

History of the LYO

Lutheran young leaders have a history of gathering that is over 100 years long. On October 31, 1895 the Luther League, the forerunner of the Lutheran Youth Organization was constituted in New York City. The 381 members took on the responsibility to enhance the spirit of loyalty to the church, secure individual activity, increase the zeal and ability of lay workers, and provide acquaintanceship, friendship, and cooperation among people of the whole Lutheran Church. Ninety-two years later in 1987, young members of the newly-formed Evangelical Church in America (ELCA) representing leaders from the three predecessor church bodies went about doing the same thing. Youth from across the country boarded a plane in July and attended the Constituting Convention for the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) in Indianapolis. This was the start of accumulation of inspiring leaders for the ELCA. The LYO enhanced the strength, power, and faith of young people making them advocates for diversity, social change, and ecumenical relationships.

The Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) is the umbrella organization for high-school aged youth in the ELCA, representing the voice of nearly 100,000 people in this church. Some congregations call their youth groups LYO, almost all synods have an LYO or corresponding group (elected from youth within their congregations), and the LYO is present in the churchwide expression through the Board of the LYO, MAC, DAC, the Council and the triennial LYO Convention. The LYO has an important place in the life, mission, and ministry of the ELCA. For more information about the LYO, visit www.elca.org/lyo.

Those who have participated in LYO since its incorporation in 1987 have informally created the LYO Alumni Association for networking and continuing leadership support purposes, because often, leadership in the LYO is just the beginning of a life dedicated to serving the church and the world in various forms of leadership. Former LYOers today are pastors, youth workers, engineers, writers, nurses, pilots, teachers, and much more. Find them online at facebook!