



# JUNE 27– JULY 1 HOUSTON, TEXAS

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

Grace is a foundational and distinctive piece of the Lutheran faith. This gift, undeserved and freely given, changes lives and perspectives as people realize they are enough because of what Christ has done and are called into the world to serve their neighbor and share the good news.

## ABOUT THE ELCA YOUTH GATHERING:

Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gather for a week of faith formation known as the Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.

Houston is a great host city and has excellent venues for all of our Gathering program needs. It is one of the most multicultural cities in the United States and has a rich history we can learn from by being there.

- 4th most populous city in the US.
- Most diverse US metropolitan region in the US
- If Houston were an independent nation, it would rank as the world's 30th largest economy.
- Six flags over Texas refers to the flags of Spain, France, Mexico, Republic of Texas, the United States, the Confederate States of America and back to the United States after the civil war.
- More than 90 languages are spoken throughout the metro region. 92 Countries have consular offices in Houston, the most outside of Washington DC.
- At 655 square miles, Houston could fit the cities of New York, Washington DC, Boston, San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Miami all within its borders.
- Nearly a quarter of Houstonians are between 5 and 19 years old, making it one the "youngest" cities in the US.

**WHY HOUSTON**

# WHAT WILL WE DO THERE

The Gathering consists of five program areas – Community Life, Interactive Learning, Mass Gathering, Service Learning and Synod Day. Congregational groups will be assigned a rotation schedule to experience Interactive Learning, Synod Day and Service Learning. All participants gather nightly for Mass Gathering and on Sunday morning for closing worship. Community Life activities are available in several locations throughout the day.

# HOW WE WILL PREPARE

The Gathering provides us with Getting Ready resources that are based in group building, Bible study and faith based conversation. Starting in September, we will meet once a month to grow together and prepare for our experience in Houston.

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

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. There are twelve lessons all together – nine for use in the months leading up to the Gathering and three for taking your experience home.

# SAFETY & SECURITY

Safety is a top priority at the Gathering. Gathering leadership is already working with security personnel at NRG, our contracted hotels, the local police department and the Department of Homeland Security. In addition to these partners, the Gathering hires private security for the event and trains dozens of volunteers for duties related to safety and security.

# REGISTRATION & COST

Early Bird Registration: \$350 (September 15 - November 15, 2017)

General Registration: \$390 (November 16, 2017 - February 15, 2018)

Late Registration: \$440 (February 16 - May 15, 2018)

A \$150 non-refundable, per person deposit is due at the time of registration and must be postmarked within the rate range you expect to pay.

Generally, a Gathering can cost between \$1500-\$1650 per person, including the above registration cost. This will vary based on location, travel plans, hotel assignment, and many other factors. Groups will work with their participants and congregation to financially plan for the Gathering.