

# CBFNC Keychain Leadership

by Alyssa Queen



As I type this article, I am staring out the window of a plane headed to the Ben Gurion airport in Israel. How did I get here? It has certainly been a journey, the first step of which was First Baptist Church of Albemarle entrusting me to literal keychain leadership when they handed me the keys to the church building in January of 2016. Many churches reserve leadership positions for those who are older and more experienced, but this church chose to trust a second semester college freshman. I began as a spring-semester-through-summer youth and children's ministry intern, but it became quickly apparent that this church was my home while I was away at university.

My experience with keychain leadership is of being constantly challenged to go one step further than I thought I could. Whether that meant preaching for the first time with a very real fear of speaking in public, writing a Lenten devotional, or serving as the interim youth pastor while balancing a full load of classes, I was always being gently nudged outside of my comfort zone while at FBC-Albemarle. Those who know me well would tell you that I'm not a fan of change or performing poorly at new things. So for me, the only reason that I could accept the challenges of keychain leadership these past three years was the loving support of the congregation and staff. Keychain leadership doesn't mean randomly tossing the keys to a prospective leader and passively watching how they will use them. Keychain leadership involves walking through life alongside your new leaders.

One of the scariest things I have ever done is walk up the steps of the sanctuary to give my first sermon, but those tremulous steps and first wavering words did not just happen

out of nowhere. I had spent months reading scripture and announcements in the service, so I was more comfortable behind the pulpit. The pastor of the church and several mentors in the congregation helped me find my voice and gave me feedback on my sermon in the weeks leading up to that day. The youth group prayed for me that morning in Sunday School. Individuals in the congregation were intentional about coming up to me and hugging me and speaking words of truth in love about my sermon. All of these actions I've listed show a church committed to keychain leadership; they aren't the actions of just one person, because keychain leadership takes a village.

Back to my current situation of being on a plane to Israel: I will begin my last semester in undergrad in just a few days at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This is a step in my journey that quite frankly wouldn't have happened without the love and support of the good people at FBC-Albemarle. In addition to encouraging me to step out of my comfort zone within the walls of the church, my mentors and friends in the church community constantly reminded me to do the same in the bigger scheme of my life. My church has always been confident in my potential for growth and leadership, even when I wasn't. When I was fearful and I would fall, my church home encouraged me to fly - quite literally in this case! 🌈

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## CBFNC and NC Synod ELCA Partner Host Growing Young Cohort

by Andy Jung

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Sixteen CBFNC churches and nine ELCA churches have begun a year-long journey to discover how congregations can better welcome and engage young people. These churches have committed to learning from the leaders of Fuller Youth Institute (Pasadena, CA) and the research findings from their Growing Young project.

On January 31–February 1, leadership teams gathered at Trinity Baptist Church in Raleigh to learn from FYI leaders and from one another. In addition to the initial summit, the participating churches are benefiting from webinars, coaching calls, and dedicated time to strategize and implement new

initiatives to change the culture of their churches.

The participating CBFNC churches are Ardmore Baptist (Winston-Salem), First Baptist Burnsville, First Baptist Goldsboro, First Baptist Lexington, First Baptist Marion, First Baptist Mt. Airy, First Baptist Statesville, Forest Hills Baptist (Raleigh), Hillsong Church (Chapel Hill), Lakeside Baptist (Rocky Mount), Macedonia Baptist (Raleigh), Oakmont Baptist (Greenville), St. Johns Baptist (Raleigh), The Memorial Baptist (Greenville), Trinity Baptist (Raleigh), and Westwood Baptist (Cary).

