



Lutheran Youth Organization

The Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) had another successful and eventful year! This group of 30 people consists of 15 voting youth members, 9 voting adult members, and 6 advisory members. The board had three planning meetings where we organized two youth gatherings to spread news of God's Work through Our Hands.

The first meeting of the year took place at Shalom Hill Farm in Windom during the month of June. Over the course of the weekend, previous LYO members greeted six new incoming youth and the 2018-19 board chaplain, Michelle Kleene. Our board also welcomed a new adult representative, Pastor Bobbi Bell. Our weekend consisted of servant team breakout sessions, group bonding activities, and strength building exercises. The board participated in a color test that recognized each member's strengths that they contributed to the board. After brainstorming and deliberating a plethora of possible themes, the board chose Micah 6:8 as the theme verse for the 2019 Senior High Youth Gathering, "Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk humbly with your God."

The board reconvened in September at the synod office in Redwood Falls to discuss final plans preparations for the Middle School Gathering. Each servant team worked diligently to prepare Nightlife activities, congregational devotions, worship services, and tying in the theme of being "Undeniably Known" throughout the gathering. This year, the board decided to implement a service project at the Jr. High Youth Gathering.

Our first main event was held at the Willmar Conference Center in November. The Jr. High Youth Gathering was undeniably a success. With over 1,000 youth participating in both nights, the Holy Spirit was present throughout the gathering. Rachel Kurtz and the Synod Youth Band led the youth in meaningful, welcoming mass gatherings through gospel and music. The theme verse, "Undeniably Known", was thoroughly explained by Rachel Kurtz in a relatable and uplifting manner. Her use of humor and personal experiences resonated with the adults and the youth throughout the gathering. The LYO board was flexible and willing to serve where God called them. The Holy Spirit touched the lives of many Christians that weekend.

During January, the LYO Board discussed the pros of the Jr. High Youth Gathering and the areas of improvement. Because of a snowstorm, the board gathered for one full day at Cross of Calvary in Olivia instead of meeting over the course of an entire weekend.

As the culmination of the year approached, the LYO Board worked diligently to finish their servant team assignments and promote the Senior High Youth Gathering. This year, the gathering took place at Lake Geneva Christian Center in Alexandria. Pastor Laura Aase incorporated her unique pastoral style to the gathering. Her inviting, warm demeanor proved to be a highlight throughout her sermons. She too incorporated her own experiences as a youth to relate to the audience. AGAPE and Joe Davis were a dynamic duo as they lead the music. Their music was uplifting, energizing, and thought provoking #LutheranSWAG. The Synod Youth Band led warm-up music. Our board provided meaningful service projects to the gathering participants. A walk for water simulation, a tie-blanket activity, ELCA World Hunger Walk in Her Shoes activity, and Sole Hope shoe making were the four featured service projects. The SHYG was a weekend of eye-opening experiences for all people involved. Our synod was able to “Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with your God.” The new LYO board was elected and we cannot be more excited for the leadership to come this next year.

In addition to our two gatherings, the LYO also attended various events throughout our synod to represent the voice of the youth. Two youth were selected to travel to the National ELCA Youth Leadership Summit in Nebraska. At this event, they were able to talk with youth from across the country and discuss how their faith has impacted their leadership.

Throughout the three years that I have been a youth member of the LYO, I have had the chance to lead hundreds of youth and adults in worship during the gatherings. This experience has lead me to become a stronger leader in my community and spread the love of Jesus Christ. I am so excited to see how God works within the new board these next years to help carry on the tradition of spreading the Word of God.

God Bless,

Kylie Halvorson

President, LYO

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“Let all that you do be done in Love” 1 Corinthians 16:14