

2022 National Youth Gathering

What Exactly Is The National Youth Gathering?

The gathering is a triennial* event that draws around 20,000 young people from LCMS churches all over the country and even internationally! For 5 days this massive community of youth worship, serve, learn, and grow together in an unforgettable experience. Next summer the “NYG” will be held in Houston, Texas.

The magnitude, features, and impact of this event are truly mindboggling. This amazing event features top Christian artists, great teachers on hundreds of topics, nightly worship at Minute Maid Park, and an environment unlike anything else. Spending 5 days in this swarm of young believers has an enormous impact too. In fact, many grown adults claim the NYG as a foundational moment in their faith story decades after they participated as youth!

*“every 3 years”...but how often do you get to use the term triennial?

What does a day at the gathering look like?

Every day at the gathering is jam-packed! Each day starts early, ends late, and involves a lot of walking. After a quick breakfast at our hotel we travel to the convention center for a day full of learning, Bible study, serving, concerts, and fun! In the evening our group will grab dinner and walk to Minute Maid Park for a high energy night of worship, teaching, and community known as mass event! The final day of the gathering concludes with a worship service and the powerful experience of sharing communion with 20,000 fellow believers.

During the Gathering we will stay in hotels with 3-4 students per room. Prior to the official start of the NYG we may stay at a camp or retreat center within a couple hours of Houston. Meals are a mix of grab and go options, food from restaurants, and gathering organized dining experiences.

What Are The Trip Dates?

Tentative Dates: Friday, July 8th to Thursday, July 14th (Please allow an extra day on either side of these dates.)

The NYG event runs Saturday, July 9th-Wednesday, July 13th but we’ve found that the impact of this event is magnified when we have some time to bond as a group on the front end, and claim some space for processing on the back end.

The listed dates are tentative in order to give us flexibility to pursue cheaper flight options or alternate pre-gathering plans. We will have final dates by early 2022.

Who Can Go?

This event is open to current 8th -12th grade students and we’d love for as many folks to go as possible. However we do ask that participants fall within these guidelines:

- **We need to know you and see you regularly.** Taking students we don’t have a relationship with makes leading the group challenging, hinders our ability to build community, and limits the lasting impact the event can have. Participants should be involved in Roots and Foundations and be at all trip meetings.
- **Friends are welcome to attend but they need to be known to us too.** Their parents should also connect with Patrick before signing up. It is also recommended that WLC students bring only one friend each.

What is the Cost?

Approximately \$1,500, potentially less. It's a big number but it really does cover a lot. That price includes conference registration, hotel lodging, all meals, local transportation, t-shirts, and additional fun activities. Initial research into flight costs came in particularly high but there is potential for that to reduce between now and when we book. A rough cost breakdown is listed below. You might notice that these expenses are significantly higher than the price we're charging. In addition to covering leaders' expenses, WLC is making up that difference for each student. I'm incredible grateful that we are a church that believes in their young people and invests in them so significantly.

	Cost
Flight + baggage	\$ 640.00
Hotels	\$ 456.00
Gathering Registration	\$ 395.00
Meals	\$ 160.00
Side Trips, shirts, program costs	\$ 135.00
Local Transportation	\$ 50.00
Total	\$ 1,836.00

How Do I Register?

Registration and deposits can be completed at WLCYouth.org. Registration will go live on Monday, October 11th and participants should be registered by the end of the day on Monday, October 25th to guarantee a spot. The possibility of adding students after October 25th is more difficult and is not guaranteed.

A \$150 deposit is required to register for the gathering. This deposit is only refundable if we are able to find someone to fill that spot. Gathering registrations are non-refundable or transferable after May 31st and families are responsible for the full cost after that point.

Ways to Offset the Cost

Unfortunately Covid has put a damper on many of our traditional fundraising efforts. Currently, no decision has been made on this year's Easter Breakfasts or Garage Sale Fundraisers. We will communicate that information when we a plan is in place. NYG participants could also consider raising funds through these other options.

Support letters. Sending notes about the event to friends and family allows them to help make it a reality!

Put it on your Christmas or birthday list! Ask for contributions to this experience instead of other gifts!

Odd Jobs. If you're a babysitter, lawn mower, or willing to do odd jobs like moving furniture or yard work, we can pass your name on to congregation members looking for students to serve.

Scholarships. It's true that we never want financial situations to be the reason a student doesn't participate in WLC events. It's also true that this is an expensive event so many families will be looking for assistance. Scholarships are available, but will be distributed in a way that allows us to keep supporting future generations of students too. If your family would like to discuss financial assistance for your trip contact Patrick Brewer.

COVID

Of course the ongoing pandemic is a major factor in thinking about next year's gathering. As expected the gathering planning team is working diligently to provide a safe event if possible. Also unsurprisingly it's too early to offer many definitive plans about what that looks like. The most thorough and current information can be found at <https://lcmgathering.com/faq/>. I encourage every family to read through it thoroughly before signing up and refer back to it often.

A vastly incomplete summary of these statements can be found below. The NYG Planning Team:

- Is committed to providing a safe gathering experience if possible.
- Is continually monitoring the situation in coordination with the city of Houston, national trends and research, and best practices from large conferences, concerts, and sporting events.
- No official decision has been made at this point regarding vaccination, pre-event testing, or masks. Some trip entities (flight, hotel, convention center, etc.) might require these even if the NYG does not.
- If the gathering needs to be cancelled...
 - Registration fees (excluding the \$150 deposit) not spent or not required to be spent on the cancellation process would be returned.
 - If rescheduled to a future date, they will work to transfer deposits to the next event.
 - These plans could vary depending on who makes the decision to cancel/reschedule and when.
- Ahead of key dates (rate increases, etc) the NYG's plans will be updated or reiterated to congregations.

Questions?

Contact Patrick Brewer. brewerp@woodburylutheran.org or 651-247-1563