



SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD
SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING
MARCH 12-13, 2010
COUNTRY INN & SUITES, MANKATO MN

Dear Youth Leaders,

We are pleased to have received your registration for this year's Senior High Youth Gathering. We know the Holy Spirit is at work and trust this gathering will be one where faith is strengthened and grown.

In this letter you will find a wealth of important information that will be helpful as you prepare for the gathering. Below you will find the following:

- ◆ Group Covenant
- ◆ Medical Release/Information Form (please download this separately from www.swmnelca.org)
- ◆ Gathering Checklists for youth and adults
- ◆ Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Board information and election instructions
- ◆ LYO Board Application/Nomination Form
- ◆ Notes for adult leaders

DIRECTIONS (If you need more detailed directions, you can use a site like Mapquest.com)

The Country Inn and Suites, Mankato MN is located near the intersection of Hwys 14 and 22 in Mankato MN. Traveling on Hwy 14, follow the Hwy 22 exit and go east on Hwy 22 under the overpass. The Country Inn and Suites will be located on the right side of the road.

PARKING

There is ample parking in the hotel parking lot. If you plan on bringing a bus, please let Patrice Luker know ASAP so we can make arrangements with the hotel to block off a section of the parking lot for buses.

REGISTRATION

Registration will take place from 4:00-6:30pm in the Hotel Lobby. Following are a few things that will help you speed through registration.

Please bring:

- An updated list of participants
- Group Covenant signed by all youth and adults attending in your group – this will be collected.
- Medical Release Forms for all youth and adults attending – the “Gathering Copy” 1/2 sheets will be collected. It would be helpful if you would cut them apart before you come.
- One check for your balance due payable to the SW MN Synod

Upon registration you will receive gathering bracelets and T-shirts for each participant. Please make sure your youth secure their bracelets, as this is their entrance to all gathering activities and meals. Lost bracelets cost \$20.

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED REGISTRATION QUESTIONS

- If you need to make substitutions, only same gender substitutions will be accepted.
- If you need to substitute an adult leader, they must be same gender adult leaders, not youth.
- If you have a youth cancel and do not find a substitute, you will not receive a refund of the deposit, nor will the deposit be credited to your balance. But you will not be responsible for the balance due for that person.
- We are sorry, but we cannot accept new registrations when you arrive in Mankato.
- Adult Leaders must be at least 21 years old.
- We cannot accept any additional registrations after March 1, 2010.

HOUSING

Our costs are based on four people per room. You should expect that some of your group may share rooms with people from other congregations. Because of this, please do not do any switching of rooms or adding people from your group to a room.

SCHEDULE

Please look over the enclosed schedule. We strongly encourage you to arrive as close to 4:00 p.m. as possible, **allowing at least one hour for registration**. Our experience has been that groups who arrive, register, and move into their rooms early have a much easier time relaxing at the first session. PLEASE NOTE: Supper is on your own and should be taken care of before the gathering assembly starts at 6:30.

MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

Please make copies of the health form that each participant (including adults) must fill out. Congregational leaders will keep 1/2 of the sheet and 1/2 of the sheet will be kept by the gathering staff. For ease in registration, please cut the form in half before you come to register.

COVENANT

Every person in your group must sign the covenant. This is our agreement as we live together. A copy of the covenant with all the signatures will be collected during registration.

SECURITY

We have a group of people to serve as our mentors and curfew monitors during the gathering. The purpose of this security team is not to badger or intimidate, but to gently remind individuals of appropriate behavior and common courtesy if needed. They will be up all night in the halls to help ensure your youth are safe in their rooms.

SMALL GROUPS

Each youth will be assigned to a small group that will meet throughout the gathering. Each group will be led by a youth who is trained to do so. We pray this aspect of the gathering will be helpful in diving deeper into the theme, making new friends and growing faith. There will be a space provided for adults to engage in networking and educational opportunities during the small group meeting times.

SERVICE PROJECTS

Service projects will take place in the afternoon on Saturday. Immediately following the Saturday morning session, lunch will be served at the hotel. After eating lunch you will proceed to your service project site. **YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE THE TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE PROJECTS THAT ARE OFF SITE.** You will receive an email to prompt you to sign up for the service project of your choice as there are limited spaces available for each. You will need to indicate your first, second and third preference for service projects and breakout sessions. The email will be sent to the contact person listed on your registration, if you have not received this please notify Patrice Luker at gatheringregistrar@yahoo.com. At registration, you will receive specific information about your service project. We prefer to keep congregational groups together for the service project.

SYNOD LUTHERAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION BOARD APPLICATION FORM

Do you have young leaders in your congregation? Encourage them to run for the Synod Lutheran Youth Organization Board. Serving on the LYO board is an opportunity for gifted young leaders to serve their church.

OFFERING

We will collect a monetary offering for Kids Against Hunger at the closing worship. This time of offering is a vital and important part of our time together. Please take time with your youth to discuss the difference between planned giving and just giving what's left in our pockets. Our monetary goal is an offering that would equal at least \$2 per participant. On Friday night, we will collect the offering of supplies for Lutheran World Relief Health Kits. Please bring supplies with you to the mass gathering Friday night.

SPENDING MONEY

Participants will be responsible for supper on Friday and supper on Saturday if your group chooses to stop for supper. Rachel Kurtz will have CD's and such for sale. Please plan accordingly.

Lutheran World Relief

One of our service projects this year will be preparing health kits for Lutheran World Relief. We are asking all congregations to support us in bringing donations for the health kits that we will prepare. Please see the attached flyer regarding needed items. Our goal is to have each gathering participant bring at least 5 items. Please enlist the help of your congregation in collecting these donations.

NIGHT LIFE

A variety of wonderful activities have been planned and we look forward to your participation in them. One of the nightlife activities this year will be a "Coffee House". This area will have open mic opportunities. Please encourage interested youth to participate by sharing their favorite poetry, musical gifts and/or instruments in a relaxed atmosphere.

EMERGENCY NUMBER

In case of any emergency, the hotel number is: Country Inn and Suites (507) 388-3646.

THANK YOU for all your work with this gathering. You play a vital role in helping make this event a success. We realize there is a lot of info in this letter. We recommend that you have a meeting with your group prior to the gathering to go over all the details. We have included a checklist for your use at this meeting.

We're very much looking forward to our time together. We ask for your continued prayers as we take care of the final details of this event.



God's Peace, The Southwestern Minnesota Synod Lutheran Youth Organization Board

Tentative Gathering Schedule

(You will receive a more detailed schedule at the gathering)

Friday

4-6:30 pm	Registration
6:30-7 pm	Pre-Assembly Music
7-8:30 pm	Assembly I
8:30 pm	Small Groups, Chaperone Orientation,
9:15 pm-11:45 pm	Nightlife, LYO Board info meeting
12:00 am	Family Time
1:00 am	Curfew

Saturday

8:00-8:45 am	Breakfast
9:00-11:15 am	Assembly II small groups, adult ed LYO elections
11:15-12:00	Lunch
12:30 – 2:30 pm	Service Projects and Breakouts
3-5:00pm	Closing worship

SW MN Synod 2010 Senior High Gathering Covenant

Please have every youth and adult sign and bring with you to the Gathering

We, the undersigned, agree to covenant the following behaviors for the duration of the SW MN Synod Sr. High Gathering, March 12-13, 2010. We do this in order to receive maximum benefits from our time together.

In keeping with our witness as a Christian Community, we will:

1. Refrain from using any substance that will alter our state of mind or being, including drugs, alcohol, or tobacco in any shape or form.
2. Follow Jesus' example by putting other people before ourselves, so that all people - speakers, musicians, security, hotel staff, other guests and all other participants - will be respected. This includes listening, participating, our language and gestures, and the observing of Quiet Hours.
3. Treat facilities with care.
4. Not leave the designated hotels or other locations without the permission of our adult advisor.
5. Actively participate in all gathering events.
6. Refrain from using cell phones and texting during gathering activities.
7. Refrain from using electronic devices such as IPOD's during gathering activities.

Signed:

Date:

SW MN Synod Sr. High Gathering Checklist for Adult Leaders

- _____ Collect completed and signed medical release forms for every participant, including adults.
 - _____ Collect balances due.
Be prepared to pay with **ONE CHECK** made out to: SW MN Synod
 - _____ Look over schedule – meals, questions, spending money, etc.
 - _____ Read, discuss and sign the covenant. Talk about its importance and what it means to be full participants.
 - _____ Make sure all your adult leaders are 21 years of age or older.
 - _____ Offering: Intentional giving vs. what's left in my pocket. Gathering goal is at least \$2 per person.
 - _____ Initiate congregational support for donating items for Lutheran World Relief Health Kits (see insert)
 - _____ Sign up for the service projects that you would like your group to participate in.
 - _____ Discern if anyone from your group is called to serve on the Synod LYO Board.
Submit application form(s) **to be received by March 1.**
 - _____ Read the proposed constitutional amendment to be voted on at LYO Convention Saturday morning.
-

SW MN Synod Sr. High Gathering Checklist for Youth

We will leave at _____ o'clock on _____, March 12

and return at _____ o'clock on _____, March 13

What to bring:

- clothes, including clothes for your service project
- toiletries
- swimsuit and towel for the pool
- Bible
- Offering
- Spending money for supper Friday and Saturday and maybe band merchandise
- Medical release form
- Instrument, poetry, etc. for "Coffeehouse" (optional)
- Items for Health Kits LWR

If you're interested in running for the Synod Lutheran Youth Organization, talk to your youth leader and send in the application/nomination form **to be received by March 1.**

In case of an emergency, the hotel number is: Country Inn and Suites, Mankato MN (507) 388-3646.



LYO Board Elections

A new LYO Board will be elected at the Sr. High Youth Gathering. This is an amazing opportunity for youth to serve their church, synod and community while growing in faith and leadership skills. Please encourage youth from your congregation to run for this board. It is a rewarding learning and faith building experience.

The LYO Board is responsible for planning and leading the Jr. and Sr. High Youth Gatherings and representing the voice of youth on a synod level. The LYO is a leadership team that requires leadership skills, maturity, a significant investment of time, and a desire to grow in and share one's faith. Board members receive training to grow in their skills and accomplish their assigned tasks.

Youth from your congregations in grades 9-11 are eligible to run for thirteen one-year LYO board terms. The 13 elected youth will choose their own officers during LYO training.

Serving on the LYO board involves a time commitment of attending LYO training/Synod Assembly, 2 weekend meeting/retreats, and leading the Jr. and Sr. High Gathering. Dates for these commitments are printed on the LYO application form.

On this sheet you will find an LYO application form. Forms received by **March 1** will be printed and distributed to gathering participants to aid in the election process. All youth who run for the LYO board will need to fill out a form, but **only those received by March 1 will be printed.**

If you have any questions please contact Sarah Hausken, 507-430-2273 or sarah.hausken@swmnelca.org.

What has it meant to you to serve on the SW MN Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Board?

Thoughts from current board members . . .

"There were times when I had doubts of what my faith was about. But my eyes have opened and I no longer believe because I've been told to believe. I've felt God with me. I've noticed everything that God does for me. I understand that the gifts of the Holy Spirit will help me build up the church, and I wish to share in building up the Holy church by helping the younger youth come closer to God. Being on the LYO Board this year has been an amazing opportunity for me. We are called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through various activities. Being on this board is not only an honor, but a valuable learning experience for me as well! This board is helping me and others grow in faith."

Janelle Curry, New Ulm, MN

"Serving on the LYO board has meant the world to me. I have met some of the most amazing people and made tons of new friends. I have made connections that will last a lifetime. My faith life has also been deeply strengthened. I feel much closer to God and I am a lot more comfortable spreading his word and having a great time while doing it! LYO is a great experience. I've recommended it to lots of friends. I just love having the opportunity to serve God and others and to do so with others who share the same excitement about it as I do!"

Brittani Lamb, St. Peter, MN



Application Form Candidates for Southwestern Minnesota Lutheran Youth Organization

The LYO Board is responsible for planning and leading the Jr. and Sr. High Youth Gatherings and representing the voice of youth on a synod level. The LYO is a leadership team that requires leadership skills, a significant investment of time, and a desire to grow in and share one's faith. Board members receive training to grow in their skills and serve in this ministry.

Following are the meeting dates the 2001-2011 LYO board is committed to attending and serving. If you know you will be unable to attend more than one meeting or will not make your participation in the LYO board a priority, please consider letting someone who is able to make the commitment and be present for more meetings have the chance to serve on the LYO Board. Thank you.

LYO Training in June (date to be decided); September 11, 2010; November 18-21, 2010;
January 14-15, 2011; March 10-12, 2011

Name _____ Gender _____ Birth date _____ Grade _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____ Home Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____ Do you text? _____ Parent's Name(s) _____

Home Congregation and Town/Location _____

1. In 30 words or less, please state why you are interested in serving on the LYO Board. (What motivated you to apply? What do you hope to accomplish for youth in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod by serving on the LYO Board?)

2. In 30 words or less, please state some strengths, gifts, abilities or perspectives you would bring to the LYO Board.

3. In 30 words or less, please state any activities have you been involved with at school, church and in your community that may give you experience that would help you serve on the LYO Board.

Written applications to be printed for the gathering will only be received until **March 1, 2010**.

All candidates must fill out an application before voting takes place on March 13, 2009 **Please send to:**
LYO Secretary Jessica Epple, 1689 340th St. Canby, MN 56220, epple_2011@live.com 507-694-1340, cell – 1 507 530 2763

Jessica will contact you via email or text to let you know she's received your application.

If you do not hear from her, please contact her to make sure she received it.

Small Group Leaders

Small groups are a central part of the Sr. High Youth Gathering, and are instrumental in promoting and cultivating friendships between youth from different congregational groups, thereby helping youth to dig deeper into the entire gathering experience.

We are asking you as an adult leader to seek out 10-12th grade youth whom you feel would be gifted in leading a small group, and ask them to consider serving in this way. We are looking for youth who display an aptitude for leadership and conversation. Past experience in leading a small group is helpful but not required. We are trusting your judgment to ask youth who would be gifted in this way. We certainly don't want to set any one up to fail.

Small groups will be made up of approximately 7 youth from different congregations (both male and female), in the same grade.

We ask that each small group leader come to a required training. This training will take place on Sunday, February 28th from 2-5pm at Bethel Lutheran Church in Willmar. If you cannot make the training, please contact Brittani to make other arrangements.

This is a wonderful opportunity to give youth a chance to serve at the Sr. High Youth Gathering and use the gifts God has given them. If you have any questions about small group leaders, training, etc please contact Brittani Lamb (507) 351-1516 brittani167@hotmail.com or Pastor Steve Rasmusson 507-829-9164 rasmus@frontiernet.net

Please ask youth to fill out the following form. Adult leaders can mail or email the form to Brittani Lamb, 2015 Bunker Lane St. Peter, MN 56082 brittani167@hotmail.com

Small Group Leader Questionnaire

Name _____ Gender ____ Grade _____ T-shirt size _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address (if you check it regularly) _____ Phone # _____

Congregation Name _____ Cong. Town _____

Youth Leader Name _____ Youth Leader Phone # _____

What gifts would you bring to being a Small Group Leader?

What experiences have you had that would help you with this role?

Following is a recommendation made by the SW MN Synod Lutheran Youth Organization to be explained more thoroughly, discussed and voted on at the LYO Convention which will take place at the SW MN Synod Sr. High Youth Gathering March 12-13, 2010

2010 Proposed Constitutional Amendment

WHEREAS the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Lutheran Youth Organization Board would like to be more intentionally inclusive and diverse, and

WHEREAS the election process can sometimes unintentionally exclude people who have gifts to serve, and

WHEREAS a well functioning board benefits from a balanced mix of gifts, skills, experiences and perspectives to complete their mission, and

WHEREAS It is important for this church to have all voices represented at the table, and

WHEREAS the 2009 Convention of the Lutheran Youth Organization passed a resolution strongly recommending that synod LYO boards make provisions for intentional multicultural and definitely-abled representatives to have full voice and vote in synod youth leadership positions, as equal partners in ministry, and

WHEREAS having the ability to choose two additional at-large youth representatives would allow individuals' gifts to shine and allow for greater insight and representation from across our synod;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following changes be made to the SW MN Synod Lutheran Youth Organization Constitution:

Article V.

The board of this organization shall consist of the president, the vice-president, secretary, the bishop (or representative of the same), ~~ten~~ **twelve** at-large youth representatives, ten adult conference representatives, and the adult advisor. The adult advisor shall be appointed by the Executive Committee which consists of the bishop (or appointed representative), the president, the vice president, and the secretary.

Section 6.06

Two at-large youth representatives will be appointed by the outgoing board after elections have been completed. The intent of these positions is to further diversity and bring a balanced mix of gifts and skills to help further the mission of the LYO board. Special consideration will be given to multicultural, definitely-abled, and other under represented voices.

Section 6.0607

Ten adult conference representatives shall be chosen by their conference in a manner determined by each conference.

Health Kits for Lutheran World Relief

We're going to be collecting and packaging Health Kits for Lutheran World Relief* as one of the service projects at the gathering! **But we need your help!**

Please bring as many of the following items you can so we can make a difference in someone's life. Let your congregation help too! Don't let this just be a youth thing. Please, ask for donations and bring them to the gathering for assembly into Health Kits.

FYI, Lutheran World Relief sends Health Kits all over the world. And these kits can honestly mean the difference between life and death for people. The earthquake in Haiti has depleted Lutheran World Relief's supply of Health kits. They desperately need more. So this project is very timely and very needed. Thank you for your help!

Each Health Kit includes:

- One hand towel, dark color recommended
- One washcloth, dark color recommended
- One bath-size bar (4 to 5 oz.) of soap, any brand, in its original wrapping
- One adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging
- One sturdy comb
- One metal nail file or nail clippers with file attached (do not substitute cardboard emery boards for the file)
- Six Band-Aids® (or similar brand), preferably 1/2" to 3/4" (must all be the same size)



Please bring as many of these items as you can!

If we have a surplus of certain items and can't use them in making the Health Kits at the gathering, we will donate them to a congregation who will be packaging Health Kits in the future.

Additional notes about items:

- Sending top quality items makes a caring statement to the recipient about the giver. **Please give new items only.**
- **Please do not donate items with any religious symbols, messages or with your congregation's name.** LWR provides material resources based on need, regardless of religious creed. Religious references could be misinterpreted by the governments of the receiving countries, jeopardizing the delivery to the people who need the items most.
- **Please do not donate any items decorated with a U.S. flag, patriotic or military symbols, or references to the armed forces, including camouflage.** LWR and our overseas partners have access to areas of the world others do not because we are impartial humanitarian organizations. If our intentions are misinterpreted as being politically motivated, our work, our partners and the people we assist could be endangered.

* Affirming God's love for all people Lutheran World Relief works with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice and human suffering. www.lwr.org

Service Project and Breakout Sessions Sign Up

Congregation Name: _____ Town: _____

Contact Person at the Gathering: _____

Cell phone number for contact person at the Gathering: _____

You will receive this document via email. Please respond to gatheringregistrar@yahoo.com, indicating your first, second and third preference for the Saturday afternoon service projects for your congregational group. Projects are scheduled from 12:30-2:30pm. **You will need to provide your own transportation for offsite projects.** Driving directions will be provided and groups will be encouraged to caravan to ensure that no one gets lost.

Off-Site Projects

___ Kids Against Hunger Food Packaging: Help package food kits at the Mankato Kids Against Hunger warehouse

___ Hillcrest Nursing Home: Bingo with residents

___ Oaklawn Nursing Home: Bingo and other activities with residents

___ Laurels Edge Nursing Home: Bingo and other activities with residents

___ Mankato Health: Board games and visiting with residents

On-Site Projects

___ Lutheran World Relief: Packaging Health Kits

___ Global Health Ministries: Making rolled bandages

Just a Few Notes for Adult Leaders...

Thank you for being an adult leader! This gathering can be such an amazing time of spiritual growth for all of us. We pray it may be so for you and your youth. Should any concerns arise, please feel free to contact Patrice Luker (Senior High Gathering Manager) or Sarah Hausken (Synod Youth Ministry Coordinator).

Information for Adults:

- The adult leader orientation meeting is Friday evening at 9:00 pm. We will announce where it will be held when you register. Please plan on attending.

Rule-Type Things:

- It's fine to have groups gather in sleeping rooms, but please make sure the males and females are in sleeping rooms as a group, not one on one – you know what we mean.
- Please be in your sleeping rooms by 12:30 am and please respect quiet hours after 1:00 am.
- Thank you for helping to limit talking during the mass gatherings.

Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Applications and Nominations:

- Every youth interested in running for the SW MN Synod LYO must attend a mandatory informational meeting at 9:00 pm on Friday night in the hotel lobby.

Please note that the address to send applications is:

LYO Secretary: Jessica Epple 1689 340th St. Canby, MN 56220, epple_2011@live.com 507-694-1340, cell – 1 507 530 2763

Nightlife:

- Please note the pool closes at 10:00 pm
- Please be available for your youth during nightlife. This is a great time to build relationships. And if we believe that *faith is formed through personal, trusted relationships*, then building relationships is one of the most important things we can do.
- Some youth would rather hang out in their sleeping rooms during nightlife. Often this is because they just haven't given nightlife a chance. Sometimes it's because they don't like the nightlife options. A couple words of encouragement from you may be all they need to get involved in the various activities.

Hotel Stuff:

- If you want to order pay-per-view movies after 12:30 am, you as an adult may do so by going to the front desk and pre-paying.
- Some leaders decide not to give youth keys to the sleeping room. They feel that youth participate in nightlife better if they don't have keys. It's your call; this is just something that works for some groups.
- It is important to remind you that your congregation will be responsible for payment of damage to property in sleeping rooms or charges for extensive cleaning. Please make sure your youth do not bring or use confetti and/or silly string etc. in their rooms. Since respecting the facility is addressed in the covenant (#3), we trust this won't be an issue.

The Spirit Garage:

- It is an interactive prayer chapel experience.
- Please make a point of visiting it with your youth. It has been a very powerful part of the gathering experience.

Security:

- The security team will help by monitoring the halls into the night. You are still directly responsible for your youth.
- We also ask that you not be afraid to affirm or guide any youth at the gathering if you see they're doing something exemplary or inappropriate.
- Please direct security questions to Adult LYO member, Kristin Ruud.

Safe travels and we hope you have a Blessed gathering!!

GATHERING COPY

Medical Release/Medical Information/Photo Release Form

SW MN Synod Senior High Youth Gathering

Please reproduce this form – one form for every youth and adult.

Name of gathering registrant: _____

Age: _____ Phone #: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s) _____

Are there any medical conditions or allergies that we should know about?

If parent/guardian is unavailable, please contact:
_____ Phone #: _____

Insurance Company name and policy #: _____

I hereby grant my permission for my child to attend the SW MN Synod Senior High Youth Gathering, to be held at the Country Inn and Suite in Mankato, MN from March 12-13, 2010. I also grant my permission, in case of an emergency, for medical attention to be sought by the chaperones for my child's group and/or the persons in charge of the gathering. I understand that all efforts will be made to notify me immediately of any such happenings.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Signature of parent/guardian)

I also give permission for the use of photographs, video and electronic images including my child in Youth Gathering materials, including online sources such as Facebook and the synod website.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Signature of parent/guardian)

CONGREGATION COPY

Medical Release/Medical Information/Photo Release Form

SW MN Synod Senior High Youth Gathering

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