



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

For several months, you all have been in my prayers. As the rest of the National Lutheran Secretariat (NLS) executive committee does, I look forward to seeing you at the 2026 annual Via de Cristo gathering that begins next week at Texas Lutheran University (TLU) in Seguin, TX.

For those who have been to prior gatherings, I anticipate you're eager to reunion with your Via de Cristo (VdC) friends from across the US. If you are attending your first VdC annual gathering, I pray this welcome letter conveys foundational information to help you have the best annual gathering experience possible.

There is a LOT of annual gathering information available on the NLS website (<https://annualgathering.viadecristo.org/>). As we are not providing physical binders with all this information on paper, please take the time this week to familiarize yourself with the annual gathering website pages. Read through all that is available or, at least know what's there so you can come back and read it later.

Pre-Gathering

The first section to the right of Home is the Pre-Gathering section. This section includes a link to a list of **things to bring**, forms that you'll want to print and fill in so that you have them at check-in. The Frequently Asked Questions link includes the address for sending any lingering registration fees.

Logistics

The next section is the Logistics section that includes basic details that are likely to be of interest to all attendees including check-in details, a TLU campus map, local restaurant information for those arriving early, campus Wi-Fi details, and the phone numbers for key annual gathering contacts.

Annual Gathering (AG) Basics

You will find the annual gathering **schedule** (a one-page version and a detailed version), session descriptions, speaker biographies and more in this section. Identify your region using the [Via de Cristo region map](#). Read the one-page document in this section that lists the sixteen [Via de Cristo essentials](#).

NLS Annual Meeting Documents

While only authorized delegates have voting rights at the annual meeting, everyone is invited to come and be part of the annual business meeting sessions. This section includes the meeting agenda and a link to a summary of common Roberts Rules of Order. The executive committee positions open for election this year are found in this section with job descriptions, blank nomination forms, and current nominee pictures and their completed nomination forms. There is also a link to the Bylaw change that has been proposed by a member of our community. I strongly encourage all voting delegates to carefully read through the agenda, board election details as well as the proposed bylaw change. Please also read the [Minutes – Via de Cristo](#) of the NLS Executive Committee reports for the past year.

During the AG, the website will be updated with daily blogs and videos.

For your convenience, you will be offered a folder at check-in that includes:

- Key contact information
- A TLU campus map
- Daily schedule (the long version)
- EOI / Dialogue descriptions
- NLS annual business meeting agenda
- NLS financial statements and proposed budget
- Proposed by-law change
- Essentials of Via de Cristo with definitions

Please print and bring with you any additional documents from the website that you want on paper.

Like each Via de Cristo weekend, the success of this annual gathering relies on the presence of the Holy Spirit, the planning of the weekend, and on your spirit of idealism, cooperation, and love. The NLS Executive Committee and the Region 3 Texas and Arkansas/Oklahoma (A-OK) host committee have done our best to plan for every detail of this gathering for you. Having experienced 20 annual gatherings, I trust the Holy Spirit's got us covered. Now, with your generous offering of your own spirit of idealism, cooperation and love, I can't wait to be a part of what God's going to do!

Come with an open heart. Come and, every morning, again surrender all of yourself into the Potter's hands. Come, Holy Spirit. Fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love.

I pray that we all are encouraged by this annual gathering to persevere and continue to grow the ministry of Via de Cristo that unites us.

God's peace and joy to you!

Carolyn

Carolyn Witham

704.651.4230

NLS Vice President of Administration