



Who Am I

Higher Things Conferences 2024

FAQ



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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General

Why Higher Things conferences?

The mission of Higher Things is to make the Gifts of Christ Jesus known to youth and young adults. Since 2000, Higher Things has held a total of 55 Lutheran youth conferences! In 2024, we are excited to add three more to that list.

We host these events because we are convinced that youth need solid teaching and experiences that will nurture a lasting Christian faith. Higher Things believes in challenging youth to learn the pure doctrine of the Christian faith. By teaching them the same message that they already hear at home and at church, youth grow in the fullness of the Christian faith as they come to appreciate historic liturgical practice and its unique focus on God's Gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation for us delivered in Word and Sacrament.

What does the 2024 conference theme, "Who Am I," mean?

"Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands." Isaiah 49:16a

Identity. More than what you want to be when you grow up. More than what's expected of you. What do you see when you look in the mirror? What gives you value? What makes you "you"? Dealing with insecurity, anxiety, and self-hate is hard enough before the pressures of the world, the pressures of your family, your own hopes and wants and dreams, and even the pressures of the church make this question debilitating. So Jesus baptizes you. Your identity is here. A child of God. It gives shape to the rest. It gives shape to your role as a man, a woman. It gives promise to your vocation. It even gives answer to your sin. You don't identify by that anymore. Not by what you've done. By what's been done for you. Who am I? A Christian. You're found in the wounds of the Savior. Your identity starts there.

What should I expect at a Higher Things conference?

You should expect to spend four days immersed in the Gospel with your youth. You'll hear about Jesus and what He's done for you. A lot. You'll learn about our faith, not just what we believe but why we believe it and why it's essential. All this will equip them to talk about their faith to others. You'll participate in worship services during which we join our voices with those of the historic Christian Church through liturgy and hymns and hear the Gospel preached in its purity.

You and your youth will get to know hundreds of other youth just like you throughout the worship and sessions, and especially during the free time activities each evening. Higher Things conferences are held every summer, so they will have an opportunity to build life-long friendships as they worship, learn, and have fun together, especially if your group can attend year after year!

Who may attend?

In general, youth and their adult leaders make up the bulk of our attendees. Our conference programming is geared toward high school-aged youth who have been confirmed. However, there are a



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fair number of groups who bring younger, middle school age children as well as college age adults who attend independently. All are welcome! (See the Registration Policies for further detail.)

May I bring a non-Lutheran friend?

Yes! Of course! In fact, you are encouraged to do so!

What if I have special needs?

We will do our best to make our conferences inclusive events, developing support for those with disabilities as needed. Additional fees may need to be assessed for equipment rental, interpretive staff, on-campus transportation assistance, parking, etc.

We also provide a sensory-friendly room at all conferences for registrants who may suffer from sensory overload, anxiety, or just need a quiet place to rest and regroup.

Registration

When does registration open?

Registration opens on November 1st and closes as conference locations reach capacity. Registration will remain open as long as there is room at a conference site! However, the cost of registering increases as the conference dates get closer.

Where do I register?

The only way you can register for a Higher Things conference! Visit the link on our website at www.whoami24.org.

What does registration cost?

We work very diligently to keep costs as low as possible while providing the best conferences we can each and every summer.

	Early Bird Rate November 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024	Regular Rate February 1 - April 30, 2024	Late Registration On or after May 1, 2024
Concordia University Mequon, WI June 25-28, 2024	\$550.00	\$575.00	\$625.00
University of the Ozarks Clarksville, AR July 16-19, 2024	\$525.00	\$550.00	\$600.00
Lewis & Clark College Portland, OR July 23-26, 2024	\$550.00	\$575.00	\$625.00



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A non-refundable deposit of \$150.00 only guarantees that an individual has been accepted as a registrant for a conference if the location reaches capacity and creating a waitlist becomes necessary. Payment of non-refundable deposits does not lock-in a group's registration rate.

Deposits will only be refunded for a cancellation if there is a waitlist for that conference at the time of the cancellation, and someone from the waitlist can fill the spot forfeited by the cancellation. A deposit may not be transferred out of the space that it saves. In other words, it MAY NOT be transferred toward a group's remaining balance if a cancellation occurs and there is no substitution to fill the space.

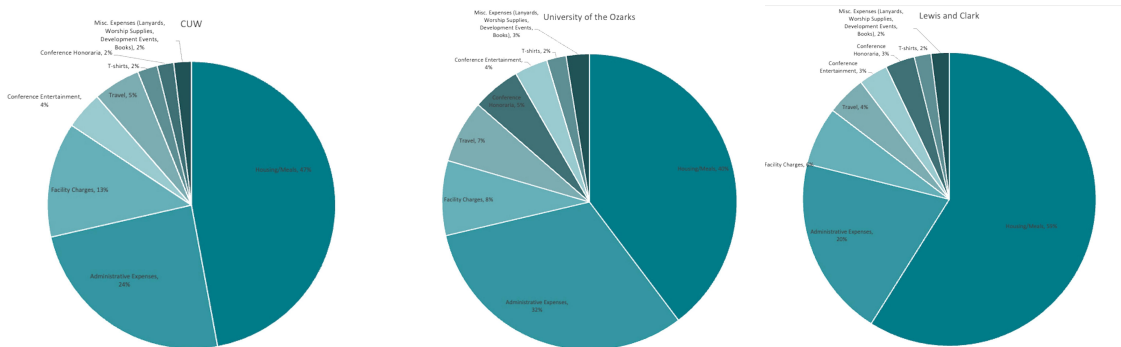
Non-refundable deposit policies do not apply to infant, toddler, and child registrations, as those are flat fees.

What does the registration fee include?

Your registration fee covers:

- Conference programming
 - Planning and preparations
 - Teaching (4 plenary sessions; 5 breakaway sessions; panel; fireside chats)
 - Worship (2 Divine Services, 11 Prayer Offices)
 - Entertainment activities
- Three nights of on-campus housing, including linens
- Nine meals (Tuesday dinner through Friday lunch)
- Printed conference handbook
- Printed worship booklet
- Conference T-shirt
- Access to weekly High School Bible Studies for the following academic year

How does Higher Things use my conference fees?





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Are scholarships available?

Yes, we have limited funding available for full or partial individual or group scholarships. Please contact Patrick Sturdivant, development executive (development@higherthings.org), for more information on applying for conference scholarships. You can also find the application on the conference website, www.whoami24.org.

How many chaperones are allowed per youth?

Higher Things requires that each group must provide at least one male adult for every seven male youth (11-17 years of age at the time of the conference) and/or at least one female adult for every seven female youth (11-17 years of age at the time of the conference) in the group. Chaperones must be at least 21 years old at the time of the conference and approved by the group's pastor for their role. All chaperones and any other adults attending the conference must also complete the registration and any required background check process. See Registration Policies for additional information about chaperones and other adult registrants.

What if I can't find enough chaperones from my church?

Suppose you are unable to recruit the necessary number of chaperones for your group to attend a conference. In that case, Higher Things will be happy to help you contact groups who might be willing to share their chaperones with you. Please contact the conference registrar (registrar@higherthings.org) for assistance.

My church doesn't sponsor youth to go to HT conferences.

You can still come! Because you will be coming from one congregation, that'll be your group, even if your group is only a single youth with a parent.

When should we plan to arrive and depart?

The opening Divine Service starts at 2:00 pm on Tuesday of the conference week (registration check-in will run from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm), and the conference will finish around lunch on Friday.

Groups may also stay on campus for one extra night before and/or after the conference for an additional fee of \$50 per person per night (additional meals not included). Check-in on the day before the conference will be between 5:00 and 10:00 pm, and those staying an extra day after the conference should plan to check out by 10:00 am the day after the conference closes.

Transportation

How do we get to the conference?

Groups are responsible for obtaining their own transportation to and from the conference sites. If traveling by airplane, bus, or train, groups will also need to make arrangements for ground transportation to and from the campus and for your group's private use during the week if you want to go sightseeing on your own.



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How much walking is involved?

A lot. Seriously. A LOT. Because of the nature of college campuses, you will get your exercise! If someone attending with your group cannot walk long distances or will need assistance getting around at the conference, please note this as a special need with their registration and contact the conference registrar (registrar@higherthings.org). We are happy to accommodate anyone with special needs to the best of our ability but we need your help to plan in advance. Additional fees may be assessed.

How do I get to area attractions during the conference?

Any off-site transportation for scheduled conference activities will be provided by Higher Things and is included in your registration fee. If groups choose to take their own vehicles to scheduled off-site activities, they will be responsible for additional charges (parking, tolls, etc.). Groups are responsible for arranging their own transportation for any sightseeing not included as part of the conference.

Is parking available on campus?

If applicable, group leaders will be provided detailed information regarding parking (including fees and obtaining parking passes) before the conference.

Housing

What kind of housing can we expect?

Since Higher Things conferences are held on college campuses, all registrants will stay in residence halls. Sometimes this means a suite of two double-capacity rooms with a shared bathroom between the rooms. Or some residence halls will have standard double rooms with common (single-sex) lavatories with private toilets and shower stalls. Not all residence halls on campuses have air conditioning. If you are assigned to buildings without air conditioning, we will do our best to notify you in advance so you may bring small fans. You can follow up with us close to the conference date to check on your group's dorm air conditioning status.

How many people will be assigned per room?

Groups should plan for two occupants per room. You may request roommates from within your own group. Private rooms are available by request for an additional fee of \$50 per room per night (\$150 total for three nights). If your group does not fully occupy the available rooms or suites, roommates and/or suite-mates (of the same sex and age category) may be assigned from another group. Please see the Housing Policy for details about roommate assignments.



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Will groups be housed together?

Wherever possible, male and female rooms will be separated by floor, wing, or building. We will do our best to assign group members' rooms near one another. Adults will not be housed in the same room as a youth unless there is a direct familial relationship AND both adults and youth are of the same sex. Please see the Housing Policy for details.

Can spouses be housed together?

Unfortunately, no. We assign rooms with male and female rooms appropriately separated by floor, wing, or building. Chaperones must be housed with the youth from their groups.

Are linens provided?

Yes, pillows, bed linens (including blankets), and towels are usually provided for each registrant. However, most campuses do not provide mattress pads or fitted sheets.

If any of the above linens are not provided by the campus, group leaders will be notified well in advance to bring them. Registrants may bring additional linens of their own.

Do we have to stay on campus?

No. Higher Things will not reimburse or discount your registration fee if you choose to stay off campus. Besides, staying in dorms allows youth to get a glimpse of college life and to get to know other youth at the conference, potentially forming lasting friendships.

Can we stay on campus before and/or after the conference?

Yes! You may spend one additional night on campus before and/or after the conference—in the same room(s) you'll use for the rest of the week—for just \$50/person/night. Meals are not provided for these extra days. Groups must notify the registrar that they will need an extra night no later than May 15. Those arriving early may check in on campus between 5:00-10:00 pm the evening before the conference begins and must check out by 10:00 am the day following the conference.

Worship

How many services do we get to attend each day?

At least three, often four. Each year most youth report that worship is the best part of the conference week and that they miss it once they return home. Every day, youth and adults start their day with the service of Matins or Morning Prayer, followed by Vespers in the mid-afternoon, and end the day together with Evening Prayer. Time for Individual Confession and Absolution is also offered following Evening Prayer, and small groups are encouraged to gather for Compline before lights-out.



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We know that a lot of this will be new to groups unfamiliar with the services. Feel free to make the schedule work for you and your group! If that means staying back for a prayer office to destress or talk about the day's teachings as a group, go for it!

From where do the services come?

All services are taken from the *Lutheran Service Book*, which most of you use in your own churches. It is a long-standing tradition in the Christian Church to conduct brief prayer services throughout the day. These services provide a great way to keep our days focused on Christ and His Gifts for us, giving a rhythm to the life of a Christian.

Is there a conference hymn each year?

The conference hymn for the Who Am I 2024 conferences is “Alleluia! Let Praises Ring” (LSB 822). You can use this hymn in your congregations in the weeks and months leading up to the conference. It’s a beautiful hymn that we’re sure everyone will enjoy singing together!

Music

May I sing in the choir?

YES! Participating in the conference choir is one of the best ways for youth (and adults) from all over the country to get to know each other. Everyone is welcome to sing in the choir, regardless of experience! Rehearsal times will be included in the week’s schedule.

Please register for the conference choir by June 1st so we know how many music packets to have available.

May I play my instrument at the conference?

Yes! Depending on the number of volunteers and the space available for an orchestra, this process may include an audition. If you’d like to volunteer to play during the conference, notify your group leader to indicate so on your registration and/or contact the conference registrar (registrar@higherthings.org).

Teaching

What is a plenary speaker?

Plenary speakers are the main speakers for the conference! Check out the website for more information.

What is a breakaway?

Breakaways are sessions taught by pastors and other adults attending the conference with their youth groups. Attendees have five different sessions to choose from at each conference.



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When can we get a list of breakaways?

Breakaway titles, abstracts, and speakers are announced June 2024.

Do we need to sign up for breakaways in advance?

No. Breakaway seating is on a first-come, first-seated basis.

How are breakaway speakers selected?

Breakaway speakers are chosen from the pastors and lay members of LCMS congregations in good standing who apply to teach in February. All speakers must also be comfortable communicating with youth, and they should try to prepare their sessions in such a way that will help them live out their faith in love and service to others. Interested in teaching? Watch the website for more information!

Free Time/Entertainment

How much free time will there be?

We plan a few hours of scheduled entertainment events and/or free time each afternoon and evening of the conference week. However, if your group wants to do some more extensive sightseeing around the conference cities, you should plan for an extra day in town to do that.

For your convenience, groups can reserve an extra night (Monday and/or Friday) in their rooms on campus at the time of registration for \$50/person/night.

What will we be doing for fun?

We're working on planning some really great activities that we'll be able to tell you about very soon!

YOUNG ADULT LEADER

What are Young Adult Leaders?

(formerly College Conference Volunteers or CCV)

Young Adult Leaders play an integral role in the conference staff. They are energetic young people who volunteer to help manage the conferences on the ground. They work hard and play even harder. They are often seasoned Higher Things conference-goers, but some newbies get their first HT experience as a YAL.

What kinds of things do YALs do at the conferences?

- Registration: Directing groups through the registration check-in, helping to prepare and distribute materials, directing people to dorms and parking areas, helping to break down the information table after the end of the conference, etc.



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- Speaker Care: YALs are assigned to a breakaway speaker to hand out materials in the breakaways, make sure speakers have any needed food and/or beverages, run AV, remind attendees to text in evaluations, etc.
- Worship: Help setup and breakdown the conference chapel, assist with crowd control and altar guild duties.
- Merchandise: Help set up and break down as needed.
- General: Help supervise activities, give directions, run errands, answer questions, put up signs, etc.
- Photography: Take pictures of everyone having a great time.
- AV: Assist our media staff with audio/video recording.

How much is my registration if I am selected as a YAL?

YAL registration is FREE! If travel costs are a hindrance to you applying, reach out and we'll talk. Scholarship money is available to help!

How old do I have to be to be a YAL?

You must be at least 18 years old and have completed your high school studies at the time of the conference. We'll accept young adults 18-24 years of age.

How and when do I apply to be a YAL?

You can apply online at www.whoami24.org between November 1, 2023, and February 28, 2024. Look for the link on the conference website. Applicants will be notified by March 15, 2024, if they have been selected to serve as a YAL.

Should I still register even though I am applying?

Yes. Whether your church is sending a group to the conference or not, you should register as an individual or with your group AND complete the YAL application so that you are sure to get into the conference, should it fill. If you are selected as a YAL, your registration will then be processed separately from your group and Higher Things will reimburse any balance paid. You will also be assigned housing in a separate staff area.

Other Conference Support

How else can I support the conferences?

- Pray for Higher Things! Our staff, volunteers and board members welcome your prayers above all things.
- Give! Regular gifts to Higher Things: The organization's yearly operations are supported by general individual, church donations, and sponsorships of other non-profit organizations.
- YAL scholarships! Young Adult Leaders registrations are paid as a conference expense so that these volunteers don't have to pay registration fees. All contributions received in the offerings during the opening and closing Divine Services will go toward this expense.



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- Registrant scholarships! Full and partial conference registration scholarships are now available to registrants and groups with financial needs.
- Sponsorships! Contact exhibitors@higherthings.org for more information about sponsorship opportunities.
- For more information about further opportunities to collaborate or contribute, contact our development executive, Patrick Sturdivant at patrick@higherthings.org.



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Sample Conference Schedule

Day 1

1:00 pm Leaders' Meeting
 2:00 pm Opening Divine Service
 4:00 pm Plenary Session 1
 5:00 pm Dinner
 7:00 pm Breakaway Session A
 8:00 pm Evening Prayer
 8:30 pm Individ. Confession & Absolution
 8:30 pm Free Time/Entertainment
 11:00 pm Compline
 12:00 am Lights Out

Day 2

7:00 am Breakfast
 8:00 am Choir Rehearsal
 9:00 am Matins
 10:00 am Plenary Session 2
 11:00 am Lunch
 11:15 am Leaders' Meeting
 1:00 pm Vespers
 1:45 pm Free Time
 2:45 pm Panel
 4:00 pm Breakaway Session B
 5:00 pm Dinner
 7:00 pm Breakaway Session C
 8:00 pm Evening Prayer
 8:30 pm Individ. Confession & Absolution
 8:30 pm Free Time/Entertainment
 11:00 pm Compline
 12:00 am Lights Out

Day 3

7:00 am Breakfast
 8:00 am Choir Rehearsal
 9:00 am Matins
 10:00 am Plenary Session 3
 11:00 am Lunch
 11:15 am Leaders' Meeting
 1:00 pm Vespers
 2:00 pm Breakaway Session D
 2:45 pm Free Time // HT4U Reception
 4:00 pm Breakaway Session E
 5:00 pm Dinner
 7:00 pm Evening Prayer
 7:30 pm Individ. Confession & Absolution
 8:00 pm Free
 Time/Entertainment
 11:00 pm Compline
 12:00 am Lights Out

Day 4

7:00 am Breakfast
 8:00 am Choir Rehearsal
 9:00 am Plenary Session 4
 10:30 am Closing Divine Service
 12:00 pm Lunch