



Front Row: Sara Aigner, Adam Schmit, Zach Wulfekuhle, Lauren Beyer, Claire Aigner, Ava Aginer, Bailey Adams, Tina Aigner Back Row: Devlyn Brooks, Owen Martinson, Carter Brooks, Austin Erickson, Ben Krump, Janelle Krump, Christie Erickson, Kaitlyn Israelson



The theme for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering was "This Changes Everything" come from 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."

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

I would like to thank the Faith Lutheran congregation for supporting and funding my trip to Houston. I had a blast and it was an experience that I will never forget. I was able to create great relationships with our chaperones and friends. Even though the tram rides never seemed to stop there was always something worth waiting for at the end. – Austin Erickson

Thank you Faith Lutheran for sending me to Houston. It was definitely an experience I will never forget. It was crazy to see 30,000 kids my age with the same ideas. My favorite part was going to Galveston Island and swimming in the ocean. – Claire Aigner

Thank you Faith Lutheran Church for all of the support throughout this journey that we LYO members got to go to and expand our faith. This was an amazing experience. This may have been my last gathering but it was one to remember! We made some amazing memories, especially the amazing Mexican restaurant! – Kaitlyn Israelson

I learned a lot of things on the Houston trip. In my opinion, one of the most important things to have is patience. For example, I needed a lot of patience during all of the car rides, subway rides and plane rides. Another thing I have

learned is to help people around us. In Houston there was a lot of homeless people in need and I learned that everyone should be accepted and helped. – Owen Martinson

Dear Faith Lutheran Congregation,
Thank you so much for everything you do for our LYO group and helping send us to Houston for the youth gathering. Getting to go to Houston was one of the highlights of my summer. I loved swimming in the ocean, listening to all of the speakers at the gathering, and meeting and getting to know new people. I also like singing hymns with 30,000 other Lutheran kids. The trip was so much fun and it's something I will never forget. Thanks again! – Ava Aigner

I learned that accepting everybody in the church is important. I learned that if a bunch of people get together they can do amazing things. I enjoyed helping. I enjoyed the entire trip, other than the tram. I'm glad I went with. It was a great experience. – Carter Brooks

Thank you so much for helping our group get to Houston. My favorite part of the trip was the last full day when we went to the beach. We went and swam in the ocean and then got souvenirs. Thank you so much. – Lauren Beyer

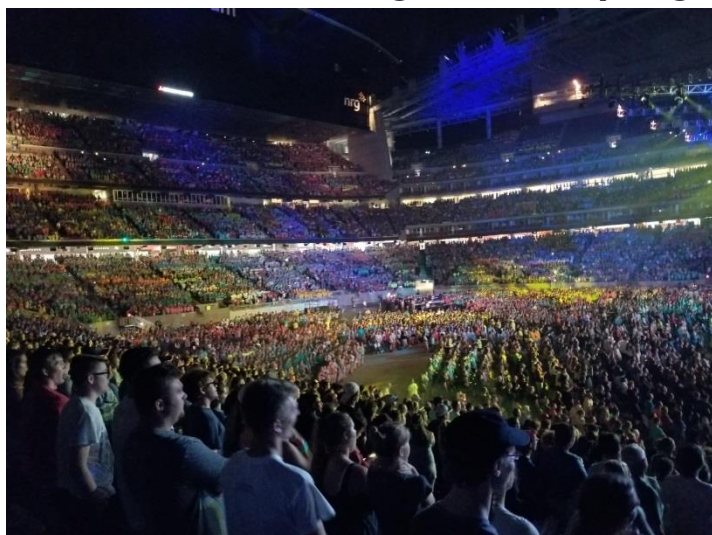


I want to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to go to the ELCA Youth Convention. It was very inspirational. One of the main things I learned was that when things get hard, God will be there for you and to have hope and help people no matter what. – Zachary Wulfekuhle

Thank you so much to the church council and the congregation. The entire trip was a lot of fun with all of the other kids that went with us. Even though I had to be very patient when waiting for the buses and trains it was still a very good experience. – Ben Krump



Mass Gathering: Worshiping with more than 30,000 people



Day 1 speakers included a welcome from Bishop Michael Rinehart of the Gulf Coast Synod and Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton, who is the current Poet Laureate for the City of Houston. Ginny Owens, a singer-songwriter who has been blind since the age of 3, shared about finding your calling and how faith has a way of helping you see with more clarity. ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton talked about our God grace and love who welcomes EVERYONE. Finally, Rev. Tuhina Rashe told her story of how she became an ELCA Pastor even though she grew up as a 2nd generation Hindu-American. Featured artists for the night were AGAPE* and Josiah Williams. Wednesday's Mass Gathering was centered on the daily theme of "God's call changes everything".

Thursday's theme was "God's love changes everything". Musical artists were Rachel Kurtz, Guardians and Ryan Brown. Speakers for the evening were Caroline Meeker, Rev. Aaron Fuller, and Marlon Hall. Caroline is a wish grantor through the Make a Wish Foundation on the campus of Texas Tech University, where she is a freshman. Rev. Fuller is a Parish Pastor, Navy Reserve Chaplain, and a wrestling coach. Mr. Hall shared his message which encompassed the day's theme. The sermon was delivered by Deacon Erin Power.

Grace is a God-given gift. Pastor Elizabeth Peter shared the day's message centered on the daily theme of "God's grace changes everything". Jaszy Segarra, Michaela Shelly, Rev. Will Starkweather, and ELCA Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber shared their personal stories of

how God's grace influenced their lives. Rachel Kurt shared both her message and her musical talent. Tauren Wells had the entire stadium on their feet singing and dancing!



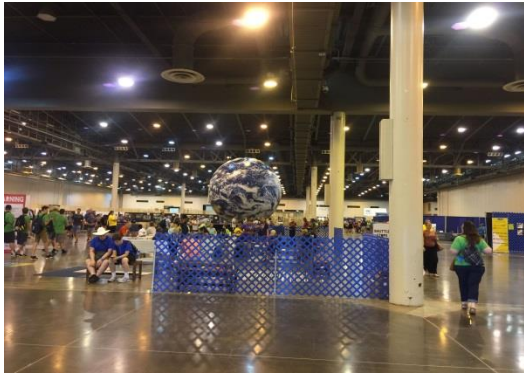
Having had just over two years sobriety and recovery from drugs and alcohol, college student Carson McCullar, shared that without the help of God, he wouldn't be able to share his experience, strength, and hope with other addicts and alcoholics who need it most. Jamie and Rebekah Bruesehoff are a mother daughter team advocating for transgender children and youth. As an eleven year old, Rebekah, spreads her message of hope for trans kids internationally. Other speakers were Stephen Bouman, Executive Director for Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA, and Maria Rose Belding, Executive Director of MEANS Database, which is a national nonprofit tech company that has rerouted more than 1.7 million pounds of food waste to people in need. Joe Davis is a national touring writer, speaker, and performer who is known for sharing his message through poetry. Returning to the stage were Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton, AGAPE* and Josiah Williams. Day 4's theme was "God's hope changes everything".

The closing worship on Sunday morning was led by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. The sermon came from Mark 5:21-42, which is the story of Jesus healing the hemorrhaging woman and raising the little girl from the dead. This is just one of the many stories of the healing power that Jesus can bring. Jesus changes everything!

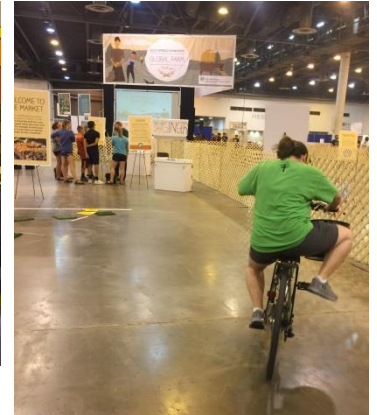
Along with the Bishop's message, Savannah Sullivan shared her experience on how she decided to live in Rwanda for a year as a volunteer through the ELCA's Young Adult and Global Mission Program.



Interactive Learning



Interactive Learning is a "Holy Playground" of sorts that invites Gathering participants to encounter God through a variety of learning styles and sensory experiences.



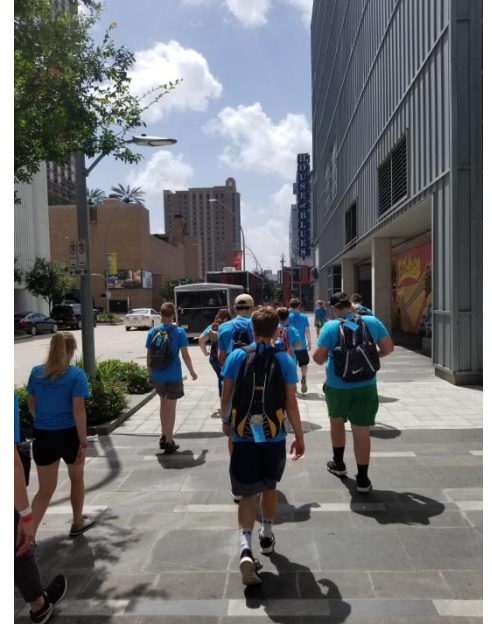
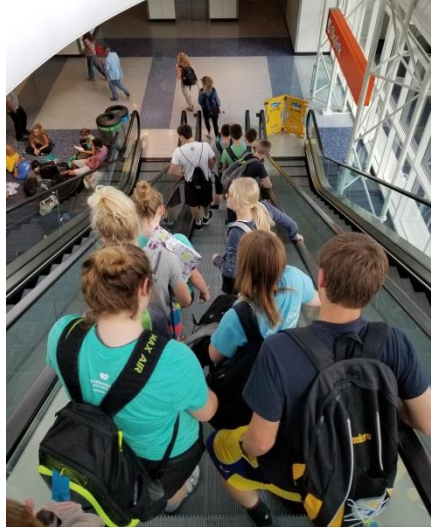
Synod Day



Synod Day is a program day where we meet for worship, bible study, learning and more, with all of the attendees from our synod.



Our Service Learning Day was spent at Kashmere High School moving books and furniture so that the custodians were able to wax the floors before school started. The day integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities.



Transportation





Site Seeing



Fun Food Friends

We ended each day together as a group sharing about the day and preparing for the next day. It was a time for reflection, planning and prayer. In the tradition of the Final 15... we would like to share our Final 15!



Thank you for all of your contributions and prayers for our trip. We would not have been able to have this amazing experience without your support. ~ Faith LYO