



The Sea has Settled, and the Boats have Returned

By Kyle McGinnis

On July 25-26, hundreds of people from 13 states and Mexico converged on First English Lutheran Church in Victoria, Texas for the 2025 LCMC Texas District Annual Gathering. This year 364 people registered for the event, making this our biggest Gathering ever!

With a theme of “All in the Same Boat,” based on Mark 4:35-41, we remembered how Jesus and His disciples encountered a storm while crossing the sea. As the wind swirled and the waves crashed all around them, Jesus was there when called upon to calm the storm. No matter what storms we face as Christians, we have so much in common and we need to encourage one another and be reminded of the power and presence of Jesus in the midst of the storms. We’re ALL IN THE SAME BOAT!

Trevor Sutton, Steve Turnbull, and Christian Huntley presented both at the Pre-Gathering Seminar and as the keynote presenters. Our event emcees were Bryce Formwalt and Kari Malinak. Opening worship was led on Friday by Chip Reynolds and First English, Victoria with Aaron Goeke preaching. Closing worship was led by Michael Geise and Holy Cross, Rockport with Cindy Bailey preaching. There were 18 break-out presenters, each sharing ways to live in the Kingdom and share it with others.

In addition, 56 middle and high school youth attended our Youth Gathering and Lock-In which was held concurrently. Attendees got to play games, listen to presentations, enjoy fellowship, and help with service projects. Special thanks to Julie Thigpen and Stephanie Stevens for planning and leading the youth event.

Feedback from this year’s Gathering was overwhelmingly positive. This was the first time that Charlie Johnson attended a District Gathering. Relatively new to

“I loved it! I can’t wait to return next year.”

“LOVED IT!”

“Please let it be longer”

- Youth Gathering Attendees

LCMC, Charlie is a member of St. Paul-Phillipsburg, Brenham and shared this about his experience:

“Throughout the event, we were uplifted not only by the Word, but also by the creative, Spirit-led energy of our wider church community. LCMC churches are known for their congregational freedom—and that came through clearly in conversations about ministry. Pastors and leaders are encouraged to lead responsively and boldly, shaping their outreach according to the gifts, needs, and context of their local communities. This emphasis on flexibility and innovation gives room for churches to try new approaches without losing sight of Scripture or Gospel clarity.

We heard practical examples of how congregations are embracing digital tools, expanding worship formats, and rethinking outreach—not for novelty’s sake, but to meet real people in real time. And while each church has its own unique rhythm, there’s a shared heartbeat: a commitment to mission, authentic connection, and the faithful teaching of God’s Word. What stood out most was the sense of collaborative support—not a centralized mandate, but a deep well of prayer, ideas, and mutual encouragement flowing between congregations.”

We are incredibly grateful to Chip Reynolds, the team leaders, volunteers and the entire congregation of First English for their gracious hospitality and hard work. We are grateful to God for the impact that this Gathering has had and pray it continues to have. And we remember that when the storms of life begin to rise again, we’re all in the same boat!