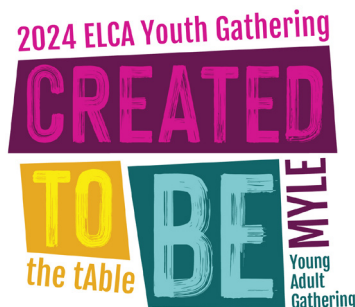


# ELCA Youth Gathering Updates

by Alison Pettit, Gathering Synod Champion

Some 443 participants from more than 30 Northeastern Iowa Synod congregations are now registered to attend the Youth Gathering July 16-20 in New Orleans. As the date gets closer, new policies and recommendations continue to be announced. Here is a look at some of the latest updates.



## 2024 GATHERING VENUE POLICIES

The following policies will be in effect at the Smoothie King Center and Convention Center.

- 1. Cashless Venue**—The Smoothie King Center and Convention Center are cashless. Please be prepared to use a credit or debit card when purchasing food at concessions at either of these venues.
- 2. Clear Bottles**—Water bottles should be clear and/or translucent. No metal/aluminum or glass water bottles will be permitted.
- 3. Clear Bags**—Participants will be able to carry the following style and size bag, package or container at the convention center, stadium plaza areas, stadium gates, or when approaching queue lines awaiting entry into the stadium:
  - Bags that are clear plastic, vinyl, or PVC and do not exceed 12" x 6" x 12".
  - No buckles, grommets/hardware, or décor can be concealing any part of the bag.
  - One-gallon clear plastic freezer bag. Logo can only be on one side of the bag.
  - Small, non-clear bags that do not exceed 4.5" x 6.5" in size, with or without a handle or strap, can be taken into venues with one of the clear plastic bags.

## COLLECT COOLING TOWELS FOR IN-KIND OFFERING

In the aftermath of a storm, hurricane or tornado, New Orleans residents regularly find themselves without electricity. This quickly becomes a health crisis as people try to manage life in the hot, humid Gulf Coast summers.

## GETTING READY EVENT

MAY 5, 2024

All youth and youth leaders from this synod who are registered for the ELCA Youth Gathering should plan to attend the Getting Ready event set for Sunday, May 5, at Wartburg College.

Check-in will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the McCaskey Lyceum, located in the Saemann Student Center. Programming is from 2 – 5 p.m. and will include games, discussion led by Chaplain Maggie Falenschek on how to process unfamiliar topics or situations, and Bible time with Bishop Kevin Jones using Unit 5 of the Getting Ready materials.

Everyone planning to attend the Gathering is highly encouraged to attend this informational meeting. There is no charge to attend, but we ask that adult leaders RSVP for their groups at <https://forms.gle/zW9jxrsPwmwtZvEa6>.

City leaders and community organizers identified the eight most-requested items to help residents as they wait for the power grid to be restored. A goal for the Gathering is to create 3,000 disaster relief kits filled with these items to help New Orleanians get through the days immediately following a natural disaster.

It takes about \$100 to complete an entire disaster relief kit. Synods are encouraged to collect items assigned to their regions to contribute to the disaster relief kits. As part of Region 5, the Northeastern Iowa Synod youth groups are asked to collect cooling towels for the kits or raise funds to complete an entire kit.

Starting in April, people will be able to order cooling towels directly through an Amazon Wishlist with items being delivered directly to New Orleans. Now we need your help to make sure families and neighborhoods are prepared for the next disaster.

Find more updates on the synod website at [www.neiasynod.org/gathering-24](http://www.neiasynod.org/gathering-24) and at [www.elca.org/gathering](http://www.elca.org/gathering).