

Montreat Youth Conference

2019 Leadership Bios

Alpha

Week 1 | June 2–8

Week 2 | June 9–15

Theta

Week 3 | July 17–13

Week 4 | July 14–20

Omega

Week 5 | July 21–27

Week 6 | July 28–Aug 3

Alpha Leadership



Mark Montgomery – Keynote

Mark Montgomery works in interim ministry and over the years has served congregations in South Carolina, Virginia, Texas, California, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. In each congregation, regardless of his job title, Mark has loved to include youth and young adults in the full life of the church, encouraging their prophetic voices by engaging youth as liturgists, dancers, actors, musicians, artists, and preachers. He believes that we better understand God's presence in the world when all voices are given the opportunity to tell that which they know of God, and all God's children find their place at the table of communion.



Irene Pak Lee – Preacher

Irene Pak Lee's passion around ministry is rooted and grounded in the love of God and love of people, and a good meal shared in community. Irene received her BA in public relations with a minor in music from Weber State University in Ogden, UT, and her MDiv from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL. She loves to eat good food, sing, hike, watch movies, and is enjoying the adventure of life with her husband and son.



Marissa Galván-Valle – Music Leader

Marissa is originally from the beautiful island of Puerto Rico and is the director of language resources at Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. She is also the pastor at Beechmont Presbyterian Church, an intercultural congregation in Louisville, KY, that has people from the US, Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, and the Philippines. She loves to sing music that comes from different countries and experiences and loves to lead others in worship.



Marcus Hong – Music Assistant

Marcus A. Hong is a child of God and a cultivator of worship who has served in congregations, new worshipping communities, college chapels, and youth groups for over fifteen years. He is the director of field education, chapel worship coordinator, and assistant professor of practical theology at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and a PhD candidate in Christian education and formation at Princeton Theological Seminary. Originally from Salt Lake City, UT, Marcus is a lover of movies, fantasy literature, poetry, and songwriting. He and his wife Sarah have their hands blessedly full raising two precocious children.



John Weicher – Recreation Leader

From the moment that John first walked into Anderson Auditorium in high school, he was in love. He loved the energizers, the singing, the new friends from all over, the Good News communicated with him in mind, the electricity and enthusiasm, and the God who stood behind it all, inviting him to love and serve. John believes deeply that if we can play together, then we can better talk and listen to each other. So, let's play!



Morgan Waters – Recreation Assistant

Morgan is from Swarthmore, PA. Over the past few years she's been involved in conferences in multiple capacities. She served as an enabler at Massanetta in high school and spent this past summer working on Montreat's summer staff. She loves working with youth, and is so excited to serve in this new role as the rec assistant!

Theta Leadership



Michelle Thomas-Bush – Keynote

Michelle loves her work with young people and is passionate about intentional faith formation. She rides bikes, kayaks, and loves to cook. Her goal is to rock in every rocking chair in Montreat and find contentment in the small things of life.



Jerry Cannon – Preacher

Rev. Dr. Jerry L. Cannon was born in Kannapolis, NC. In 1984, he received a BS in business administration from Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia. In 1988, he earned a MDiv specializing in the Bible from the Interdenominational Theological Center - Johnson C. Smith Seminary, Atlanta, GA. He received his DMin from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio in 1998.



John Lee – Music

John has been coming to Montreat Youth Conferences for over 20 years and they have always been a life changing experience for him. He began doing music and ministry because of his time in Montreat, and his family also loves Montreat and is excited to be here again.



Betsy Apple Eldridge – Recreation

John Muir wrote, “Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.” Like many others, Betsy finds that nourishment in the mountains of Western NC - Montreat has been the backdrop for much of her spiritual formation. She's grateful for the opportunity to play and pray with folks who will gather together this summer - faithfully engaging the challenges of today, building relationships with each other and Christ, and...having FUN!

Betsy lives in Seattle with her husband, Daniel. When she's not at work, you'll likely find Betsy sipping on a cup of coffee with a good book in hand, exploring nearby trails with her (very good) dog, Raleigh, or browsing Goodwill for a forgotten treasure.



Jeremy Tidman – Recreation

Jeremy is from Culpeper, VA, and is currently studying religion and culture at Virginia Tech. In his free time Jeremy loves to hike, listen to music, spend time with my friends and family, seek out random adventures, and eat absurd amounts of food. He's looking forward to spending time at Montreat and seeing Christ work in all of us!

Omega Leadership



Amos Disasa – Preacher

Amos Disasa was born in Ethiopia. Currently, he is the co-pastor at Downtown Church, a new Presbyterian (U.S.A.) congregation in downtown Columbia that he launched in 2011. Before he began this most recent phase of his ministry, he was associate pastor at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, also in Columbia. Amos earned a BA in 2001 from Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, and a MDiv in 2006 from Wake Forest University. Amos is committed to the well-being of the people of his home city. Amos and his wife Sarah have two children, Abraham (9) and Shepherd (7).



Neeley Rentz Lane – Keynoter

Neeley is a child of God, a college women's soccer coach's wife, and mommy of three precious girls. She loves the PC(USA), a good belly laugh, quality time with family, tap dancing, children's crafts, and embracing this beautiful hot mess journey of life.



John Sawyer – Music

John Sawyer can't remember a time when he wasn't making music - from church choirs to old-time country to rock n' roll bands. Since graduating from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2001, he has served three congregations from the deep South to the far North and has been able to incorporate a ministry of music into his life as a pastor. John is married to Amy, a physical therapist, and they have a son named Samuel, who is just starting to find his singing voice.



Leslie Rodriguez – Music

Leslie Rodriguez lived in Nashville for 12 years where she was involved in several different musical ensembles and worked as a singer/songwriter. In 2013 she joined the folk-rock band Humming House and toured with the band around the country as the lead vocalist and percussionist until 2017. She now lives in Louisville, KY, with her husband, daughter, and three dogs, and works as a full-time wedding photographer.



Cal Findeiss – Recreation

Cal has two silly kiddos, is married to one amazing woman, and is best friends with one fluffy pup. He was a program director at a Presbyterian summer camp in Florida for nine years and is now a software developer. His soul delights in dancing to energizers and making up new games to play.