



Synod Assembly Offering 2024

At a recent Synod candidacy committee meeting a prospective seminary student, when asked to describe a vision for ministry in a congregation, responded saying...

"I just want to love on them...and show them know how much God loves them...all of them."

God is love. We sing in Sunday school
Love, love, love, that's what it's all about
Because God loves us, we love each other...

Jesus is love. We sing at Christmas
Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas...

We are beloved, and in our baptism we are claimed and named
....child of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

I share another recent conversation... one that may sound familiar:
"We just don't have many young people anymore; school and all the activities keep them so busy. We want our kids to come to church, they need to know Jesus. How can we build a youth group again? What can we do?"

Love on them...

I invite you, each person, and every congregation, in the Western Iowa Synod to **love on our young people**. Love on our young people who will be participating in this summer's ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans by giving generously to the offering at the Western Iowa Synod Assembly, April 19-20.

I invite each congregation to commit to bringing an offering of at least \$450 to the Western Iowa Synod Assembly. Three-fourths of your offering will assist with the registration fees for one of our young people to attend the Gathering. One-fourth of your offering will support the Western Iowa Synod Hog Project: a project that connects hog producers with community meals and food pantries around this Synod.

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\$450 from each congregation? – yes!

This means a gift of \$112.50 a month for February, March, April, and May

That is only \$26.47 each Sunday for 4 months - to love on our young people AND feed hungry people here in Western Iowa.

You have questions?

"My congregation has no one going to the Gathering."

Yes, you do! You have 100 young people in the Western Iowa Synod who want to grow in faith, gather for worship with new friends, and love on the people of New Orleans. These kids ARE YOUR kids!

"My congregation is already working with 15 kids going to the Gathering."

Great news! We are church together and we are working together to pay for registration for each young person planning to attend. Bring an offering of at least \$450. The Western Iowa Synod will write a check to your congregation for registration fee or travel expenses up to \$375 for each of the fifteen young people who are planning to attend the Gathering. The remainder will go to the Hog Project.

The young people attending the ELCA Youth Gathering ARE the youth of Western Iowa. We have raised them together, promising to walk with them on their baptismal journey. We have prayed for them and cheered them on as they participated in countless activities; music, speech, school plays, 4-H, FFA, sports, Special Olympics, Sunday School, Confirmation classes, and Bible Camp.

You will have the joy of meeting many of these wonderful, faithful young leaders at the Synod Assembly when we meet in Council Bluffs!

So...together...let's love on them and support them with our generosity!

Rev. Lorna H. Halaas, Bishop
Western Iowa Synod, ELCA