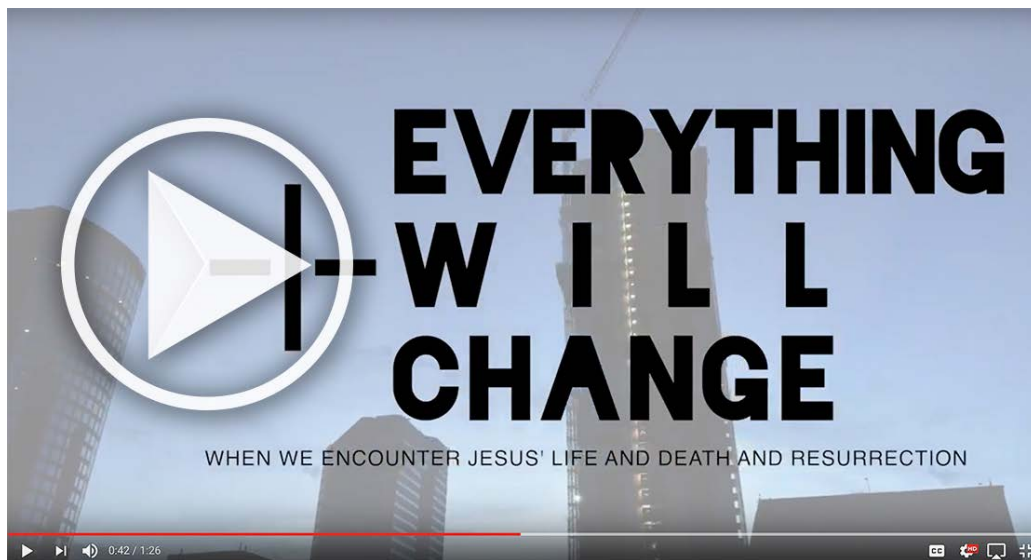


The Gathering 2018: This Changes Everything.
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



'This Changes Everything'

We are excited to share with you the theme for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering, "This Changes Everything." Our primary Scripture will be Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."*

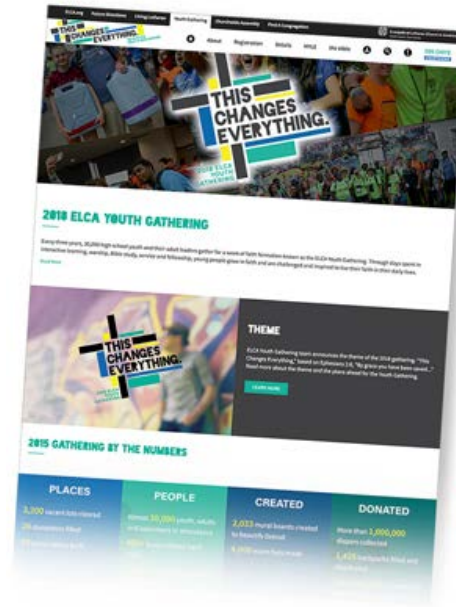
Grace is a foundational and distinctive piece of the Lutheran faith. This gift, undeserved and freely given, changes lives and perspectives as people realize they are enough because of what Christ has done and are called into the world to serve their neighbor and share the good news.

Our logo is a visual representation of our theme and the 2018 Gathering experience. It incorporates the coming together of a mosaic to reflect the diverse host city of Houston, as well as the idea that we are a church where all are imperfect and incomplete, yet we each belong in – and have an important place in – God's masterpiece. The cross at the center of the logo is the focus – it is God's grace, through Christ's life, death and resurrection, that changes everything for all people. [Read more here.](#)

Have we mentioned our new website?

Check out our new, revamped website for all things Gathering! Want to learn how you can volunteer? Check out the website! Want to learn more about MYLE or the tAble? Check out our website! Want to sign up for gNews (you definitely want to sign up for gNews)? You can do that at our website! Are you trying to figure out what this “Gathering” is? You can check out what happened at past gatherings – on our website!

Learn all you need to know about the Gathering, its history, and what’s happening in 2018 at ELCA.org/gathering.



Service learning at home

When we think of service projects, what do we think of? We think of serving meals at a soup kitchen on Thanksgiving. We think of sorting clothes at a re-use facility. Service learning takes these service projects and turns them into projects where both the people serving and the community that is being served are benefitted. Through service learning, there is an intentional effort to teach the people who are serving about the community and listen to stories from the community so that they may feel more passionate about serving. On the other side, high-quality service projects are also important so that the students can engage in their service to maximize their own learning. The projects also should make a lasting, positive impact on the community – projects in which the community will develop new stories to share or will build on their previous stories for other people to hear and learn.

In this season of giving, how will you contribute? Many of you probably are already planning on doing a “Run to Feed the Hungry” or helping serve at a Thanksgiving meal, but maybe you can take it a step further this year. Before the meal, perhaps walk around your community and invite people to the meal. Engage in conversations and then make sure to reconnect if you see them

again. You could also partner with a local shelter to see if you could help on a monthly basis. Or you could start your own project to give back to the community, like [Laundry Love](#), in which you partner with other congregations to bring a service to your community. Think about your community's needs, see where you have an opportunity to engage, and tell the story.

– Cody Miller, service learning project manager, and Sierra Ronning, ELCA Youth Gathering program associate



Devotion

"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

What is this "grace"? Grace is a huge buzzword for Lutherans. A note to all those in confirmation class, grace could be the second-best answer to anything you're asked if "Jesus" is already said. But what is grace? According to the song "Amazing Grace," it is amazing, sweet, precious, a teacher, a comforter. Those things all may be true, but I often feel that it is something else as well. Humble. We are called to be humbled in God's grace. This is not always a comfortable place for us to be. I know I have a tendency to think pretty highly of myself. I know what I'm good at, and I can be pretty confident about it, and I'm willing to bet you have similar tendencies. It's these tendencies that can bring out the worst in us. But when we can be humble in God's grace, we can let go of our egos and just be ourselves. We can begin to feel what it's like to be loved for just being ourselves. God loves us, just as we are, and nothing can take that away. But now the question that we are faced with is, what are we going to do with that? How are we going to share this love and this grace?

– Sierra Ronning, program associate, ELCA Youth Gathering

2018 Gathering timeline at a glance

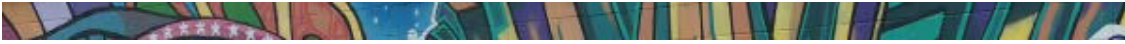
November 2016 – Theme and logo announced
November 2016 – Promotional materials available

May 15, 2017 – [Volunteer application](#) opens
July 15, 2017 – Volunteer application closes
Sept. 15, 2017 – [Registration opens](#) and early bird rate begins
Nov. 15, 2017 – Regular registration rate begins

Feb. 15, 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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