

2026 WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING



july 16-19, 2026 ✦ des moines, iowa

**Join us for the upcoming Triennial Gathering** This event brings our community together for renewal, learning, inspiration, and celebration.

If you have not yet registered, we warmly encourage you to do so. Your presence makes our gathering stronger, more vibrant, and more meaningful.

Register by - **June 21, 2026**

We hope to see you there!

---

## Registration

As of **February 19**, total registrations stand at **781**. Overall, we are tracking solid momentum with healthy regional participation and strong engagement across key activities.

Let us begin by looking at the registration composition.

- **206 first-time attendees**, which is roughly **26%** of total registration.
- Day-pass interest remains a small portion of the total: we have **10 Friday-only** and **8 Saturday-only** registrations, representing just **2.3%** of all registrants.
- Youth attendance is modest at this time, with **1 attendee ages**

**13–18** and **1 attendee under 13**, which together make up roughly **a quarter of one percent** of total registration.

We will continue monitoring youth engagement as registration continues.

---

## Engagement Add-Ons and Volunteer Roles

Engagement in add-on activities and volunteer roles continues to be a strong point, indicating a high level of participant enthusiasm.

- **140 T-shirts pre-ordered.**
- **125 participants** in the 5K - Run, Walk & Roll
- **118 Gathering Volunteers**
- **150 Worship Volunteers**, making this the largest volunteer category.
- **69 Late Night Café participants**
- **14 Blood Drive sign-ups**
  - If you have not had a chance to sign up yet, please consider participating—every donor makes a difference.
  - To register, contact Eva Yeo at: [eva.yeo@elca.org](mailto:eva.yeo@elca.org)

We currently have **zero translation service requests**, but we will continue to promote this resource to ensure accessibility for all participants.

---

## Regional Participation: Synod Highlights

Turning to synod participation, our synod-attributed total is **661** registrations. This is slightly below the

overall number, which indicates that some registrations have not yet been mapped to a specific synod. Even so, regional engagement remains strong.

Our **top ten contributing synods** include:

1. Southeastern Iowa – 50
2. Central States – 40
3. South Dakota – 26
4. Saint Paul Area – 26
5. Nebraska – 25
6. Northeastern Iowa – 25
7. Southeastern Minnesota – 23
8. South-Central Wisconsin – 23
9. Northeastern Minnesota – 21
10. East-Central Wisconsin – 21

These top ten synods account for just over **42%** of all synod-linked registrations—an expected pattern, given their proximity and strong history of participation.

At the same time, we do see opportunities for targeted outreach. Currently, there are **zero** registrations from the **Allegheny Synod**, the **West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod**, and the **Caribbean Synod**. Several synods have **only one** registrant so far, including **Southeast Michigan** and **Southeastern Pennsylvania**. We will continue to make outreach efforts to ensure broad national representation.

---

## Operational Notes and Next Steps

A few operational items to highlight:

- With 0 requests to date, the service will remain available, and we will continue promoting its availability.

- We currently have **8 wheelchair scooters** and **4 childcare requests**. These are manageable at this time, but we will watch for increases as registration accelerates.
- We are very well positioned with **118 general volunteers** and **150 worship volunteers**. Scheduling will begin soon to align volunteers with peak onsite needs.
- We will continue engaging low-participation synods and sharing highlight stories from our top-performing synods to inspire wider involvement.

In summary, with **781 registrations**, engagement levels are strong, and we have a clear roadmap for continued outreach and support.

---

## Pre-Registrations

We currently have **305 pre-registrations**, of which **254 have fully finalized** their registration. This leaves **51 individuals** still needing to complete their process.

Our outreach is ongoing—emails and phone calls have been sent to encourage these participants to finalize their registration.

---

## Pre-Registration Transfers

A reminder that **pre-registrations are non-refundable**, but they **are transferable**. All transfer requests must be fully completed by the transferring participant, including identifying the recipient of the transfer. Submit

completed transfer forms to Gabriela Contreras via email at [gabriela.contreras@elca.org](mailto:gabriela.contreras@elca.org). We will continue assisting participants to ensure that all transfers are processed promptly and accurately.

---

## Housing Update

### Hilton Des Moines Downtown

The Hilton remains our highest-demand property due to its location adjacent to the Iowa Events Center. Because one or more nights during the Gathering may already be sold out, the system may show “no availability” for any stay that includes those nights—even if other nights remain open.

We continue to monitor weekly and request additional rooms when possible.

### Marriott Des Moines Downtown

AS of 2/19/26, the Marriott currently has availability for **12 full reservations** for the Thursday–Sunday window. At this time, it remains the best multi-night option within our contracted block.

### Additional Hotels

We are **not planning to contract additional hotels**, but we strongly encourage attendees who have **not yet booked accommodations** to explore nearby downtown hotels. The **Greater Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau** ([Downtown](#)). information site provides lodging options, area maps, and transportation guides.

---

## Transportation

There is **no event-arranged airport transportation**, so attendees should plan their own transfers.

Available options include:

### Hotel Shuttles

- **Hilton:** Complimentary shuttle.
- **Marriott:** Shuttle for guests only; costs \$15 each way

### Taxi Services

- Approx. **\$13–\$17**, travel time **9–10 minutes**

### Rideshare

- Uber and Lyft widely available

### Paratransit Services

For attendees needing accessible transportation, providers include:

- Fraser Medical Services:  
515-284-1111
- Midwest Ambucare, Inc.:  
515-252-0022

Attendees can visit the **Des Moines International Airport** website ([Shuttle Services | Des Moines International Airport](#)) for additional shuttle and paratransit details.

---

### Mobility Assistance – Wheelchair & Scooter Rentals

For attendees who require mobility support, **Central States Mobility** offers rentals with delivery and pickup at the hotel.

**Scooters** are **\$240** and **manual wheelchairs** are **\$60** for the full event. Equipment will be delivered by **5 PM on July 15** and picked up on **July 20**. Reservations should be made **2-3 weeks in advance**.

Attendees staying at any hotel other than the Hilton should check walking distances to ensure the mobility device meets their needs.

This information can also be found at welcatg.org: [FINAL-Wheelchair-and-Scooter-Information.pdf](#)

---

## **Closing**

In closing, we are in a strong position:

- **781 total registrations,**
- strong activity engagement,
- strong volunteer interest,
- and steady progress on housing and accessibility planning.

We will continue weekly tracking, follow-up with pending registrants, and targeted outreach to ensure a successful and well-supported Gathering.

Thank you.

**Gabriela Cotreras**

*Director for Meeting Planning*  
Women of the ELCA