



*"Train up a child in the way
he should go; even when he
is old he will not depart from it."*

— PROV. 22:6 —



Resources and Services

- Lutheran Youth Fellowship Leadership Training
- LCMS Young Adult Ministry
- National LCMS Youth Gathering
- LCMS Servant Events, ongoing volunteer opportunities for youth to engage in service
- Lutheran Young Adult Corps
- *YouthESource*, a website that provides Jesus-centered resources for those at work with youth in Lutheran congregations and beyond

Strong Faith, Fervent Love: Helping Young People Grow in the Faith

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's (LCMS) Youth Ministry faithfully leads, serves, resources and networks youth and adults — working through LCMS districts and congregations — with Christ and His gifts at the heart and center of everything. It provides a context where people are thinking, talking and engaging youth both within and outside the faith. More information about the LCMS Youth Ministry can be found at lcms.org/youth.

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Helping Young People Grow in Their Faith *by Melanie Ave*

"Being fully immersed in God's love."

That's how one teenager who attended a Lutheran Youth Fellowship Leadership Training event said he felt afterward. Bolstered by what he learned at the training, the teen said he was able to share the message of God's unending love and mercy with a friend.

Sponsored by LCMS Youth Ministry, more than 80 youth and adults attended the 2016 training, where they learned how to reach other young people for Christ in the digital age.

That is the No. 1 goal of LCMS Youth Ministry – helping young people grow in their faith in Jesus Christ, said the Rev. Mark Kiessling, the ministry's director.

"Young people have a great capacity for learning about the world God has created, for caring for others in their community and for understanding how their Christian faith intersects with their daily lives," Kiessling said. "It is a great blessing and opportunity for congregations to support and love young people in Christ as they learn about God's plans for them and also encourage them in times of celebration and life's challenges."



LCMS Youth Ministry aims to faithfully lead, serve and provide resources and networks for youth and adults within districts and in congregational settings with a vision of hope and celebration in the name of Jesus Christ.

In addition to Lutheran Youth Fellowship, the ministry also oversees the LCMS Youth Gathering, LCMS Young Adult Ministry and Servant Events. It provides a host of Jesus-centered resources for people who work with youth through theSource website at YouthESource.com.

LCMS Youth Ministry is in the process of launching a new mercy-focused opportunity, the Lutheran Young Adult Corps. The program is designed to provide service opportunities for a 12-month period of time for young people between high school and college or college and full-time work. The full program is expected to launch in fall 2016.

Kiessling said LCMS Youth Ministry wants to create a context where people are talking, thinking and acting positively with regard to ministry with youth.

Other recent highlights of LCMS Youth Ministry include:

- At the 2013 LCMS Youth Gathering, more than 5,000 of the event's 25,000 youth and adult participants were deployed into the city of San Antonio to serve at more than 100 off-site servant event opportunities, donating an estimated 20,000 volunteer hours to the community.
- Planners for the 2016 Youth Gathering in New Orleans expect around 10,000 participants to be involved in service projects and 40,000 volunteer hours served. In addition, thousands of other participants will

engage in service at the convention center and complete projects such as packing 500,000 meals for people in need, collecting and sorting canned food, providing backpacks and school supplies for disadvantaged school students, and packing hygiene kits for homeless individuals.

- Nearly 100 LCMS Servant Events are planned by LCMS churches, recognized service organizations, social service agencies, outdoor ministries and others for the summer of 2016 to provide service learning experiences for thousands of youth.
- Over 400 professional and lay youth workers were affirmed, connected, equipped and enriched in their vocations of serving youth during the 2015 National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference July 12-15 in New Orleans. Another 80 attended and were equipped around the topic of youth confirmation at the LCMS Youth Ministry Symposium in January 2016.

Looking to the future, LCMS Youth Ministry hopes to expand intergenerational ministry; to reach and support young adults in their faith; to provide solid, practical Lutheran resources to support congregational youth ministry; and to provide leadership training for teenagers, lay volunteers and professional church workers.

"Our churches and communities are blessed by the presence of young people," Kiessling said. "It is our goal to support parents, church workers, volunteer leaders and church members as they encourage young people in their faith development and understanding of God's love found in Christ alone." ✠

