

RAYAC Report for the 2025–2026 Planning Meeting

To: Bishop Juluis H. McAllister, Jr. Supervisor Deana Young McAllister, Presiding Elders Council, Reverend clergy, officers, delegates, and members of the Ninth Episcopal District:

The Richard Allen Young Adult Council submits this report with gratitude for the opportunity to serve and renewed conviction for the work before us. Over the past year, RAYAC has engaged in intentional listening, collaborative conversation, and thoughtful evaluation of our current strengths and challenges. Through these discussions, one truth emerged repeatedly and unmistakably:

Our young adults are present. Our young adults are gifted. And our young adults are ready — but they must be made visible, connected, and empowered.

I. Summary of District-Wide Conversations

Throughout our joint gatherings with local, conference, and district leaders, several consistent themes surfaced:

1. Visibility

Young adults in many of our churches are active, but invisible. Many members, and even pastors, lack awareness of RAYAC’s mission and presence.

One pastor stated, “Exposure is the key; we cannot be a hidden secret.”

Young adults echoed this sentiment, emphasizing a desire to be recognized as a meaningful arm of ministry, not a peripheral group.

2. Connection

A major disconnect exists between:

- Local RAYACs and their Conference Presidents
- Conference leadership and the District RAYAC
- District RAYAC and the Connectional Council

In multiple conferences, individuals who were reportedly “appointed” to RAYAC leadership were unaware of their appointment and received no communication. This gap has hindered flow of information, event participation, and the development of a consistent district-wide identity.

3. Empowerment

The bishop reminded us that young adults reach young adults, and urged us to think beyond traditional frameworks.

Rev. Thornton affirmed that young adult ministry thrives when:

- young adults are given real responsibility,
- invited to the platform,
- allowed to lead events,
- and trusted with the work of evangelism.

Young adults expressed a desire not simply to attend, but to serve, lead, and shape the mission of their church.

II. Challenges Identified

1. Lack of awareness of RAYAC in many congregations: Many AMEs — even seasoned members — do not know what RAYAC is or how it functions.

2. Absence of organized RAYAC bodies at some local churches: Some congregations have the age demographic, but not the structure.

3. Communication breakdown between levels: Information is often not shared with local churches or young adults.

4. Limited inter-conference collaboration: Though each conference has activity, these initiatives often occur in isolation.

5. Misalignment of leadership roles: Appointments and positions are not consistently communicated or operationalized.

III. Emerging Vision: “Visible. Connected. Empowered.”

This theme embodies the heart of our conversations:

- Visible — RAYAC must be seen, heard, and represented at all levels of church life.
- Connected — Local churches must be connected to their conferences, conferences connected to the district, and the district connected to the Connectional Council.
- Empowered — Young adults must be equipped with resources, opportunities, and space to lead.

This theme calls for a new year of intentional rebuilding, consistent communication, and strategic collaboration throughout the Ninth District.

IV. District-Wide Strategy for the Year

A. Quarterly Initiatives

Each conference (Alabama River Region, Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, and Southwest,) will host at least one quarterly event, extending an invitation to all other conferences for shared fellowship and impact. These may include:

- Business & Entrepreneurship Expos
- Coffeehouse Conversations
- Worship Nights
- Service Projects
- College Engagement Initiatives

B. Rayac-led Training & Visibility Workshops

RAYAC will propose a workshop at Mid-Year or the Planning Meeting titled:

“Reaching & Retaining Young Adults: Tools for Today’s Church.”

This workshop allows RAYAC to:

- Educate pastor and parishioners,
- offer evangelistic strategies,
- and build credibility through meaningful contribution.

C. Digital & Interpersonal Connectivity

RAYAC will implement:

- Monthly or bi-monthly district-wide Zoom sessions
- A digital contact list for pastors and young adults
- Social media communication standards
- A district-wide mailing list

D. Strengthening Local Leadership

Presidents and coordinators will meet quarterly to:

- share updates,
- ensure flow of information,

- troubleshoot gaps in communication,
- and support new or struggling local chapters.

E. National Engagement

Promote and prepare for the 2026 Connectional RAYAC Retreat in Houston, ensuring Ninth District representation increases from the previous year.

V. Action Items

For District Leadership

1. Approve the 2025–2026 theme: “Visible. Connected. Empowered.”
2. Endorse the creation of a RAYAC-led workshop at Mid-Year or Planning Meeting.
3. Ensure appointments to RAYAC roles are documented and communicated to district leadership.

For Conference Presidents

4. Host one quarterly inter-conference event and submit an event report.
5. Establish or confirm RAYAC leadership in every local church within the conference.
6. Create conference-wide communication channels (email lists, group chats, social platforms).

For Local Churches

7. Pastors identify at least three young adults to participate in RAYAC this year.
8. Add RAYAC moments or highlights to Sunday worship at least once per quarter.
9. Encourage young adults to attend district Zoom sessions and training opportunities.

For District RAYAC Officers

10. Publish a District RAYAC Handbook outlining structure, mission, and expectations.
11. Develop a unified marketing/branding system for events and communication.
12. Maintain monthly communication with conference presidents and report progress to the bishop.

Conclusion

RAYAC is not only a ministry; it is a movement. The Ninth District is blessed with passionate, capable, visionary young adults who desire to serve the church and

strengthen its future. With renewed visibility, deeper connection, and intentional empowerment, we believe the 2025–2026 conference year will be one of transformation, growth, and kingdom impact.

Respectfully submitted,

Reverend Brandon L. Thornton,
The Ninth Episcopal District Richard Allen Young Adult Council President