

Young Leaders Network

Description

The Young Leaders Network is a relational learning community for emerging leaders currently serving in local churches, as well as young adults exploring their unique calling within the body of Christ. Our network provides space for prayer, encouragement, spiritual formation, and vocational discernment alongside peers from across the Chicagoland Baptists family.

Purpose

We exist to champion the local church by developing the next generation of leaders to advance the gospel in Chicagoland and beyond. The network is designed to reinforce—not replace—local church discipleship, offering relational learning and exposure to broader ministry pathways that complement the work of the local congregation.

Meeting Schedule

When: 7:00pm to 8:15pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month beginning February 24, 2026.

Where: Zoom (with occasional in-person gatherings)

Participants

Young men and women ages 18–35 (approximately) who are:

- Actively serving in their local church, OR
- Exploring a potential call to ministry or church leadership

NOTE: Participation is encouraged through the recommendation of local church pastors and leaders.

Primary Outcomes

1. Formation and Confidence

Through participation in the Young Leaders Network, participants will grow in understanding their God-given value within the body of Christ and be encouraged and equipped to serve faithfully in their current ministry contexts.

2. Vocational Clarity and Urgency

Through participation in the Young Leaders Network, participants will develop a clearer understanding of ministry as a vocation, gaining exposure to areas such as missions, church planting, pastoral ministry, church revitalization, denominational life, and other key expressions of local church leadership in various contexts.

Network Commitments

The Young Leaders Network gathers to foster:

- Meaningful relationships among young leaders in Chicagoland.
- Ongoing spiritual formation.
- Intentional leadership development.
- Discernment of ministry calling and direction.

Learning Environment

The network will create opportunities for:

- Sharing ministry experiences and challenges.
- Relational connection and peer support.
- Learning from seasoned pastors and ministry leaders.

Suggested Reading

Foundations & Calling

- Guinness, Os. *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Nouwen, J.M. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989.
- Pace, Scott and Pruitt, Shane. *Calling Out the Called: Discipling Those Called to Ministry Leadership*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2022.
- Proctor, Samuel, D. and Taylor, Gardner, C. *We Have this Ministry: The Heart of the Pastor's Vocation*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1996.
- Taylor, Edward, L., ed. *Faith in the Fire: Wisdom for Life*. New York: Smiley Books, 2011.

Practical Leadership & Discipleship

- Dever, Mark. *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016.
- Wilkes, Gene, C. *Jesus On Leadership: Timeless Wisdom on Servant Leadership*. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998.

Heritage & Local Context

- Carter, Nathan, ed. *Longevity in Chicagoland: What it Takes to Make It in Ministry Here*. Chicago: Chicagoland Baptists, 2025.
- Gayle, Clement. *George Liele: Pioneer Missionary to Jamaica*. Kingston: Jamaica Baptist Union, 1982.
- Marsden, George, M. *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.

Relationship to the Local Church and Expectations

The Young Leaders Network is designed to serve in partnership with the local church and under the spiritual authority of participants' pastors and church leadership. Participation does not replace local church discipleship or ministry involvement, but seeks to strengthen it through monthly gatherings, relational learning, and exposure to broader ministry pathways. The expected time commitment is one 75-minute meeting per month, with suggested reading drawn from, but not limited to, the listed texts to support discussion and reflection.