

Peace Student Ministry Families,

We are pleased to announce a special opportunity for summer 2017. A group of Peace students and adult leaders will journey next summer to the triennial ELCA Youth Gathering that will take place in Houston, TX June 27-July 1.



The 2017 Youth Gathering will be offered as an opportunity in addition to two Peace Student Mission Trips. This will be the second year Peace looks to attend the Youth Gathering in this decade. (9 of us went to Detroit in 2015.) Pastor Doug and Marta are looking forward to taking students again. Our commitment/decision to go, travel plans, and timeline will all depend on the interest we receive in October.

Similar to our High School Mission Trip, the ELCA Youth Gathering is open to students who've **completed grades 8th-12th**. (So, 2017-2018 8th Graders, this could be for you!)

We encourage eligible Peace students and families to learn the basics about the ELCA Youth Gathering through this document, and then we invite you to learn more at our **Information Session in the Family Ministry Space: Sunday October 1 at 7pm**. No commitment, just come and learn about what is in store for us in Houston next summer!

Next summer allows us to present two completely different experiences, both of which offer opportunities for students to experience God at work in the world as we journey together. Depending on personal finances and interest, high school families can choose to do one or both the HS Mission Trip and/or the Youth Gathering.

Our 2017 schedule is as follows:

Peace Student Ministry Summer Schedule 2017
Middle School Mission Trip- June Date & Location TBA
(Students completed 6th-7th Grades)

ELCA Youth Gathering- June 27-July 1
Houston, TX (Students completed 8th-12th Grades)

High School Mission Trip- July Date & Location TBA
(Students completed 8th-12th Grades)

The ELCA Youth Gathering is an opportunity for our students to gather with other ELCA Lutheran Youth from across the country to turn a stadium into a worship space where they sing and praise God with over 30,000 other people. They have a chance to serve God with their hands in a city waiting to hear a word of hope. They will spend time with their group in Bible study, their regional synod in worship and community building, and learn through conversation and hands on experience what we as the church and followers of Jesus Christ can do together.

Look It Up!

The best way to get a sense of the ELCA Youth Gathering is to visually see what 30,000 Lutherans in one city looks like! The ELCA has put out great promotional materials we encourage you to look up:

In a YouTube search type in “ELCA Youth Gathering 2018”

General Itinerary

Tues/Wed. 6/26- 6/27	Thurs. 6/28	Fri. 6/29	Sat. 6/30	Sun. 7/1
Travel via bus or airplane to Houston 7pm- Stadium Gathering/Worship	Morning/afternoon initiatives & activities 7-8:30pm- Stadium Gathering/Worship 9-10:45pm- Evening Community Life (Hotels)	Morning/afternoon initiatives & activities 7-8:30pm- Stadium Gathering/Worship 9-10:45pm- Evening Community Life (Hotels)	Morning/afternoon initiatives & activities 7-8:30pm- Stadium Gathering/Worship 9-10:45pm- Evening Community Life (Hotels)	Closing Worship 9:30-11:30am Travel Home

Hotel Accommodation

We will be staying in Gathering-sanctioned hotel accommodations, likely away from the downtown area. By staying in a hotel assigned by the ELCA, we will be included in the Gathering-arranged travel to and from all events in downtown Houston as well at the Community Life happenings in the late evening (fellowship, concerts, fun) in our hotel ballrooms.

In order to allow for this trip and these hotel accommodations, we brought an amendment to current Peace policy to the Peace Vision Board:

■ **Present Policy:** “Peace Lutheran Church has a policy that children will be supervised by at least two (2) adults at all times.”

■ **Youth Gathering Amendment:** “For the purposes of the 4 night-hotel stay at the ELCA Youth Gathering, Peace policy will allow students (up to 4) to stay in hotel rooms without 2-adult supervision.”

The amendment passed in 2015, and so we will house students (up to 4) in gender-specific hotel rooms while adult leaders will stay in neighboring rooms in the same hallway. The safety of our students and adult leaders is our main priority, and we hope to instill in our students a sense of responsibility in this arrangement. This arrangement is a privilege we take seriously and to ensure that all attendees have a positive experience, any students who abuse this privilege will be sent home at their family's expense.

Along with other registration forms, attendees and their guardians will sign an additional Peace waiver that states and agrees to the above amendment and arrangements.

Funding

Based on travel to Houston, this financial commitment is substantial compared to other trips. Depending on our travel decision, the total cost per participant will be approximately \$1,120(bus) - \$1,220 (flight)).

This includes the Youth Gathering Registration fee, hotel, and meals.

At our information meeting, we will discuss financial decisions in more detail, including fundraising and other opportunities to offset the cost.

Detroit

From the ELCA Website:

People might know it as Beyoncé's hometown, others as the world hub of the energy industry, some for its prominence as the flight control center for all of NASA's manned space missions, but we know it best as the host city for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering! We also know Houston to be a diverse, **multicultural metropolis with thriving performing arts and culinary scenes, over 55,000 acres of green space, large and growing international community**, and so much more.

Houston is still committed to being a gracious host of the Gathering despite the impact of Hurricane Harvey. The ELCA is committed to this partnership and finding ways to encourage and serve the city while we are there.

Gathering programming will take place in three main venues, NRG Stadium. NRG Arena and NRG Center, located just outside of downtown Houston in the entertainment complex known as NRG Park, a convention and sports entertainment complex.

Safety

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.

Again, we look forward to what God has in store for us next summer on Mission Trips and in Detroit. We hope your family will take some time this fall to consider your Summer 2017, and how an experience with Peace can be a part of that!

God's Peace,

Marta Diehm

Pastor Doug Warburton