

Statement from Young Adult New Fire Participants, November 5, 2008:

We are young adult ecumenists, called by Christ to relationships of prayer and accountability with one other. We represent a wide variety of Christian traditions, including those who are not members of the National Council of Churches/Church World Service, all gathered in affirmation of our common baptism. We are committed to reaching out to more of our brothers and sisters in Christ to establish a wider and deeper fellowship that expands the ecumenical circle beyond those gathered here.

We moved from a day on Saturday of ecumenical formation, history, and training, placing ourselves within the context of the greater ecumenical movement, to a day on Sunday that included dialogue, both with each other and with seasoned ecumenists that led to deeper relationships being built. Monday saw us send each other forth, commissioning us to take the relationships forged here into the larger ecumenical movement in our contexts. Throughout our time, worship fueled the fire of what we did together. A highlight of this was an opportunity on Sunday to worship with a local congregation, First Plymouth United Church of Christ. We pushed our boundaries, shared our vulnerabilities, and grew together as brothers and sisters part of something larger than ourselves. By deepening our relationships as ecumenical groups and individuals, we solidified the relationships that will keep this fire burning, and brighten it into the future.

We understand that our present unity in Christ is not the end goal, but the beginning of engagement with the world.

We have a deep commitment to conversations and relationships with our fellow Christians, including those with whom we most deeply disagree, and those who have not yet been part of our conversation.

We hope to use these deepening relationships with one another to share resources and knowledge that will enable us to act cooperatively on diverse issues in diverse contexts.

As young adults committed to the ecumenical movement, we seek to achieve this vision through the following commitments:

We will issue invitations to new partners in order to increase the diversity of our corporate body to better reflect the reality of the Body of Christ throughout the global church.

Our ecumenical organizations will engage in critical self-reflection to determine where God is calling us and how our particular vocation and gifts can enhance the ecumenical movement by responsibly sharing resources of time, funding, staff, and knowledge.

We will use the new website Faith Connects Us, a ministry of the US Conference of the World Council of Churches to bring together all of these resources in a central and widely accessible location.

We will also deepen our relationships through prayer partnerships and new technologies to connect us across distances to maintain these relationships that make these commitments possible, such as facebook, blogs, and skype conferences.

We invite you, our fellow ecumenists, to join us in this vision by extending invitations to young adults within your communions, and by praying with us and for us as our generation seeks continued renewal of Christ' s church through the fire of the Holy Spirit.

The 40 participants of New Fire included representatives from over 17 denominations and member churches, over a dozen universities, seminaries and divinity schools, and numerous young adult ecumenical initiatives and organizations including: The Ecumenical Young Adult Ministries Team of the National Council of Churches, The Young Adult Task Force of the US Conference for the World Council of Churches, The World Student Christian Federation, ECHOS Commission on Youth of the World Council of Churches, The Council for Ecumenical Student Christian Ministries, National Catholic Young Adult Ministries of America, Student Christian Movement of Canada, The National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program, The Young Adult Ecumenical Forum, Ecumenical Advocacy Days, Christian Churches Together, and The Ecumenical Water Network and Church World Service.