youth Task Team was formed & given specific deliverables.
- The youth task team engaged various youth structures to hear their thoughts on the challenges that youth had been facing.
- After engagements with all stakeholders, a report of findings was presented to council with a recommendation to hold a "Youth Revival Day"

Findings

- Elder youth felt that, with the growth of the church, an influx of the younger youth confirming and then joining youth, there was disconnect due to age differences.
- Youth Leaders felt that they were not getting enough support from the council and congregation.
- It was also noted that support from parents is crucial to the success of the youth ministry.

Solutions

- The task team engaged and incorporated a few parents & youth leaders into the youth task team.
- Planning of the "Youth Revival Day" with parents and youth being primary to the success of the revival.
- Youth Ministry to be divided into two age groups:
 - Group A (13 – 18)
 - Group B. (19 – 35)
- Each age group should elect its Exco and draw up their own calendar of activities for the year. However, they should align towards a common vision and joint activities and remain under the umbrella of MLC Youth Ministry.

Youth Revival Day- 8 March 2025

- Both Parents & Youth in attendance.
- Youth Leadership and a total of 16 youth members from West Rand Lutheran Community Church, known as “Holy Culture ”, were invited to motivate & encourage MLC youth.
- MLC Ministries offered words of encouragement & support and made monetary pledges towards the Revived Youth Fund.
- Parents were encouraged to discuss and commit to support the Revived Youth Ministry.
- Youth engaged in an "amazing race" game to deal with various issues in the youth ministry & help shape the vision for Revived Youth Ministry.
- Feedback from Parent & Youth engagements was presented by representatives from both parties and an alignment of ideas was reached.
- Fun Activities for both parents & youth created a wonderful atmosphere of fun & victory.

Revived Youth Structure

The youth ministry currently has an umbrella structure, with sub-groups, namely:

- Four Pockets Full (FPF) - age group 13-18
- The Bridge League (TBL) 19-35

In Conclusion

The two sub-groups form MLC Youth Ministry, each with its own Exco & and leadership but working in unity & alignment for the common vision of the ministry.

The Youth Ministry meets weekly as separate groups with monthly joint meetings of fellowship & bonding games. TBL as the older group gives guidance & mentorship to FPF Exco / Leadership, promoting spiritual and personal growth.

The congregation is especially proud & grateful for the unity and growth in our Revived Youth Ministry. Both FPF & TBL have various roles in the liturgy of the church services, and they handle it diligently. During youth month, in June, the lead two church services as "family on duty" and were able to introduce themselves to the congregation.

Lutheran Church - North Rand

1. Age Groups Reached

- Children 6–12 years (8)
- Teens 15–18 years (5)
- Young adults 19-21 years (4)

2. Well-Received Activities / Regular Groups

Activity	Frequency	Age group	Short description of what makes them successful
Kids session	Sat / Friday	6-12	Focused time
Camps	Bi -Annually	6-12	Focused time
Fun time – Outings		14-18	More relaxed
Service participation		14 -18	Short term commitment / youth feel part of congregation and contributing to the service

3. Team / Support Structure

- Youth co-workers
- Ideal if no siblings in the group

4. Cooperation with Other Congregations

- Currently no partnerships or collaborations
- Planning to meet and explore collaboration for kid’s camp with Church of peace – Hillbrow

5. Looking Ahead – Next Six Months

- Kids Sessions – Monthly
- Youth Service – Heritage theme
- Co -workers training
- Camp -3/4 Days

6. Challenges and Struggles

- Attendance can be improved
- Kids and youth schedule not able to accommodate activities – Most youth are already involved in many extramural activities.

Johannesgemeinde Pretoria-East

1. Age groups reached

- Children (age 2-12)
- Teenagers (age 13-18)
- Young Adults, unmarried (age 18-27)

2. Activities/regular groups that are well received

- Kompass (grade 1-5), every week + regular sleepovers
- Kids Week (grade 1-5), school holidays
- Children's Church (age 2-12), every week, 3 age groups
- Johnny FM (age 13-18), every month
- Johnny Jugend (age 13+), twice a month, events
- Johnny Bible Group (age 18+), every week (except university holidays)
- Kailager Camp during summer camp

3. Do you have a team/support by coworkers?

Children's Church is mainly led by coworkers, youth team, building foundation of peer coworkers (e.g. confirmands at kids' weeks)

4. Do you cooperate with other congregations?

Sometimes, e.g. students from other congregations, camps

5. What are you looking forward to in the next 6 months?

- Sunday school fest
- Confirmation
- Nativity play
- Camps (Rüstwoche, Kailager, Students)

6. Are there struggles you'd like to share?

- Finding adult coworkers for school holiday activities
- Transition from children's program to confirmation time to youth