



1st Annual Wyoming Youth Gathering

Submitted by the Wyoming Conference

What would happen if you took a group of youth from around the state, put them together in a central space, supported them with 6 pastors from 8 different congregations. Fed them, provided campfires with s'mores, floated down a river with them, worshiped together with them, shared communion with them, and took them out into the community to serve others? You'd have one amazing 1st Annual Wyoming Youth Gathering!

The Wyoming Conference sponsored the 1st Annual Wyoming Youth Gathering June 26–28 in Casper, Wyoming. The group was comprised of youth, middle school through high school, from six congregations across Wyoming. We came to celebrate our faith together along with serving as people who “are in the world but not of the world.”

Our focus theme was “WhY Jesus” and exploring the question of why Jesus is important to each of us and how we see ourselves living out our faith. Our agenda for the 3ish days consisted of time for worship together, devotional time where we focused on the amazing story of Paul and Silas, and some of the Psalms where we were reminded that God never leaves us, and we are fearfully and wonderfully made. There was also lots of fun time and fellowship built in—with an epic river float where no one left the river dry, and finally 2 incredible service opportunities within the Casper community.

Our first service project took us to the Iris Clubhouse, a working community for adults living with mental illness within the Casper, Wyoming area. Our group planted flower beds and a vegetable garden. The director shared the mission of this community and how it came about, giving us a tour of the facility while we interacted with several of its members.

Our second project was at Kind Grounds, located at Grace Lutheran Church. Kind Grounds is a navigation center for people experiencing homelessness in Casper, WY. Here, people can relax

and enjoy hot coffee, breakfast, and lunch. They also connect with services and community partners to help further life along. We had the opportunity to hear stories from several individuals from the unhoused community along with sharing a meal with each other.

Following lunch, because it was Friday, the three-member staff needed assistance with deep cleaning the space. Every surface was wiped down, chairs stacked, and carpets vacuumed and cleaned. Everyone loved using the carpet cleaners. As a group, we made cleaning fun. It was a good feeling seeing the space reset to support the next week of ministry and service that would happen in that place.

Each evening, devotion time was spent outside of the old parsonage around a fire pit reading scripture, hearing the word of God, and learning how it is relevant in our lives. Afterwards it was s'more time, of course! We began and ended this journey with worship. It was a beautiful way to gather in community to partake of the Eucharist and hear God's word while reflecting on where we saw Jesus in our time spent together.

We are excitedly beginning conversation around the 2nd Annual Wyoming Youth Gathering (tentatively to be held June 2026).