

# Welcome!

Welcome to the 2024 Michigan District Junior High Youth Gathering!

We are so glad you've made it, and we are thrilled that your families/churches sent you to join us this weekend. Our prayer is that it is a truly blessed event and that you leave filled with the spirit, ready to live for our risen Lord Jesus.

Our theme for this 2024 Jr. High Youth Gathering is *MESSY MERCY*. I don't know for sure, but I would suspect that life feels chaotic and messy for many of you from time to time. I know it does for me! It may be business, it may be juggling friend groups, it may be expectations that we are desperately trying to live up to ... maybe it's trouble at home or not knowing what the future has in store for us. Whatever it is for you, life is messy and you're not alone in that! When sin entered the world and became a reality for all our lives, the mess became inevitable. But there is good news...

*"But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).*

God did not wait for us to fix our own mess. He reached down, into the mess, and offered His hand of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. We do not have to Face or Fix our mess on our own. Christ loves us and cleans us up.

Life is messy. But never forget that you are loved and cleaned up by Christ and the cross.

A big "Thank You" goes out to Pastor Tyler Cronkright, Swenless, our Gathering Sectional leaders, the Gathering planning committee, the Frankenmuth community, St. Lorenz Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth, the Michigan District Staff, and all those who have helped make this Gathering a possibility.

I also want to thank all the youth leaders, volunteers, pastors, and parents for taking the time to bring your youth to this Gathering. Without you this event would not be possible. So youth, when you see any of these individuals—give them a high five and a big thanks!

God's blessings on your weekend!

Luke Esselman  
2024 Junior High Gathering Chairman