

MINISTRY WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Opportunities for Small Group Leadership at youth events in 2023-2024

Lost and Found

Nov. 17-19, 2023

Eagle Eyrie, Lynchburg

This is our weekend faith formation event for 7th and 8th graders, and it runs from about 8:00 Friday evening to noon on Sunday. We will need 15-20 Small Group leaders and about 15-20 co-leaders or assistants to lead five small group sessions. Young adults who are college age (18 and above) and are new to Small Group leadership are invited to sign up as small group assistants. Most SG leaders are also adult advisors from their congregations and don't need to arrive at the event any earlier than their congregational youth. A Small Group Leader guide, with outlines for the activities of every small group session, is sent to each group leader about ten days before the event to allow time to prepare. Most Small Groups have a leader and an assistant or two leaders, so you can share both the joy and the workload as a team. Group leaders' registration expenses are covered by the Synod, except for a \$50 processing and supplies fee, which we hope congregations will cover!

Winter Celebration

Feb. 2-4, 2024

Eagle Eyrie, Lynchburg

"Winter Cel" is our renowned faith formation weekend for High School youth (9th-12th graders) and runs from about 8:00pm on Friday evening to Sunday noon. We will need leaders and assistants for about 20-25 small groups. The Small Group Leader guide gets sent out to leaders ten days in advance. As with Lost and Found, Small Group leaders pay only the \$50 processing and supplies fee.

Seventh Day

**MARCH 2-3,
2024**

This is an overnight retreat (noon Sat. to Sun. early afternoon) for youth in grades 5-6 which offers participants an opportunity to explore one particular Bible story in multiple ways. The format of this event differs from the other weekend events in that there are "Shepherd Groups" rather than small groups and they are not mainly for discussion, but for shared activity. All adult advisors who come with youth from congregations serve as "Shepherds" for these groups or assistants in the activity modules. The main role of Shepherds is to guide the participants from one activity location to another and help with whatever activity is being conducted in that place, so we do not need Small Group leaders for this event like we do for the others. We do, however, need adults in planning and leadership roles for the four activity areas: music, interactive story-telling, games and movement, and craft/construction. **NOTE: Seventh Day Shepherds' expenses are not covered by the Synod. All adults pay the full participant fee.**

Youth Assembly Date and Loc. TBA Summer 2024

This is our annual gathering of youth for exploring the work of the church beyond the congregation. Two youth from each congregation can attend (one from grades 7-9 and one from grades 10-12), plus a third if there's room. It is held at Roanoke College at the same time as the Main Assembly, and detailed information and registration forms are sent to congregations in February along with the Main Assembly registration materials. Since congregations do not send advisors to this event as they do for Lost and Found and Winter Cel, we need about a dozen adults who will be residents at this event, staying as advisors in the dorms with the youth and also serving as group discussion leaders. These groups function somewhat differently from small groups at our other events, so there is very little preparation on your part prior to the event. Many youth and adults report that this is their favorite of all the events. Registration fees for non-clergy adults are covered by the Synod.

Kairos

**june 23~28, 2024
Roanoke College, Salem**

Kairos is our annual week-long faith formation retreat for youth who will be in 9th-12th grades the following fall. Congregations do not send adult advisors with their youth, so the adults who serve at this event stay in the dorm with the participants and serve both as adult advisors and Small Group leaders from Sunday at 6:00 pm to Friday noon. Kairos is both our most demanding and our most rewarding event for adults, since it requires adults to be present for the entire week but also provides an opportunity to get to know the youth

and shape their faith lives in a fuller way than is possible at our other events. A Small Group Leader Guide is sent to adults 2-3 weeks in advance of the event, and Small Groups normally have two adults so that leadership responsibilities can be shared. It can be an intense week, but we provide nighttime hall monitors for the dorms, so most adults find that they are able to get to bed in time to get the sleep they need and actually find the week to be as spiritually exhilarating for them as it is for the youth. The fee requested for adults is \$50 for processing and supplies.

OTHER EVENTS IN 2023-2024

Caroline Furnace
And
Hungry Mother
Lutheran Camps

Your Lutheran Camps on the territory of the Virginia Synod offer a wide range of camping and adventure opportunities each summer for youth of all ages. Caroline Furnace is located in Fort Valley, Virginia and Hungry Mother is in Marion, VA. These sites also make excellent locations for congregational or small group retreats.

www.CarolineFurnace.org and www.hungrymother.org

Region 9
Bishop's
School
June,
2024

Virginia Synod is part of Region 9 of the ELCA, which covers the southeast US and Caribbean. Each year up to 30 youth from the region who have just completed 11th or 12th grade are selected from among applicants for a week of biblical and theological study with theological faculty from our colleges and seminaries. Applications are available starting in January and are due back by the beginning of March. In 2024 Bishop's School will be held concurrently with Southeastern Synod's Affirm event in Tennessee. Exact dates will be announced early in 2024.

~LAUNCH~
JULY 7-11, 2024
ROANOKE COLLEGE

This is an opportunity for youth who have just graduated from High School, designed to mark the transition from youth to adult life by gathering in study and small group sessions to consider the particular faith, lifestyle, and vocational challenges that face young adults who are moving away for the first time from the structures that sustained them as children and youth. The adult staff for this event is small, but if you have a particular interest in helping with it, please let Dave Delaney know.

JUNIOR HIGH
SERVANT
EVENT - JULY
& AUGUST, 2024
VIRGINIA
BEACH

Groups of youth who have finished 6th-8th grades and adult leaders from their congregations gather for a week of daytime servant work and evening faith reflection together. Congregational adults take on most of the leadership responsibility for their own youth, and we recruit local leaders to coordinate food service and other activities for the week. Synod Conferences who would like to add an event like this to their local youth ministry offerings should contact Dave Delaney at the Synod Office.

2024 ELCA Youth Gathering
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Every three years the ELCA hosts a Gathering for youth from all across the country and US territories who have completed grades 8 through 12. In 2024, the Gathering will be held July 16-20 in New Orleans, LA and will also include a parallel event for young adults, along with pre-events for Multi-cultural youth (MYLE) and young people who live with a wide range of physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities (tAble). The main event includes mass gatherings, service opportunities, interactive recreation and learning, and time to explore New Orleans. Visit the gathering site at elca.org/gathering for more information.

DREAM
EXTRAVAGANZA 2024

The ELCA Youth Ministry Network offers an annual conference called "The Extravaganza" where adults who work with youth and first-third-of-life faith formation gather for fellowship and mutual support as well as education and inspiration. Membership in the Network provides a registration discount as well as other resources and benefits. The 2024 Extravaganza will be in New Orleans, Jan. 18-21, which will also provide an excellent opportunity for adults leading a group of Gathering youth to become familiar with the city. Visit www.elcaymnet.org for more information on the Network and the Extravaganza.

*For more information on any of these opportunities or answers to any questions you may have, contact **Dave Delaney**, Virginia Synod Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministries: PO Box 70, Salem VA 24153. delaney@vasynod.org Cell: 540-529-6893*