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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



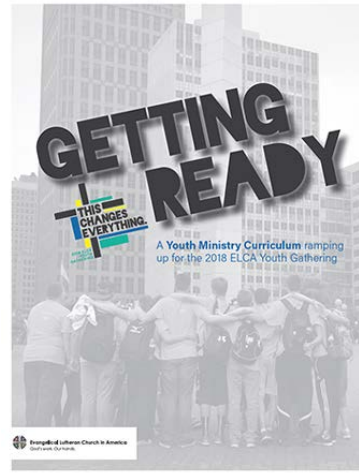
NEWS FROM THE 2018 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING + HOUSTON, TX



Getting Ready Materials webinar

The Gathering is excited to share our Getting Ready resource! We have created nine months of lesson plans that are adaptable so that you can use them with your whole group, not just those who are going to the Gathering. Join us Aug. 10 at 7 p.m. Central for a webinar led by Chelle Huth to review this great resource and the many ways you can use it with your group. Sign up now!

For other webinars, check out our [webinar schedule](#) and sign up today!



'This Changes Everything' – the theme song

We're excited to announce that the winners of our theme song contest are Judi Tyler and James Kocian with their rendition of "This Changes Everything." See our lyric video [here!](#) We hope that this is a song you can sing with your group and congregation as you prepare for the Gathering. The song is available for download on our resources page along with lyrics, sheet music and an instrumental version. We hope congregations are able to use this song to share the Gathering with everyone.

Go to our [resources page](#) today to download your copy of the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering theme song!



2018 ELCA Youth Gathering registration

Believe it or not, registration for the Gathering is right around the corner! What do you need to do to prepare for registration?

1. Hold an informational meeting with your youth and their parents.
2. Hand out registration worksheets.
3. Start putting together your fundraising and payment plans.
4. Identify adult leaders for the Gathering.
5. Register for the 2018 ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza.
6. Start to collect registrations and deposits.
7. Know your congregational ID number.

Early bird registration opens Sept. 15 at a rate of \$350 per person. If you register during early bird registration, your congregation will be entered to win one of the following prizes:

1. Community Life Priority Pass
2. Interactive Learning Priority Pass
3. Meet and greet with Mass Gathering band
4. Meet and greet with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
5. One free Gathering registration
6. Your choice of seats for one night of the mass gathering
7. Photo shoot with your youth group at NRG Stadium
8. Doughnuts on your service-learning bus
9. Emcees will wear your congregational group T-shirt one night

Email Gathering@elca.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Extravaganza Intensive Care Course

Planning on attending the [2018 Extravaganza](#)? Be sure to check out this great gathering for those involved in youth and family ministry Jan. 24-29 in Houston. And while you're there, sign up for the Gathering's Intensive Care Course! This is a great opportunity to prepare for the Gathering. Whether it's your first Gathering experience or your tenth, you'll have an opportunity to learn more about our programming, meet some of our team leaders, visit key venues and more! Don't miss your opportunity to learn all things Gathering at the Extravaganza!



Partner spotlight: Target Hunger

[Target Hunger](#) is an organization that combats food insecurity throughout Houston's low-income neighborhoods of the 5th Ward, Kashmere Gardens and Denver Harbor. Target Hunger distributes 4.4 million pounds of food each year through their five food pantries, six community gardens and 16 senior home delivery routes.

Target Hunger also teaches the residents of these neighborhoods how to cook with the fresh produce they receive so they have healthier options for meals. Gathering participants who serve Target Hunger during their Service Learning Day will help in the various food pantries, sort food at their major distribution center and help at the community gardens. Target Hunger is just one of many organizations that work to end food insecurity in Houston.



Why the Gathering?



An article published in Detroit during the 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering described how the "Skittles" were taking over the city. This was referring to the several thousand youth and adults

in Hart Plaza wearing bright orange shirts. But these weren't just any old Skittles that when they get hot their color stains your hands or they get hard to bite into. These Skittles only got better with time. On my service day, I was on one of the busses that went around to the hotels that people were staying in and collected diapers. It definitely didn't seem or feel like a service project considering there were other people that had their orange shirt covered in dirt. Once we got to the place where all the diapers were to be dropped off, we saw the impact we had made – an entire gym full of diapers and wipes. So many families were helped by us just riding around and all of the people who brought diapers with them. The ELCA Skittles don't make stains; we try our best to get rid of the previous ones, even though it may not seem like it at times. We are all moving toward that common goal.

I am one of the lucky few that will get to attend two Gatherings. Detroit was an experience I will never forget, and I can't wait to see what Houston has to offer next year.

– Landon Ridgell, North Carolina

2018 Gathering timeline at a glance

July 15, 2017 – Financial assistance application opens

Sept. 15, 2017 – [Registration opens](#) and early bird rate begins

Nov. 16, 2017 – Regular registration rate begins

Feb. 16, 2018 – Late registration rate begins

May 15, 2018 – Registration closes and all payments are due

June 24-27, 2018 – [MYLE](#) and the [Table](#)

June 27-July 1, 2018 – [ELCA Youth Gathering](#)



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Contact us

Please [contact us](#) with your ideas and comments. Please forward this email to others who may be interested. Mail: ELCA Youth Gathering, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631.

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