

Youth Extravaganza & Gathering Update

by Alison Pettit, Gathering Synod Champion for the Northeastern Iowa Synod

In mid-January, Gathering Synod Champions (GSCs) from across the country joined the entire ELCA Youth Gathering staff and team for the three-day Youth Extravaganza in New Orleans to train and prep for this summer's ELCA Youth Gathering. I left the training feeling energized and excited for what our participants will experience in July!

We currently have 378 participants from 30 Northeastern Iowa Synod congregations registered to attend the Youth Gathering July 16-20 in New Orleans. Congregations can still register. Late registration opens on Feb. 15 and closes on April 15. The final account balance, which includes registration fees and housing, is due on April 30.

A new policy at this year's Gathering limits the size and types of bags that can be brought into the Superdome and Convention Center. Details of this clear bag policy can be found on the Gathering website. We will organize a bulk order of clear bags from Old Lutheran. Details will be sent to the congregation's primary adult leaders.

SYNOD DAY ACTIVITIES

Plans are coming together for our Synod Day during the Gathering. We will all meet in a hotel ballroom for worship, which will be much shorter than in past years. Part of the day will be spent doing a Goosechase scavenger hunt. The GSCs were able to try an abbreviated version of this new activity, and we had so much fun! The "missions" in the hunt require everyone to get out and explore the French Quarter, dig into the city's history and culture, and find things that may have otherwise been overlooked. We are hoping to have a synod lunch on this day as well. More details will be sent to primary leaders when they are available.

REQUIRED TRAINING FOR LEADERS

All adult leaders will be required to complete two online trainings. These will be available starting May 1, and leaders are required to complete them by June 15. Any adults who do not complete the trainings will not be given wristbands at registration time and will not be permitted to enter Gathering venues.

The Gathering is hosting webinars to help leaders prepare for the event. You can register for these on the Gathering's website. In addition, I will lead a Zoom with adult leaders to share additional information from my time in New Orleans.



Alison Pettit, center, joins a group of other Gathering Synod Champions for a Goosechase scavenger hunt during the Youth Extravaganza in New Orleans. The scavenger hunt will be one of the activities offered during Synod Day of the ELCA Youth Gathering in July.

Mark your calendars for a pre-Gathering event for all participants on Sunday, May 5, at Wartburg College.

Visit the Gathering website at www.elca.org/gathering.

Hunger Ministry Gathering Set

MARCH 9, 2024

The Synod's Hunger Network will host a Hunger Ministry Gathering on Saturday, March 9, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, at Redeemer Lutheran, Waverly. Participants will hear from guest speakers and join in table discussions around topics related to hunger ministries.

To best serve our attendees, the Network is asking for everyone to complete a brief survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/VPHSH88. The results will help guide discussion. To RSVP for the event, please complete this form <https://forms.gle/yEXsuAPwtj1ocN4Z8>.