

FLY Convention® FAQs
SUMMARY PAGE

Q: What is FLY? Why is it listed “FLY Convention®”?

A: FLY stands for “Free Lutheran Youth.” FLY Convention® is the biennial national youth gathering of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC). “FLY Convention®” is a registered trademark. The event is focused on teenagers and spiritual life.

Q: Why is it every other year?

A: The other summer features a national youth equipping conference called FLY Beyond. The every other year nature of the FLY Convention enables teens to prioritize FLY in their schedules.

Q: Does someone have to be a Christian to attend?

A: No. All teenagers are welcome! The convention is planned with adolescents in mind. But we are not trying to fake you out either – FLY does prioritize sharing with every attendee about a relationship with Jesus Christ. Whether or not you are a Christian, this week-long event includes many wonderful activities.

Q: Does someone have to be a Free Lutheran to go?

A: No. The “Free Lutheran” church family plans the FLY Convention through an elected planning team, but everyone is welcome to attend. The teaching times consistently hold a Word-centered, Christ-centered view and will be expressed from a Lutheran distinctive.

Q: What ages does the FLY Convention target?

A: The convention is planned with the participation of 12-18 year-olds in mind. A “student” is anyone in the age range that your local congregation addresses for youth ministry. Many churches focus on 7th through 12th grade teens. Some include 6th graders in their youth ministry. The local congregation’s current efforts define the eligibility to attend as a “student.”

Q: What is the YMCA of the Rockies?

A: A member of the national YMCA association, Estes Park Center is nestled on 860 acres in the heart of Colorado’s Rocky Mountains. Located 8,010 feet above sea level, there is plenty to see! We have held the FLY Convention at this location since 1991. We find the location and the YMCA staff an unbeatable spot for our gathering. For more information about the location, <http://ymcarockies.org/>

Q: How do I register?

A: We offer online registration to the national youth gathering. Register at www.flyconvention.org/ by following the “Registration Is Open” button. The navigation will guide you to the information that you will need to register. Registrations can only be completed online.

Q: How do the registration deadlines work?

A: There are deadlines for each rate. The status listing of student, staff, adult, etc. are offered on the registration landing page at www.flyconvention.org/registration. When a person registers with a minimum deposit of \$150 by a certain date, they secure the rate level. For example, if a student registers online January 19, the cost would be \$649, but if a student registers online January 20, the cost would be \$749. Those that arrive at the FLY Convention on July 3 without a previous online registration are considered “Walk Ups.” The cost for a walk up registrations are listed, but a person cannot serve as a Dorm Room Leader or FLY Staff member with “Walk Up” status.

Q: How much do we have to pay when we register?

A: A \$150 deposit is required for each individual registering. All deposits and registrations are non-refundable and non-transferable. Both the online registration and a deposit must be made for someone to be considered registered. If paying the deposit by check, it must be postmarked by the posted deadline in order to secure the current registration rate.

Q: What are my payment options?

A: We offer a secure online payment option as well as check payments. If paying the deposit by check, it must be postmarked by the posted deadline in order to secure the current registration rate.

Q: How do I pay my final balance?

A: Fill out our Payment Control Sheet, available on our website (www.flyconvention.org/payments). The Payment Control Sheet has an option to pay by mailing in a check or online payment. If you choose to pay your final balance online, email chrisr@afcl.org your completed Payment Control Sheet. The email listed on the sheet will be sent a link to an online payment form. If you are unsure of how much is owed towards an individual or group attending FLY, contact FLY Registrar Chris Rasmussen (chrisr@afcl.org). We are encouraging attendees to pay the final balance before arriving. The final payment deadline is June 6, 2023. All outstanding balances after this date will be considered late and will be charged a 5% late fee.

Q: I don't see a check-in schedule or a departure time. How does that work?

A: FLY onsite check-in at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO begins at 3:30PM. PLEASE NOTE this time is later than past FLY years. Here are a few more details on these Qs:

Monday July 3

3:30 PM FLY Convention Registration Opens
4:30PM YMCA Housing Rooms open (estimated)
5:30PM Supper opens
8:00PM FLY Opening Evening Session

Saturday, July 8, 2023

Depart for home

NOTE: Breakfast is not included for FLY attendees on Saturday morning, because a large segment of churches depart late Friday night. Breakfast can be purchased on your own from the YMCA cafeterias, but our contract ends with the overnight stay (Fri PM to Sat AM). Groups leaving Saturday morning have found a 9 or 10 AM local time useful to target, because the Friday night activities lead up to 11 PM or midnight.

Q: Who decides housing assignments?

A: The FLY Convention reserves the right to place all attendees in such a way for housing to maximize the event. The group leader or designated FLY adult leader (youth leader/pastor / congregational member) is encouraged to submit requests for housing arrangements included. This arrangement is limited to one leader per congregation. The housing request form will be posted on www.flyconvention.org by April.

Q: I'm our church's group leader. Can I secure spots by \$150 deposit only per person? In other words, can I send in \$1,800 for 12 spots and send in the names later.

A: No. Our registration process requires a form and a deposit per person being registered. Without a form, we cannot know if the desired "spot" is a teenager, child, dorm room leader, or adult. A group leader can send in a check for \$150 deposit per person, if the group leader confirms the people being paid for have completed an online registration. For more information, please contact FLY Registrar Chris Rasmussen.

Q: I am being sent as an adult chaperone from my congregation to FLY? What registration status best fits my situation?

A: It depends on your congregation's goal for the week. Our first question to clarify is this: *are you a "driver" or a "dorm" leader?* Some congregations identify adults that are willing to focus on the transport to Colorado and back. FLY often calls them "drivers." In this situation, the adults are not expected to have regular connections with the teens through the week. Drivers can register with the "adult" status meaning that you are not intending to be in the dorms with teens for overnight supervision. Drivers are housed with other adults attending FLY.

Many congregations send adults as those supervision people that are going to be overseeing teens throughout the week. FLY calls them "dorm leaders." These adults focus may include driving to Estes Park, but they are especially interested in connecting with the students throughout the week and the best way for that is staying with them in the dorms. The Dorm Room Leader designation will have an adult stay in a room with 4 teenage students of the same gender for the week.

Q: How do I become a Dorm Room Leader (AKA stay in the dorms with teenagers) ?

A: Dorm room leader applicants must complete the application form found on the FLY website within their registration. This process will ask for permission for a background check. The safety of the teens attending FLY is a top priority. When approved by our FLY staff, a dorm room leader is placed into a room with teens. The room priority on placement is the local congregation relationship first, then the preferences from the congregational group leader or designated FLY leader.

Q: How do I become a FLY Staff member?

A: Staff members are selected by our FLY Coordinators and Managers. To make yourself available, please complete the FLY Volunteer Form, which is found at the "Want to be FLY Staff" page found under the Helpful Information drop down at www.flyconvention.org. The FLY Staff member will be informed of your interest through this step. Completing the form online **IS NOT** the same as being selected to serve. The selection process of each FLY Staff member is at the discretion of the FLY Coordinator or FLY Manager. If selected by a FLY Staff member, then a volunteer will receive instructions about his or her registration steps.

Q: Our group is thinking of flying to FLY (get it!?) is going to be most cost effective. Can FLY get us from the airport to the Convention?

A: No. FLY is neither responsible nor equipped to handle transportation to and from the airport for FLY Convention attendees. Flying may be your most cost effective measure, but be certain to account for travel costs from Denver International Airport (DIA) to Estes Park. Estes Park Shuttle Company is approximately \$85.00 per person round-trip and it is roughly a two-hour drive each direction. If you select this approach, please plan accordingly.

Q: When will we know our housing arrangements are set?

A: With the online housing request process available by April, the housing arrangements will be set in early June. The FLY office will issue a registration and housing report to each congregation with at least one person registered. The report will cover people, current housing status, and remaining balance.

Q: What are the "cut-off" ages for teen/student rates? Can our current 6th grader attend as a student? Can our graduating high school senior attend as a student?

A: Because of the variety in local congregations' approach to youth ministry ages, the basic answer is: *"It is determined by your youth group age guidelines."* If your youth group includes 6th graders, then they are welcome to attend. The youngest allowable is completing 6th grade the spring of 2023. Graduating high school seniors (Class of 2023) are students by our procedure, since dorm room leaders are expected to be one year beyond high school graduation.

Q: I don't see any ages designated, so how do we know if we have a "student" or a "child"?

A: Because different congregations note various starting ages for youth ministry, we do not set specific ages on the registration form. The youngest possible student is a young person who has just completed the 6th grade in the spring of 2023. The oldest possible student is a young person who has just completed the 12th grade. The status of the young person is the priority in conjunction with the local congregation's practice.

If a "Student" Registration, then that young person will be staying in the dorms with FLY Dorm Room Leader supervision alongside of other teens.

If a "Child" Registration, then that young person will be staying in the housing for staff and adults with a parent/guardian (parental supervision). A "child" cannot attend FLY without an accompanying parent/guardian, who is also registered as an adult.

Q: Are families welcome at FLY? Does FLY have non-student activities for them? How does the housing work for families? What does the registration for adults and children cover?

A: The FLY Convention is the national youth gathering, but families are very welcome at FLY. The Convention schedule has a focus on the teen audience, but much of the daily opportunities are welcome to the whole family. In addition, there are some elective workshops that are specifically geared to parents. Center for Parent/Youth Understanding (CPYU) President Walt Mueller will be a presenter for special electives addressing parents of teens and those that work with teens.

Families (adults and children under 12 accompanied by a parent) are in a separate hotel-style housing unit from the teenagers. A typical room for a family has two full beds and a private bath or one full bed, a bunk bed, and a private bath.

The registration fee covers the meals, the housing at the YMCA, and the FLY activities throughout the day. FLY does not plan specific activities for children, because the YMCA of the Rockies has a great set of options for families. You can see a summary and some details of their family-oriented activities on the YMCA Estes Park page: <http://ymcarockies.org>

Q: What does an "adult" registration rate cover?

A: This rate covers...

- + Room (separate housing units for adults, couples, and families with children)
- + Meals at the YMCA (Monday evening through Friday evening)
- + Activities at FLY (the full schedule of national youth gathering options)
- + YMCA privileges with their facility (mini-golf, sand volleyball, hiking, swimming, etc.)

Q: What are "day passes"?

A: If you have a way to stay off-site and intend to attend FLY during the days, there are Day Passes required. One day pass is \$70. Day passes are available at the FLY Office. All visitors MUST register with the FLY Office to be on YMCA grounds per our agreement with the YMCA of the Rockies.

Q: Why does FLY ask for medical information?

A: As a national youth gathering with activities from Monday afternoon through attendees' departure on Saturday morning, accidents do occur. It is beneficial for our safety team of first aid and crisis control FLY staff to have the health insurance and brief medical details of each attendee in case of an emergency.

Q: Why does FLY ask for a visual/photo release?

A: In the video and photo documentation of the national youth gathering, it is important to respect the wishes of families that do not want to be photographed. We know that the majority of families are comfortable and eager to see the photos and videos recorded during FLY, but we want to honor those that may have specific reasons not to be noted in this way. If an attendee has declined the visual/photo release, then it is expected such individuals will not himself/herself in situations where pictures and videos are taken.

Q: As adults attending FLY, how do I make sure that I am housed with my spouse?

A: The congregational group leader can make specific housing requests of FLY on the website starting in the spring of 2023. Only one group leader per congregation can make housing requests. Although you know that you are husband and wife, it may not be obvious to FLY from your online registrations. Please contact your group leader to submit a housing request to make certain.

Q: How do I know what goes on during the week of FLY?

A: On the website www.flyconvention.org, there is a "Helpful Information" tab. In addition to a map of the YMCA and a FLY Media Kit, the menu includes the schedule for the week. FLY is also pleased to offer a livestream of the evening sessions during the week. Details will be available at the website during the convention.

Q: How does FLY handle things like bus drivers, cell phones, dress codes, sessions, etc.?

A: On the website www.flyconvention.org, there is a "Helpful Information" tab on the homepage. This menu includes a "Policies" option which can address these and many more details about FLY situations.

Q: I'm curious who the speakers are going to be for the evening sessions at FLY. Where can I find that?

A: On the website www.flyconvention.org, there is a "Speakers" tab on the homepage. It lists the five evening session speakers and the morning Bible study leaders. In the spring of 2023, it will also list the national artists that are coming to FLY.

Q: How do you fit 2,000+ people together at the YMCA? What is the “overflow” area?

A: The YMCA of the Rockies can house in excess of 3,000 people, so FLY has room to grow for housing. Meeting all in the same space is a slightly different challenge. The Longhouse will hold plenary gatherings during the week of FLY. Due to limited seating capacity in the Longhouse, those registered as adults and/or children are expected to attend evening sessions in the overflow location in Assembly Hall. Students, Dorm Room Leaders, and youth workers are required to attend evening sessions in the Longhouse.

Q: Why are adults and children expected to attend evening sessions in the overflow location?

A: The FLY Convention is the national youth gathering of the AFLC. Our evening sessions prioritize the preaching of the Gospel to teens and those that work with teens. As such, the FLY Convention arranges for these attendees to be in the Longhouse for the evening sessions. The attendees that are adults and children can take in the evening sessions via the simulcast occurring in the overflow area. In this way, those individuals registered for FLY as adults and children can best honor the teens that have gathered for the FLY Convention.

Q: What does the FLY Convention believe and teach? I see the Free Lutheran tag, but can you tell me more?

A: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) is a national fellowship of approximately 250 churches in the United States. To find out more about the church body, please visit www.aflc.org. To find out how the national youth gathering of the AFLC applies our convictions, the website www.flyconvention.org has a tab entitled “About.” You will find under that menu a Statement of Faith. For additional questions, please contact the AFLC Youth Ministries office at youth@aflc.org.