

**“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**



Vol 1 / Issue 2  
March / 2017

**Houston, Texas / June 27 – July 1, 2018**

## **We want to go to the Gathering. Now what?**

Whether you are a group of 2 or 22, preparing for the Gathering is the most important thing that you can do to ensure that you and your group will have an amazing experience together. If you haven't already done so – please check out the **Gathering Handbook** resource available at [www.ELCA.org/gathering](http://www.ELCA.org/gathering)

**So far 13 congregations  
from our synod  
are planning to attend the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering !!**

### **Please contact Jill Goldhammer...**

- ◆ if your congregation is planning to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering, with Congregation Name and City; Primary leader name, phone and e-mail address.
- ◆ if your congregation would like additional information.

### **Important dates to remember...**

May 15, 2017	Gathering volunteers - application process begins
July 15, 2017	Volunteer application closes
July 15, 2017	Financial aid application opens
September 15, 2017	Registration opens – Early bird rate \$350
November 16, 2017	Registration continues – Regular rate begins \$390
February 16, 2018	Registration continues – Late rate begins \$440
May, 15, 2018	Registration closes – All payments due

**Note:** Registration does not include housing, transportation, and meals. Additional housing instructions will come after the registration process begins. Synod congregations will be housed at the same hotel. Plan to register during the early bird process!

**Continued...** 

## Central-Southern Illinois Synod Pre-Gathering Meetings

Pre-Gathering meetings are important for primary leaders, youth and adult chaperones as well as parents and those who have questions about the Gathering. If your congregation is still undecided about attending the Gathering, come and learn more! In addition to practical information about the Gathering, there will be time for collaboration and resource sharing – such as ideas for fundraising, shared transportation and other best practices.

Contact Jill Goldhammer to RSVP to one of the following meetings

Saturday, April 1	10:00am-12noon	Salem Lutheran Church; Peoria, IL (Northern Conference)
Sunday, April 23	4:00-6:00pm	Mount Calvary; De Soto, IL (Southern Conference)
Thursday, May 4	6:00-8:00pm	Good Shepherd; Champaign, IL (East Central Conference)
TBA		Christ Community; Columbia, IL (West Central Conference)

Or...join us for a tri-synod Youth Leader Retreat at Lutheran Outdoors Ministry Center in Oregon, Illinois - Monday, May 22 -Tuesday, May 23. The focus will be on preparing for the Gathering and other high impact trips. The cost of this 24-hour retreat is \$35 which includes overnight housing and three meals. Please make reservations directly through the camp at: [registrations@lomc.org](mailto:registrations@lomc.org)

## Addressing fears & expectations

There are some concerns that groups will face when planning for the Gathering. This event will present a unique set of challenges and opportunities for you and your youth. Good planning will include:

**RESEARCH:** Sign up for gNews on the Gathering website to keep informed of any updates. **Attend pre-Gathering events and meetings our synod will host.** It will be a great opportunity to network with other leaders and to get answers to concerns you may have. Our Synod Coordinator is available to provide guidance and information.

**PREPARE:** Be aware that every participant will have different expectations and fears about the Gathering and the host city. If you know anyone who previously attended a Gathering, invite them to speak about their experience with your group about what to expect during the event. Monthly “Getting Ready” materials will be sent to all congregations starting in August, 2017. Plan now to use these resources monthly in small groups or Sunday school to prepare for the Gathering.

**PRAY:** Remind youth that this event will strengthen their relationship with God and help them to better understand their purpose in life. Make prayer a part of your daily, personal ritual and part of the routine when engaging in any youth activity. Know that you are part of an incredible network with resources to help you prepare.

## Coming in April - “Volunteer Opportunities at the Gathering”

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](mailto:jgoldhammer@salemofpeoria.com)

