



As you know by now, I have been tasked with the role of English District Coordinator for next summer's Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas.

Recently I have also taken on the role of Regional Coordinator for the two non-geographical districts of the

Synod, the English and the S.E.L.C. As part of these jobs, I was invited to join other youth and adult leaders at the National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference (#National21) in Houston the second week of July. The main purpose of this trip was to explore and learn about Houston. We were also encouraged to attend the learning sessions that were a part of the conference track. At the conference I was able to share a lunch and some fellowship time with some of the great adults who will be leading youth groups from our district. This has been a blessing to me, other leaders, and the district youth.

Some things I learned about Houston are it is hot and sticky: 90 degrees with 80% humidity and that was as I was drinking my morning coffee! The hotel ballroom is cold; so cold that I needed to buy a sweatshirt to wear during the sessions and stand outside during the breaks to warm up. But I am sure the youth won't mind as much as this old man. The airport is a long way on a busy freeway from downtown. The Synod is working on ground transportation options. But, be advised, these will not be cheap. As for Houston, the city is exceptionally clean, and the Convention District is safe. The local people are very friendly. Unlike past Gatherings, there are more than enough hotels nearby so shuttling will not be needed. Hotel assignments will be first received, closest assigned, so be ready to mail your completed registration forms on November 1st. No registrations will be accepted before that date. The George R. Brown Convention Center (GRB) is right across the street from Minute Maid Ballpark, the new location for the Mass Events every night. These are the two places where all the youth gathering action will take place. Downtown Houston has a tunnel system that is air conditioned and has many reasonably priced "grab and go" food options, a VERY important necessity when traveling with teenagers! There also seem to be some reasonably priced food options on the surface streets. The LCMS Gathering staff is working hard with the GRB, Minute Maid and the hotel vendors to provide additional food options. At this time, a large "food truck avenue" is being planned for the street in front of the GRB.

I have been working on a few other things. First our District will be branding ourselves as “A DISTRICT WITHOUT BORDERS.” We will use this on our t-shirts and as the banner for our space in the District Zone. I hope to have a prototype to share soon. I have been in contact with the Synod’s person in charge of servant events and am making progress on what our district event will look like. The planners are meeting as I write this, and some decisions should be made soon. I will share these details ASAP. I know the Gathering is a year away, but I would love to hear from more of you. Please send me the name of a primary adult and a guesstimate of attendees. This will help me as I share important information both with you and the Gathering planners. Please drop me an email at terleu4@gmail.com. As a veteran of ELEVEN (wow, am I getting old) youth gatherings, I am extremely excited to be going to Houston next July!

IN ALL THINGS!

Terry