

Hello my name is Annabelle Turner. I am 14 years old and will be going into 9th grade. This summer I got to experience something that I have never experienced before. I got to participate in the 2019 National Youth Gathering. At the start of the gathering I was a little skeptical. Was this all everyone has it made out to be? Was I really going to see God's presence? Now, going to the gathering, I can tell you for a fact that the Gathering was one of the best experiences in my faith life. I 100% experienced God's presence through this and my faith is definitely stronger. I felt God, especially in the mass events (and worship times). When everyone was singing to God, I could just feel God's presence in that stadium. I learned so many new things during the breakout sessions. Some examples: that Christians are being persecuted all over the world, how to deal with drama in a Godly way, and that I am a child of God, and I am worth dying for! What I learned in the Worth Dying For session, which concentrated on Godly dating, is that the future guy I date or marry should never be my number one, Christ is my number one and then everything else falls in place like it should. I also really enjoyed our service project. At our service event we cleaned a school. Some people weeded the gardens and sidewalks, while others cleaned out gyms and closets. It was definitely hard work, but it was worth it knowing that we were making life easier for other people. It's a truly special feeling knowing that you are helping make people's lives easier.

Another wonderful time in my day was the mass events. It was one of the coolest things that I have ever seen in my life. It was awesome to see 20,000 Lutherans all in one place, 20,000 Lutherans worshipping the same REAL PRESENT GOD! And there is no way that I could have experienced my REAL PRESENT GOD without the support of my church! I am so grateful to everyone who donated to sending us to the National Youth Gathering! I can't even begin to explain my gratitude to the congregation for sending me to the Youth Gathering! It is my hope and desire to take what I learned and share it with others. I will pray for the persecuted church daily and help guide and support my friends in a Godly way as they deal with drama and dating during our teen years. Thank you so much!!