



SW MN Synod Junior High Youth Gathering November 21-22, 2025

REGISTRATION GUIDE

Calling all Youth Ministers (and Pastors, Youth Directors, and Volunteers):

God's peace to you! Here's info for the Junior High Youth Gathering!

We are incredibly excited that you are looking at the materials for the 2025 Junior High Youth Gathering. This is a **YOUTH LED** event that is planned by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Board.

**This year, we're offering ONE option for the JH Gathering:
Friday, November 21 – Saturday, November 22, 2025**

We are eager to partner with the Willmar Conference Center & Best Western Plus/Holiday Inn Express once again to bring you this awesome event! We hope that this centralized location in the synod will allow you to join us for this excellent experience. We are only offering ONE this year due to the Conference Center booking a wedding over our event.

Our theme this year is "Strengthened by Faith," based on Isaiah 41:10.

Gathering Features:

- **Speaker/Musician:** Agape
- **YOUTH-LED Mass Gatherings**, which include worship, singing, faith talks by students, building relationships, growing in faith, and hanging out with other youth from our very own synod.
- **Nightlife** featuring swimming, games, food, dancing, service project and SO MUCH MORE!

We hope that this guide provides you with plenty of information to pump up the youth in your congregation! Registration will take place online September 22 – October 17, 2025, and you will be able to choose your own hotel and room assignments by booking hotel rooms **ON YOUR OWN (no hotel code needed)** once you have registered.

Registration link: <https://swmnelca.org/event/jhyg2025>

Thank YOU for supporting this youth led event!

We look forward to hosting your congregation this November!

QUESTIONS?

SW MN Synod Minister: Pastor Seyward Ask:
(678) 427-7612 -or- seyward.ask@swmnelca.org

JH Gathering Manager: Janelle Eisenbacher
(320) 295-0312 -or- jeisenbacher@hotmail.com

Registration Questions for Registrar: Amy Swanson
(320) 287-1867 -or- lyogatheringregistrar@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE:

***REGISTRATION
OPENS September 22.**

***Early Bird Registration
Sept. 22 – Oct. 10**

***Late Registration
Oct. 11-17**

***Hotel Room Block
ENDS OCTOBER 17.**

***After October 17, housing
at these hotels may not be
available, and you will
need to secure housing
elsewhere.***

What YOU need to know about REGISTRATION!

REGISTRATION OPENS on September 22.

For registration you will need to know the following:

- Number of youth participants
- Number of adult participants
- T-shirt sizes for ALL participants
- A form of payment ready to submit online (credit card or check information).



DEADLINES:

Sept. 22-Oct 10 Early Bird Registration, \$90 early bird rate (Opens at **NOON** on 9/22)

Oct. 11 - Oct. 17 Registration continues, \$95 registration rate (Closes at **5 PM** on 10/17)

Oct. 17 @ 5 PM Registration Closed – Any late registrations after this date will cost \$100.
***You'll need to contact the Gathering Registrar, and late registrations DO NOT include t-shirts or rooms in the hotel block, so you'll need to secure housing.*

GATHERING LOCATION: Willmar Conference Center – 2100 Hwy 12 E. Willmar, MN

REGISTRATION COST: \$90 per person/early bird, \$95 per person/regular registration (youth & adults)
All Gathering Participants will receive an evening snack, brunch buffet, t-shirt and excellent programming!
All registration fees are non-refundable for any reason.

AGE: The Junior High Youth Gathering is open to all 6th-9th graders! (We encourage you to decide what makes sense for Middle School or Junior High youth in your congregation.)

HOW TO REGISTER: Please fill out the registration form online at www.swmnelca.org/event/jhyg2025 and either pay online with a credit card or e-check.

NOTE the CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEARS: You will need to pay in full for your registrations at the time of registering. If you pay online with a check, NO credit card fees are charged to the synod.

Registrations will not be confirmed until payment is made.

MAILING ADDRESS:

SW MN Synod Junior High Gathering
SW MN Synod Office
PO BOX 499 Redwood Falls, MN 56283-0499

REGISTRATION CONFIRMATION:

Upon completing your online registration, you will immediately receive an email confirming you are registered for the gathering. This email will include a link to the Gathering Participant Guide (schedule, group covenant, packing list, a pre-gathering checklist, and the medical release/information/media release form). These forms will also be available on the Synod website. **Once you have received confirmation that you are registered for the Gathering, you may email your hotel reservation form to the Best Western Plus.**

What you need to know about HOTEL RESERVATIONS! Three easy steps:

Step 1: After the gathering registrar receives your registration and payment, you will receive an email confirmation, which will indicate that your church is registered for the Gathering.

Step 2: Once you have received your confirmation email, please **EMAIL** the room reservation form to the Best Western Plus in order to reserve rooms for your group. The Best Western Plus will be handling the housing arrangements for ALL hotels. They will book room requests in the order they receive them.

Do not send your hotel reservation form without your registration confirmation email.
AGAIN: NO CODE NEEDED TO MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Step 3: Best Western Plus will send you an email confirmation starting November 3 confirming your hotel.

Note: A block of rooms at each hotel will be held until October 17, but keep in mind rooms will fill up as registrations come in. Special rates for gathering participants have been arranged at these hotels. Having the freedom to choose your hotel will enable you to make housing arrangements that will fit your budget, group dynamics, and hotel preference. **NO CODE NEEDED TO RESERVE HOTEL ROOMS!**

HOTEL INFORMATION

2025 BEST WESTERN PLUS Rates:

All Rooms: \$138.59/night (includes taxes)
Connected to the Willmar Conference Center where all gathering programming is held.
Amenities: Pool, Hot Tub.

2025 HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS Rates:

Standard Room: \$138.59/night (includes taxes)
King and Queen Suites: \$199.57/night (includes taxes)
King Suites have 1 king bed in one room, 1 sofa sleeper in the other room and space for at least 1 single and 1 double air mattress. Queen Suites have 2 queen beds in one room, 1 sofa sleeper in the other room and space for at least 1-2 double air mattresses.
Located only feet away from the Willmar Conference Center. Amenities: Pool, Hot Tub.



ROOMING ARRANGEMENTS: We require a ratio of 1 adult leader (21 years or older) to 5 youth. Each congregation may decide how to assign rooms. Depending on your room configuration and how many people you put in a room, you may want to bring sleeping bags and pillows. There is a limit of 5 people in each standard room. Reserving a suite will give you more freedom to have a greater number of people in one room. You may choose to have your youth stay in rooms with adults, or you may have your adults in rooms separate from youth.

A word about housing: We do our best to create a safe haven for all people. We do not allow adults to sleep in the same bed as youth. Please make a plan that includes bringing sleeping bags and possibly air mattresses. It is also a wise practice to use the rule of 3. Never have one adult and one youth in the sleeping room alone. When an adult is in the sleeping room, make sure there are two youth present, as well. These things are done for the protection of youth, adults and your congregation.

If you have any questions, you can contact:

Synod Minister, Pastor Seyward Ask	(678) 427-7612 -or- seyward.ask@swmnelca.org
JH Gathering Registrar, Amy Swanson	(320) 287-1867 -or- lyogatheringregistrar@gmail.com
JH Gathering Manager, Janelle Eisenbacher	(320) 295-0312 -or- jeisenbacher@hotmail.com

**Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Junior High Youth Gathering 2025
HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM**



Dear SWMN Synod Attendee:

Thank you for choosing to stay with us for the Junior High Youth Gathering on November 21-22, 2025!

All reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card and must be received no later than October 17, 2025. If you need to cancel, you may do so without penalty by November 1st. Cancellations received after November 1st will result in full payment for your room(s). Reservations are taken on a **first-come, first-serve basis**. We will try to honor your hotel preference and room type (one bed or two) based on what is available **when we receive your reservation**.

Our rates for the 2025 gathering will be as follows:

- Best Western Plus \$138.59 total per room/per night.
- Holiday Inn Express & Suites
 - Standard Room \$138.59 total per room/per night.
 - Suite \$199.57 total per room/per night.

**Please Note: Rate does not include hotel breakfast - breakfast is provided at the event.*

REGISTRATION DATE:

Please, write the date of your email registration confirmation here. Email confirmation will be sent from the synod office upon completion of registration and receiving registration payment.

RESERVATIONS WILL NOT BE TAKEN OVER THE PHONE – Please submit this form via EMAIL.

EMAIL to: Caryl Paulsen, caryl.paulsen@tpihospitality.com

EMAIL SUBJECT: SYNOD HOTEL REQUEST (CHURCH NAME)

REGISTRATIONS: CREDIT CARD or CHECK (Method of Payment Must Be Provided to Make Reservations)

Your hotel reservation confirmation will be emailed to you beginning November 3.

Church Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email Address (required for confirmation): _____

Credit Card Number (if applicable): _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: (Required): _____

Gathering Date: November 21-22, 2025

of Rooms: _____

Preference (Circle One - cannot guarantee):

One Bed

Two Beds

Hotel Preference (please mark 1st and 2nd choice): Best Western Plus ___ Holiday Inn Express & Suites ___

Best Western Plus · 2100 E Hwy 12 · Willmar, MN 56201. Holiday Inn Express & Suites · 240 23rd St. SE · Willmar, MN 56201

*Questions about Hotel Reservations? Contact **Caryl Paulsen at: caryl.paulsen@tpihospitality.com***

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
Confirmation Number(s):

Location:

Room Type:

One Bed

Two Beds



SW MN Synod Junior High Youth Gathering November 21-22, 2025

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

Please, bring ORIGINAL to the Gathering, and keep a 2nd copy for your church leaders for the weekend of the Gathering.

Name of gathering participant: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____

Student Phone #: _____

T-Shirt Size (Adult sizes, circle one): S M L XL XXL
*(**If a larger is shirt needed, extra cost will apply)*

Parent/Guardian Name(s) #1: _____ #2: _____

Parent/Guardian Cell #(s) #1: _____ #2: _____

Are there any medical conditions or allergies that we should know about? (attach further explanation, if necessary)

Emergency Contact (for youth if parents unavailable & for adults in case of an emergency), please contact:

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Insurance Company Name: _____ Policy # _____

Photo/Media Release Permission: I give permission for the Gathering planners and our _____
(Church Name Above)

Church leaders to use photos and videos that include the above participant for Youth Gathering communication and promotion of the event – including printed and social media platforms. _____ YES _____ NO

Parent/Guardian Permission: I hereby grant my permission for my child to attend the SW MN Synod Junior High Youth Gathering, to be held at the Willmar Convention Center and hotels in Willmar, MN November 21-22, 2025 with the _____ Lutheran Church Youth Group and its adult leaders. I also grant my permission,
(Church Name Above)

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: (parent/guardian) _____ Date: _____

SW MN Synod 2025 Junior High Gathering Covenant

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

I, the undersigned, agree to covenant the following behaviors for the duration of the SW MN Synod Junior High Youth Gathering, November 21-22, 2025. We do this in order to receive maximum benefits from our time together and for care of others. 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 – LYO board, speakers, musicians, security, camp/hotel staff, other guests and all other participants - will be respected. This includes listening, participating, our language and gestures, honoring our diversity and differences, and observing Quiet Hours (11 PM – 7:30 AM).
3. Treat facilities with care and respect. Seek to leave spaces better than I find them, pick up, etc.
4. Not leave the designated locations without the permission of our adult leader. Stay out of hotel rooms during Mass Gatherings and Night Life so that I participate in the ministry programming.
5. Refrain from using electronic devices (other than camera use) in Worship (Mass Gatherings) & Night Life
6. Care for our neighbors, who may have health issues of their own or in their immediate family, by not attending if I am sick.
7. Commit to actively participate in all gathering events, including being fully present.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

2025 JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING Tentative SCHEDULE: (Subject to Change)

FRIDAY PM November 21st - SATURDAY AM November 22nd

Evening

4:00-6:30 pm Registration & Check-In at Hotels
6:30 pm Pre-Gathering Music

*** Before 7pm: Supper on your own*

7:00-8:30 pm Mass Gathering #1
8:45-11:15 pm Nightlife!
8:45-9:15 pm Female Adult Leader Meeting
9:25-9:55 pm Male Adult Leader Meeting

*** 10pm: Pizza Orders Due (& Paid) to the Green Mill Catering Office (located across the hall from the Dance)*

11:30 pm Mass Gathering #1
12:15 am Congregational Devotion Time
1:00 am In Your Own Rooms
1:30 am Lights Out

Morning

9:15-10:15 am Breakfast Buffet
10:30 am Mass Gathering #3: Closing Worship
12:00 pm Go in Peace, Serve the Lord!



Packing List

- Sleeping bag and pillow (may want to bring 3 for every 5 people)
- Clothes (Reminder: This is a church event– Please be mindful of sayings, slogans, etc.)
- Toiletries
- Prescription medication in original prescription container (if needed)
- Swimsuit & Towel for the Pool
- Weather appropriate attire for the drive and traveling
- Bible
- Money for our Worship Offering
- Money for Friday or Saturday evening supper (OR Sack supper)
- Service Project Materials (see next page for details)
- Optional: camping mat/blow-up mattress for students without a hotel bed
- Optional: spending money and money for Saturday lunch on the way home

2025 JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING

SERVICE PROJECT: TEEN HOMELESSNESS

FOSTERING YOUTH TRANSITIONS - WILLMAR, MN

Fostering Youth Transitions - Willmar Area is a service that prepares youth for independence. Fostering Youth Transitions - Willmar Area provides guidance and support to youth, up to age 23, who have been in out-of-home placement (i.e., foster care, group homes, juvenile justice placements or change of custody) and are preparing to find their own living situation. We also facilitate connections with their peers who have been in a similar situation.

This experiential independent living skills group includes a strong focus on adventure-based learning, leadership and team building skills. It includes retreats and field trips as well as individual transitional and independent living plans for youth who are in or have aged out of out-of-home placement care.

We'll be collecting the following items to create hygiene kits for the resource center:

- FULL-SIZED DEODORANT
- FULL-SIZED TOOTHPASTE
- FULL-SIZED BODY WASH/SOAP
- HAIR BRUSH OR COMB
- TOOTHBRUSH
- RAZORS / SHAVING CREAM
- LOTION