

UNITED EVANGELICAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
East Avenue at Dillon Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

December 1, 1976

Dear Christian Friend(s) and Member(s):

This letter comes to you from me personally but also on behalf of the entire congregation of United Evangelical Church. Please consider it a personal invitation for you to help all of us develop something entirely new and exciting here at this Church.

My proposal is this: to bring together the active young adults of this congregation in the 18-35 age group to make specific plans for specific young adult-type activities in 1977 and beyond. We can call ourselves (?) the Young Adult Planning Group or perhaps you can come up with a better name ("The Fertile Few", "Couples and Singles", "The Swingers", etc....)! The proposed date is Friday evening, December 10 at 7:30 p.m., which means you may want to postpone your booze party, TV watching, or other events that night until after this strategic get-together. As it says in the Sunday Bulletin and the United Endeavor (to make sure you get this message!), come prepared with creative ideas to help us (you-all) move as quickly as possible beyond plans to specific events that will happen in 1977 and beyond. Strategies to involve other young adults of United Evangelical will be almost as important as the plans made.

A lot can happen and needs to happen to get this group (or groups) off the launch pad and into earth orbit here around this Church. And YOU are an indispensable part (non-throwaway) to make sure YOUR IDEAS and YOUR HELP are included. See you at the meeting, R.S.V.P. (because Mrs. Hengen and I are providing refreshments!)

In Christian Love,

Rev. W. Scott Hengen III

The Rev. W. Scott Hengen, III
Pastor

*See Making Leaf
Attached*

UNITED EVANGELICAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
East Avenue and Dillon Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

Advent, 1978

TO: All Confirmed Members of U.E.C. Under Age 30

FROM: Pastor Hengen

RE: Youth and Young Adults - Our plans for the future

Dear Friends:

Please give this letter your complete attention. It comes to you out of my frustration, concern, and interest about youth and young adult activities at United Evangelical Church. But it also comes with my hope and anticipation that something new, creative, and exciting will happen here. As your Pastor, as well as the Pastor of others, I want to help make your experiences of what it means to be a Christian and a Church Member become the best possible. And I firmly believe we have among us the potential, the creativity, and the resources to do just that! That's where you come in. It will take your interest, willingness, ideas, and commitment to make it happen here in an intentional (planning) way. ("Ask not what your church can do for you, but what you can do for your church".)

Now that you know I'm concerned, let me tell you why! For some time now (who knows how long?), youth and young adult members here at U.E.C. have been treated somewhat like second-class members. Many have willingly helped with various events when asked, but even more have accepted the reality that only "older" adults decide and determine what really happens here. That reality is only partly true, because the other side of that reality is that the voting young adult members have let it happen. Even youth who have "voice" but not vote in congregational decision-making have not always let their wishes and attitudes be heard where it really counts. Hence, many youth and young adults consider themselves (have allowed themselves to become) outsiders to what is happening and needs to happen here, for the Christian growth of everyone.

There have been some significant exceptions, however. At this moment the Church Council is composed of 25% (3 persons) from the "under 30" category, two of whom are officers of the Council. Another person from this age group also serves as an officer of the Church (Financial Secretary) from the Junior Council. Junior Council members have voiced their concerns, ideas, and frustrations, but not always in the Council Meetings where they needed to be heard and responded to effectively. Therefore, it seems to me that the time is ripe (we are all now ready) for something new to happen.

But before jumping ahead to planning, let's pause to look at the recent past:

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- 1972-73 - Youth Group grew under good leadership and developed the Dinner-Theatre Show idea. Also, the Contemporary Worship Group was formed to do exciting, interesting, and creative events.
- 1973-74 - Additional full-time staff assisted the Pastor, adult leaders, youth, and young adults in programming for Christian Education (including Confirmation Classes) and Youth Work.
- 1974-75 - After experiencing frustration, lack of support, and incomplete cooperation, this additional staff person resigned. Yet, the Youth Group and the Contemporary Worship Group continued to grow and develop.
- 1975-76 - New pastor arrived with total responsibility to help develop program activities for the whole church, including youth and young adults. He served as Consultant and Advisor (ex officio) to the Youth Group, the Contemporary Worship Group, and the almost defunct Young Adult Group.
- 1976-77 - New pastor initiated a new total planning process for the entire church and its program. There was limited response from youth, adult youth leaders, and young adults in developing the Goals and Objectives for 1977-80. Feelings and attitudes of total independence or boycott were openly expressed by persons in the under-30 age group and by their adult leaders. Nevertheless, a Goal was developed and passed that by 1980 "at least 25% of the congregation will be of the 20-34 age group". And the Objective for "immediate increased support for the Young Adult Group" happened in the 1978 Budget. Some youth participated in the Chesapeake Association Youth Task Force activities.
- 1977-78 - A new Pastor's Project for leadership study, training, and planning was developed for youth, adult youth leaders, and young adults to grow and participate actively in the congregation's planning process for the 1980's. Youth Group planning and programming developed separately from our Goals and Objectives, but supported some of them. The Dinner-Theatre Show was again successful, but plans for 1979 are indefinite. Fellowship and fun (not education or action) are still the basic purposes for Youth Group activities. Some additional participation by youth in the Chesapeake Association Youth Task Force programming happened. Young adult programs are almost non-existent, except young adults are functioning as leaders in various other groups (Choirs, Church School, Committees, Council, etc.). Contemporary Worship Group decided to dissolve itself into nothingness.

Now comes what I think is new and necessary. Every confirmed person of United Evangelical Church is or should be a fully active and participating member of the church. That means to me that youth and young adults are members now, and not just the "future church". And that also means to me that each confirmed young person has the right

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and the responsibility to be heard (and even to vote) concerning any and all decisions made by the congregation. But just because I think that way or feel that way does not make it happen that way. What you need to know now is that I am your advocate (helper) towards making it happen that way here and now! And that is not said on your behalf to the detriment of any other age group in the congregation. For I am in favor of everyone having their rightful "say" in what happens or needs to happen.

Therefore, I think the youth and young adults of this church need to get their "thing" together as soon as possible. I think we should have a meeting of all the youth and young adults we can get to discuss carefully some or all of the following proposals and then organize ourselves to do what needs to be done. If you think someone else is going to do it for you, then I think you are the victim of wrong thinking. Concerned and active participation (commitment) is the way things get achieved - here or anywhere else. You are the best person to help us, the church, decide what needs to happen here. Consider carefully, please, the following proposals or any possible combination thereof:

Proposal #1 - A totally new Youth and Young Adult Program Council (Y.Y.A.P.C.) be formed immediately to plan and implement all activities for those in the 15 to 30 age group in this church. Current adult leaders, including the Pastor, would attend the formative meetings of this new group by invitation only. Coordination with other programmed activities in the church would happen through the Christian Education Committee of the Council and the Church Calendar in the Church Office. Specific goals and objectives would be developed by this group (Y.Y.A.P.C.) for inclusion in both the Objectives for 1979 and the new Goals and Objectives to be developed for 1980 to 1985.

Proposal #2 - An organized effort be initiated to lower the voting age for Congregational Meetings to age 15 and Council Members to age 18. This would recognize that all baptised and confirmed members of the church are full and participating and contributing members now and not only for "sometime" in the future. It would also recognize the new voting age (and drinking age) for state and federal elections. It could also initiate full participation (with voice, vote, and help) on all committees of the Council on a representative percentage basis to fulfill our Goal that 25% of the active congregation will be in the 15 to 35 age group.

Proposal #3 - A new Young Adult Ministries Task Group (Y.A.M.T.G.) be formed immediately to plan and implement new programmed activities for all church members in the 18-35 age group to meet their special needs and interests. It could be composed by all those currently active from that age group who are able and willing to serve. Implicit would be the need to experiment with new and creative ideas for worship, education, fellowship and outreach. Learning what has been "successful" for other churches in ministering to persons in this age group could be a beginning step.

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Proposal #4 - We do nothing or nothing more than we are doing now and live with the future consequences of that non-action.

Proposal #5 - Expect other churches in this part of Baltimore to do this kind of ministering activity for us, specifically with this age group. In that case, we should support their programs with participants, leaders, and finances.

Proposal #6 - Form a special (short-term) Youth Planning Task Group (Y.P.T.C.) to prepare Objectives for 1979 to be submitted for action and approval at the January Congregational Meeting (along with those of the Christian Education Committee).

Proposal #7 - Some or none of the above proposals be used to form a new and creative proposal to be formulated and adopted at a Grand Meeting (all-inclusive) to be called and moderated by our current youth and young adult leaders as soon as possible.

Proposal #8 - A petition be circulated among youth and young adults for the Church Council and Congregation to hire a full-or part-time Staff Person (Assistant Pastor) to help organize youth and young adult activities here as soon as possible.

OK, now that you have read this far, you are either totally confused or have begun to get some new ideas of your own. That's good, and welcome to the group of some of the rest of us who are creative, yet confused. That probably means we are ready to have a party to get ourselves together and talk out some of these alternatives and set some new plans for ourselves. So here goes ---

What? An Advent-Christmas-New Year's Blast-Off

Where? Friendship Hall at the Church

Who? You and whoever (whomever) you care to bring along

When? Friday evening, January 5, 1979 at 7:30 p.m.

BYOB Bring your own bottle - soda, of course

Note the change of date as published in the United Endeavor.

The Church will provide other snacks (cheese, chips, dip, pretzels, etc.). If we decide to get pizza, we'll decide to get pizza! If it goes too long, we may need our sleeping bags too! See you there! (I hope!)

Please bring this letter with you to the Blast-Off.

Rev. H. Scott Hengen

P.S. Please remember this will be a serious planning session for our future together.