



YES Colorado Missions The Episcopal Youth Event 2023

By Kimberley Hubbs
YES CO Mission Programs Coordinator

YES CO was honored to host the Episcopal Church in Colorado's Delegation to EYE23 at the University of Maryland this July 2023. EYE is a triannual gathering of youth from around the Episcopal Church, with youth coming from around the US and other countries. A three day event with worship, community, workshops, singing, dancing, fun and so much love. The theme of EYE23 was Regreso A Casa, A New Age of Faith. Our delegation of 19 youth from churches around the diocese and 4 adult leaders, heard a powerful message that young people are not the future of the church, they are the "Now." The present. Their voice matters and is needed now. They are wonderfully made for "Such a time as this." The story of Esther was the inspiration for many of the talks and reflections we enjoyed during our time at EYE. Esther was a strong women who God called on to be brave in saving her people. A bravery that we can empower our youth to model in the world today.



During our time at EYE23 we heard sermons and reflections from youth, priests, and guests on the importance of the youth voice. We heard about youth positions in our church and our communities. Workshops were available to youth and leaders on so many wonderful topics. Workshops on formation ideas, youth leadership councils, voting information for new voters, suicide prevention, pastoral care in young people, strengthening our faith roots and so much more. As a group we brought back with us a certainty that we are loved by God, our church, our community and each other. We brought back new ideas for sharing our ministry and faith with others and we brought back a lifelong memory of days that will be with us always. An experience these youth will carry with them as they grow into the people God has created them to be.

It is my privilege to work with our young people and I am so honored to have shared this experience with them. I could continue to go on describing our experience but my words will never be as powerful as the words of our youth. In the paragraphs that follow, please find the reflections from our young people who attended as delegates representing The Episcopal Church in Colorado. At the end of the report please also find links to videos and Sunday sermons where youth shared their reflections with their congregations upon returning from this event. Please know that this trip and our delegation was well supported by Bishop Kym, the High Plains, Front Range and Sangre de Cristo Regions along with private sponsors from around the diocese and congregations. This trip had a total cost of



\$1,015.00 per person. Thanks to our wonderful supporters, grants, and donations each youth/family paid only \$100.00 per participant. Many families would not have been able to send their youth to this life changing event without this amazing support. As you will read, our appreciation and gratitude is deep and wide. To know we are so loved that this experience was offered to so many. The Episcopal Church in Colorado had one of the largest delegations in attendance. Something we should all

be very proud of. This shows how important our youth are to us.....today!

Youth Reflections:

This trip has been of the most memorable experiences of my life. From the worship music to hearing Bishop Michael Curry speak, it has been empowering, comforting, and surreal. There are so many points from this week that I will take home with me, along with many new friends. Thank you so much for helping us to come on this trip.

Alex, Christ's Church, CR

My experience at EYE has truly been life changing. My faith and friendships have grown tremendously during this trip. Being able to experience the sharing of faith at the level has been absolutely surreal. Thank you so much!

Lilly, St. Stephen's, Aurora

Thank you to all the sponsors who helped pay for this amazing and transformative event. From these past three days I have learned that love is ABUNDANT. There is no force on earth that can take love away. Love does extraordinary things. Love is the force that will create the change we need to see in the world. Love is the future, and love is the only way.

Allie, St. Mike's, C Springs

Three epiphanies overcame me by the end of The Episcopal Youth Event which have radically changed my faith and the life in which I apply it. The first is an understanding that when I find myself contemplating a problem and tripping over my own thoughts hundreds of times over in hopes of finding a solution, I am not meant to fix that problem. God is the keeper of the solutions and will present them when He knows the time is right. The second is a realization that God doesn't rule this universe in vain. I need not worry of pleasing and validating Him. Instead, I can focus on building MY relationship with him in whatever fashion feels right to ME. The last is an awareness that I have the ability to show the power of Jesus to those that have not felt His presence in their lives. All I need is the power to love, as sharing love with others is sharing the power of God.

Eli, Christ's Church, CR

This trip has definitely helped me find myself. Julia Alaya Harris's talk helped me realize that me being a mixed Mexican should not matter and that in the Episcopal Church I don't have to be a split person, I am a whole person.

Abigail, St. Matthew's, GJ

Thank you so much for making this trip such an affordable price because this week has taught me so much. I learned that everyone has a different story but it can still lead to the same place and that's how I felt about this week. Not everyone has the same story but we still all came together to learn more about our faith. My main take away was that the youth are the future but we are also the today and we need to start making changes today for the future. So the one word I would describe this week would be surreal because of all the new things I've learned about myself and others through this trip.

Aspen, Christ's Church, CR

I have had an amazing time with everyone here at EYE23 and in growing my faith in God. This experience has been so eye opening and I couldn't be more grateful for being with the people and community of EYE23!

Savannah, St. Timothy's, Centennial

I really have no idea how to sum up this experience in words. I know I'm going to be thinking about this for a long, long time. I feel like the world and this community have opened up to me so much more about love and faith. This experience will be something I use to inform my decisions and inspire my actions in the future. Thank you!

Maddie, St. John's Cathedral, Denver



Dear beloved sponsors, Thank you so much for handing me this wonderful opportunity to be a part of history here at EYE23. It was such a blessing to be part of this inclusive, welcoming, and enthusiastic family of youth. Not just from across the great state of Colorado but from all across the world. I have strengthened my spiritual relationship with God through the memorable experience which was all made possible with your generous contributions. Thank you for spreading the love and contributing to the future of The Episcopal Church.

Christian, St. Mike's, C Springs

EYE23 helped me learn so much about what it means to be a youth in the Episcopal Church. Community was at the center of this event. This experience of community with all the youth there, with each other, and with God is something I want for whole church to experience. I am coming to realize that we all need to be the change, to be invested in it, for change to really happen. The community at EYE made me feel like this is possible. "For such a time as this..." Esther 4:14

Jacob, All Saints', Loveland

I was surprised by the enthusiasm of the other youth at EYE23. I enjoyed the worship, meeting new people, and what I learned from the workshops. Thank you for supporting this trip.

Grant, Christ's Church, CR

Thank you to all who supported us going to EYE23. I have never had so much fun at a youth event and I know God was there with us!

This retreat was very moving. Whether it was listening to the youth leadership sermons or ones given by the Bishops, each was authentic and thought provoking. I didn't know anything about EYE when signing up for it, and I was stunned. It was a great, life-changing experience and I am glad I attended!

Jackson, Christ's Church, CR

Thank you so much for this trip. I had a lot of fun! This event taught me to try new things, even when you are unsure, because they will likely surprise you. I was surprised by the impact of this event for me and by all the new friends I made.

Jake, St. John's Cathedral, Denver

Thank you! This was an incredibly powerful experience for all of our youth and for myself. It was a joy to experience God through these amazing young people and accompany them on this journey. Much love and many thanks.

Owen, Leader, St. Mike's, C Springs

This EYE trip really made me think of how I value myself and my relationships, and how others value the same things. I grew extremely closer to God and I can't wait to go again. I met so many cool people who I can't wait to continue talking to.

Johna, St. Matthew's, GJ

This week was amazing, I had a lot of fun. I learned a lot of things and met people that helped me grow in my faith. I had a lot of major questions that got answered, I made new friends, gained new role models, and expanded my understanding of the Episcopal Church.

Oliver, St. Matthew's, GJ

Thank you so much to all the donors! As a youth, I can't be more grateful for the opportunity to come to EYE. As a person who did not grow up in the Episcopal Church, I have found that the love all people experienced from God is universal regardless of background, race, class, birthplace, etc. Of all things on this Earth, the one that unites us all is the love God has for all.

Growing up in a small episcopal church in Colorado (the same one my whole life), I thought Episcopalians were rare and I never fully understood the basis behind our faith. After EYE, I feel reassured in God, and I feel a part of an amazing community of loving people. Thank you to all the sponsors who gave so much for us to have this experience, and for paying for us.

Talia, St. Stephen's, Aurora

The Episcopal Youth are a force to be reckoned with! It's something I've always believed, but seeing the near 1,100 Episcopal Youth worshipping together, learning together, and loving each other, was completely overwhelming and more amazing than words could ever accurately express. The passion for justice and humanity and the need to create change and make the world a better place leaves no doubt in my mind that they are indeed born for such a time as this. It is our job as adults to listen to them and to empower them to make that change. *Elizabeth, Missioner for Children and Youth*

We thank all of our sponsors and supporters again and offer one last way to truly experience how powerful this event was for all. Please follow the links below to listen to live reflections/sermons from the youth upon their return from the event. Their words are moving and hopeful!

[Youth Sermons Christ's Church](#) start at the 14:25 min mark

[Youth Reflections St. Mike's](#)

[Youth Sermon All Saint's](#) start at the 28:00 min mark

[Youth Reflection at EYE from our own Devynn Hubbs](#)

