

**“For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Eph. 2:8**



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Houston, Texas / June 27 – July 1, 2018

The countdown has begun!

The excitement begins now!

Synod gathering coordinator, Jill Goldhammer, is eager to hear from congregations who are still discerning a call to participate in this event or who have questions as they prepare. Her contact information is listed on the bottom of page 2.

Important dates to remember

September 15, 2017	Registration opens and early bird rate begins
November 16, 2017	Regular registration rate begins
February 16, 2018	Late registration rate begins
May 15, 2018	Registration closes and all payments are due
June 24-27, 2018	MYLE and the tAble pre-gathering events
June 27-July 1, 2018	ELCA Youth Gathering

A Gathering Ministry Partner - The Houston Food Bank

The Gathering is excited to announce that over the course of the Gathering, 2,970 students will have the opportunity to sort food, prepare meals, and prepare food bags as a service learning opportunity with the Houston Food Bank. The Houston Food Bank was named the 2015 Feeding America Food Bank of the Year. It takes in about 73 million pounds of food each year, and in 2015-2016, was able to provide 79 million meals across the Houston area. Most of the food the Houston Food Bank collects is sent to community food banks throughout the Houston area. We're excited to partner with this important ministry and Houston, and share this experience with the youth joining us.

Getting Ready

Preparation is an important part of your congregational Gathering experience. We know through conversations and surveys that congregations that are diligent in their preparation together have a much better experience at the event.

Financial Aid for youth participants opens on-line July 15, 2017

- Financial Aid applications must be filed electronically by congregational adult leaders on behalf of their youth, using the same congregational registration ID number
- Assistance is given based on the financial need of the individual and their family
- Up to \$300 per person will be credited to that person's account upon registration
- Those who receive financial assistance should register within 30 days of receiving notice or risk having the funding removed from their congregational account
- Questions about financial assistance may be directed to gathering@elca.org



Three major resources to help you prepare

The **Official Gathering Handbook:**

Tips and Tricks for Adult Leaders is available now: (www.ELCA.org/gathering) This resource was created by congregational youth ministry leaders and is filled with ideas and best practices to help you get your mind wrapped around the huge task of preparing a group to come to the Gathering.

The **Gathering's Getting Ready** resources are based in group building, Bible study and faith based conversation for use with congregational groups before and after the Gathering. Twelve lessons will be developed – nine for use in the months leading up to the Gathering and three for taking your experience home. Eight of the nine pre-Gathering lessons will become available in August 2017. The ninth lesson will be for use in the final weeks leading up to the Gathering. Because it will contain last-minute details, it will not be posted until the spring of 2018. The three post-Gathering lessons will be available shortly after the Gathering. It is a goal to create most of the Getting Ready curriculum with themes that could be used for your entire youth ministry group, not just those attending the Gathering. Stay tuned for more details!

Monthly Webinars are also available to help you prepare Monthly webinars are focused on the different program areas. Webinars will be held the second Thursday of every month at 7pm central. You can sign up on-line at the Gathering website (www.ELCA.org/gathering) – Click on the “Details” tab for the link to “Resources.” The webinar schedule is as follows:

2017

Aug. 10, 2017 - Getting Ready Materials
Sept. 14, 2017 - Registration
Oct. 12, 2017 - MYLE
Nov. 9, 2017 - The tAble
Dec. 14, 2017- Synod Day

2018

Jan. 11, 2018- Community Life
Feb. 8, 2018 - Interactive Learning
March 8, 2018 - Mass Gathering
April 12, 2018 - Service Learning
May 10, 2018- Transportation

Gathering Mission Statement: **FAITH FORMATION FOR OUR YOUTH**



Gathering Synod Coordinator:

Jill Goldhammer, Director of Youth and Family Ministry, Salem, Lutheran, Peoria, IL will serve as the synod coordinator. Jill can be reached by phone at 309-688-9212 or by e-mail at: jgoldhammer@salemofpeoria.com

