

## **BLESSING AND SENDING FOR THE ELCA YOUTH GATHERING**

Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God and seek God's blessing as we send young people and adults to grow in faith and serve the people of New Orleans at the ELCA Youth Gathering.

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. You made the whole earth for your glory; all creation praises you. We lift our voices to join the songs of heaven and earth in thanksgiving for the many blessings you have given us.

Renew in us the commitment to use our gifts in the service of others, and especially of those in need. Let us be your hands to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, comfort the weary and outcast, welcome the stranger, care for creation, and be loving neighbors to all people.

*To those attending the Gathering.* During the past months, you have been preparing and looking forward to the Gathering with great anticipation. Will you put your head, heart, and hands into the experience of the Gathering? Will you seek to be a follower and witness to Jesus every moment? Will you offer your love and service to God through loving and serving the people of New Orleans?

*Participants respond*      **With God's help we will.**

*To the congregation.* We send these young people and adults forth on their jazzy journey to the Big Easy to experience the body of Christ beyond this place. They will return to us with a new commitment to serve all God's people, following the example Jesus, and with new skills to be able to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Will you accept the gift of their witness with love and gratitude?  
**We will.**

Let us offer our blessing on this ministry of service.

**Bless those who go out from here to labor in New Orleans. Prosper the work of their hands. Enrich their faith through study and worship. Build their community with others at the Gathering. Bless those who receive them and the fruits of their labor, and may those who are sent receive blessing in return. May the gifts they use and share be signs of your love to all people.**