



2012 ELCA Youth Gathering - *citizens with the saints* - July 18-22, 2012

Plans are afoot for the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering. Is your congregation planning on participating? Do you want to know more to make your decision? For starters, please visit www.elca.org/gathering and click on **Subscribe to Gathering e-news (or gNews)**. If you didn't receive a Registration Brochure or Poster, visit the downloads page and get those items for yourself. If you need more information than you can find or a direct link, e-mail me - the Montana Synod ELCA Youth Gathering Coordinator, Pastor Andy Arnold - at andy@northridgelutheran.org.

While congregations have been preparing to return to New Orleans, New Orleans has been preparing to receive us again! The Gathering has been updating contracts with hotels, and are very pleased to report that our rates are not significantly higher than in 2009. Rates for 2012 range from \$102 to \$155 per room. There is also a hotel tax of 13%, and an occupancy tax of \$1-\$3 dollars. Congregations who came in 2009 may remember that, as in most cities, there is an overabundance of king (one-bedded) rooms. All congregations want quads (double/doubles), but the ratio in New Orleans is about two to one, so we have to spread them out and share. As you plan your rooming list, please plan for some king rooms as well as quads.

New for 2012 is the plan to house synods as closely together as possible. This means the Gathering will provide congregations from around our large synod the opportunity to spend some time together. I would also like to see us get a synod t-shirt of a bold and unique color!

As in 2009, congregations will rotate through their Gathering days in tracks. One day congregations will Practice Peacemaking, one day they will Practice Justice, and one day they will Practice Discipleship. And every congregation will be given early access to the floor and first bowl of the Superdome on their Practice Discipleship day.

Some of you have asked at Synod Assembly how much the Gathering will cost. It's tough to know exactly, but here is what I propose as a rough per-person budget:

- **\$315** - Gathering Registration Fee - Includes five inspirational sessions in the Superdome, Community Life activities in Gathering hotels, interactive, faith-informing, service-learning experiences and community-based justice projects.
- **\$200** - Meals at approximately \$40/day.
- **\$235** - Hotel costs. As stated above, hotel costs vary somewhat, and you will have some rooms with two, three, or four people in them depending on what rooms you are assigned and the size of your group. But if you get a room that costs \$175 per night and get three people in it for four nights, that would end up costing about \$235.
- This gets a total of **\$750**, not including transportation.

I would love to see us as a synod get a group bus, train, plane, or camel caravan down to New Orleans. I am investigating that possibility and will let you know more when or if I figure something out.

Be sure and invite your youth leaders to attend **Anabaino - Christikon Youth Ministry Retreat: For Adults Who Work with Youth in the Church** held **June 24-26, 2011** and costing only \$50. Pastor Kristi Bummer will be presenting youth ministry training that will be valuable to leaders attending the Gathering as well as those who aren't attending. More info is available at www.christikon.org/anabaino.htm