



**Southwestern Minnesota Synod  
Junior High Youth Gathering  
November 19-20 / 20 / 20-21, 2021**

September 2021

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION GUIDE

CALLING ALL Youth Ministers (and Pastors, Youth Directors, and Volunteers):  
***God's peace to you! With much anticipation, the Gathering is BACK!***

We are incredibly excited that you are looking at the materials for the 2021 Junior High Youth Gathering. This is a **YOUTH LED** event that is planned by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Board. There will be three date options, November 19-20, 20 and 20-21. We are eager to be partnering 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.

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are also able to provide a Saturday DAY ONLY event (no hotel stay), for 2021. Please read on for more information on this unique opportunity offered this year.*

**Our theme this year is "Faith can move MOUNTAINS" (Matthew 17:20)**

*"For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."*

Gathering Features:

- Band/Speaker: AGAPE and Joe Davis
- YOUTH LED Mass Gatherings including worship, singing, growing in faith, building relationships and hanging out with other youth from our very own synod.
- Nightlife featuring swimming, games, food, dancing, service projects 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 in SEPTEMBER and early October, and you will be able to choose your own hotel and room assignments shortly after that time. Please review the registration information for details on how to book your hotel room after you've registered for your gathering date option.

Registration link: [www.swmnelca.org/event/jhyg2021](http://www.swmnelca.org/event/jhyg2021)

***Thank YOU for supporting this youth led event! We are looking forward to hosting your congregation this November!!***

### **QUESTIONS?**

General Gathering for Manager: Kaitlin Opdahl  
(320) 293-2969 -or- [swmnelcajrhighgathering@gmail.com](mailto:swmnelcajrhighgathering@gmail.com)

Registration for Registrar: Shaun Luker  
(507) 317-8968 -or- [gatheringregistrar@yahoo.com](mailto:gatheringregistrar@yahoo.com)

***PLEASE NOTE: The deadlines for this year's gathering are EARLIER than before!***

***REGISTRATION OPENS ON SEPTEMBER 20<sup>th</sup> AND CLOSSES ON OCTOBER 17<sup>th</sup>!***



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Junior High Youth Gathering  
November 19-20 / 20 / 20-21, 2021**

**What YOU need to know about REGISTRATION for 2021!**

**2021 Saturday ONLY Option:** Due to the uncertainties of COVID-19, we have worked with the Willmar Conference Center to offer a Saturday daytime ONLY option this year. You will be able to participate in all events of the gathering upon arriving at the Willmar Conference Center on Saturday morning and departing after the end of the evening activities provided on Saturday night. You may see a schedule of events for all three date options on the last page.

**REGISTRATION OPENS on September 20<sup>th</sup>:** 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).**
- **Which gathering option you'd prefer to attend** *\*\*This is a PREFERENCE, and will be confirmed upon registration confirmation from Registrar!\*\**

Option One: Friday PM-Saturday AM  
Option Two: Saturday AM-Saturday PM  
Option Three: Saturday PM-Sunday AM

**DEADLINES:**

Sept. 20 - Oct. 1 Early Bird Registration, \$60 early bird rate! (Opens at **NOON** on the 20<sup>th</sup>)

Oct. 2 - Oct. 17 Registration continues, \$65 registration rate (Closes at **NOON** on the 17<sup>th</sup>)

Oct. 17 @ NOON Registration Closed - no late registrations on or after this date

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

**REGISTRATION COST:** \$60 per person/early bird, \$65 per person/regular registration (youth & adults)

All Gathering Participants will receive an evening snack, breakfast, t-shirt and excellent programming!

*All registration fees are non-refundable for any reason.*

**AGE:** The Junior High Youth Gathering 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/jhyg2021](http://www.swmnelca.org/event/jhyg2021) and either pay online (with check or credit card) or make one check to the "SW MN Synod" and send it to the synod office. 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. Your hotel code will be sent in a separate email.

Beginning September 22<sup>nd</sup>, you will receive an email notice letting you know which gathering option you are registered for (these are sent out in the order they come in). Once you have received confirmation of which option you are registered for and receive your hotel registration code, you may email your hotel reservation form to the Best Western Plus.

**What you need to know about HOTEL RESERVATIONS!**

*Hotel Reservations will be made by following three easy steps:*

Step 1: After the gathering registrar receives your registration and payment, you will receive an email confirmation, which will include a code that you will add to the hotel reservation form (see next page). This code indicates your group is registered for the gathering and allows the Best Western Plus to determine which night you will be attending. *Do not send your hotel reservation form without your registration code.*

Step 2: Once you have received your confirmation code, 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.

Step 3: The Best Western Plus will send you an email confirmation no later than October 31<sup>st</sup>, confirming your hotel accommodations.

**\*\*Note:** A block of rooms at each hotel will be held until October 19<sup>th</sup>, 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.\*\*

**HOTEL INFORMATION**

2021 BEST WESTERN PLUS Rates:

All Rooms: \$120.30/night (including tax!)

Connected to the Willmar Conference Center where all gathering programming is held.

Amenities: Pool, Hot Tub.

2021 HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS Rates:

Standard Room: \$120.30/night (including tax!)

King and Queen Suites: \$171.07/night (including tax!) 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 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, please contact Synod Youth Ministry Coordinator, Sister Sarah Hausken [320-579-0838](tel:320-579-0838) or [sarah.hausken@swwnelca.org](mailto:sarah.hausken@swwnelca.org)*

### **Packing List**

- ❑ Sleeping bag and pillow (may want to bring 3 for every 5 people)
- ❑ Clothes (Remember: this is a church event! 😊)
- ❑ Toiletries
- ❑ Swimsuit
- ❑ Towel for the pool
- ❑ Bible
- ❑ Offering and Spending Money
- ❑ Service Project Materials (TBD upon completing registration)



**A NOTE ON COVID-19:** *We have all learned this year how quickly things can change and how we need to adapt to an ever-changing virus. At this point, we are optimistic that plans can move forward and are hopeful we can gather in-person for events youth have loved over the years.*

*Synod leadership will continue to monitor COVID-19 and the impact of variants and follow local public health and CDC recommendations to make decisions and set protocols in the best interest of participants. Event protocols will be shared two weeks prior to the event with registered Primary Adult Leaders. We ask leaders to pass these on to youth and parents at that point. For the time being, we appreciate your grace and patience. Participants who are sick, of course, should stay home and not attend. Unfortunately, due to the expense the synod incurs when a registered participant cancels, we are not able to refund deposits, even due to illness.*

*As you consider participating in synod youth ministry events, it is important to be aware of the health risks inherent in a large gathering of people from wide and diverse geographic regions. We will manage protocols as best we can for the safety of participants, but it is important youth and parents understand that physical distancing is not practical for the types of events we hold. Participants are housed together, eat together, and gather in large groups for worship and activities.*

*We ask congregational leaders to have a conversation with parents and youth prior to registration regarding their comfort level of gathering in-person for our events, especially if participants or someone they live with are at higher risk if they are exposed or infected with COVID-19. We encourage you to discuss:*

- *travel and housing arrangements,*
- *program activities in large groups,*
- *willingness to follow COVID-19 protocols even if participant has been fully vaccinated,*
- *and the financial risk of non-refundable deposits if a participant gets sick.*

*If Synod leadership decides it is necessary to cancel the event, congregations will have the opportunity to request a refund of up to \$40 per registrant. In planning an event like this, some expenses are incurred regardless of the gathering being held. With a shared commitment to Youth Gathering Ministry, we trust that we will be able to continue hosting events where youth and adults experience the transformative love of Jesus for years to come. Thank you for your partnership!*

*If you have any questions regarding our response to COVID-19, please contact Sister Sarah Hausken, 320-579-0838*



# Southwestern Minnesota Synod Junior High Youth Gathering 2021 HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

Dear SWMN Synod Attendee:

*Thank you for choosing to stay with us for the Junior High Youth Gathering on November 19-20, 20-21, 2021!*

All reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card and must be received no later than October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. If you need to cancel, you may do so without penalty by November 12<sup>th</sup>. Cancellations received after November 12<sup>th</sup> 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 2021 gathering will be as follows:

--Best Western Plus.....\$120.30\* (including tax) per room/per night.

--Holiday Inn Express & Suites

--Standard Room\*.....\$120.30\* (including tax) per room/per night.

--King or Queen Suite\*.....\$171.07\* (including tax) per room/per night.

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



### REGISTRATION CODE:

Please write your registration code in this box. Your code will be provided to you when you register for the event.

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

*EMAIL to: Caryl Paulsen, [caryl.paulsen@tpihospitality.com](mailto: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 no later than October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (required for confirmation): \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: (Required): \_\_\_\_\_ Circle Date Requested: \_\_\_\_\_ November 19 <sup>Fr</sup> 20 <sup>Sa</sup>

# of Rooms: \_\_\_\_\_ Preference (Circle One - cannot guarantee): \_\_\_\_\_ One Bed \_\_\_\_\_ Two Beds

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

*Best Western Plus • 2100 E Hwy 12 • Willmar, MN 56201. Holiday Inn Express & Suites • 240 23<sup>rd</sup> St. SE • Willmar, MN 56201*  
Questions about Hotel Reservations? Contact **Caryl Paulsen at: [caryl.paulsen@tpihospitality.com](mailto:caryl.paulsen@tpihospitality.com) or 320-235-3312 x304**

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY  
Confirmation Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Room Type: \_\_\_\_\_ One Bed \_\_\_\_\_ Two Beds

**GATHERING COPY**

**Medical Release/Information/Media Release Form**  
SWMN ELCA Synod: Junior High Youth Gathering 2021

*Please reproduce this form: One form is needed for every youth and adult participant.*

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Names (youth only):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone Numbers (youth only):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Medical Conditions/Allergies:  
(attach further explanation, if necessary)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (for **youth** participants, who can we call if parent/guardian is unavailable, for **adult** participants, who can we contact in case of an emergency):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Company name and policy #:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Photo/Media Release Permission (It is OK for gathering planners to use photos and videos that include the above participant for future Youth Gathering communication.):

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

Parent/Guardian Permission (youth only): I hereby grant my permission for my child to attend the SW MN Synod Junior High Youth Gathering, to be held at the Willmar Conference Center in Willmar, MN from Nov. 19-20, 20 ONLY & 20-21, 2021. I also give 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONGREGATION COPY**

**Medical Release/Information/Media Release Form**  
SWMN ELCA Synod: Junior High Youth Gathering 2021

*Please reproduce this form: One form is needed for every youth and adult participant.*

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Names (youth only):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone Numbers (youth only):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Medical Conditions/Allergies:  
(attach further explanation, if necessary)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (for **youth** participants, who can we call if parent/guardian is unavailable, for **adult** participants, who can we contact in case of an emergency):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Company name and policy #:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Photo/Media Release Permission (It is OK for gathering planners to use photos and videos that include the above participant for future Youth Gathering communication.):

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

Parent/Guardian Permission (youth only): I hereby grant my permission for my child to attend the SW MN Synod Junior High Youth Gathering, to be held at the Willmar Conference Center in Willmar, MN from Nov. 19-20, 20 ONLY & 20-21, 2021. I also give 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: \_\_\_\_\_



**2021 JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING Tentative SCHEDULE: (Subject to Change)**

<b><u>OPTION ONE:</u></b> <b><u>FRIDAY PM-SATURDAY AM</u></b>	<b><u>OPTION TWO:</u></b> <b><u>SATURDAY AM-SATURDAY PM</u></b>	<b><u>OPTION THREE:</u></b> <b><u>SATURDAY PM-SUNDAY AM</u></b>
<i>Evening</i>	<i>Morning</i>	<i>Evening</i>
Before 7:30      Supper (on your own)	9:30-10:45 am    Breakfast Buffet	Before 6:30      Supper (on your own)
5:30 pm            Registration at your hotel	11:00 am          Mass Gathering	4:30 pm            Registration at your hotel
7:30 pm            Mass Gathering	12:30 pm          Registration at Best Western Plus Lobby	6:30 pm            Mass Gathering
9:15-12:00 am    Nightlife!	<i>1:00 pm-6:30 pm Activities in Willmar community, don't forget to eat lunch and supper! ☺</i>	8:15-11:00 pm    Nightlife!
9:15-9:45 pm.    Female Adult Leader Meeting	<i>Evening</i>	8:15-8:45 pm     Female Adult Leader Meeting
9:55-10:35 pm    Male Adult Leader Meeting	6:30 pm            Mass Gathering	8:55-9:35 pm     Male Adult Leader Meeting
12:00 am          Congregational Devotion Time	8:00-11:00 pm    Nightlife!	11:00 pm          Congregational Devotion Time
1:00 am            In your own rooms	8:15-8:45 pm.    Female Adult Leader Meeting	12:00 am          In your own rooms
2:00 am            Lights Out	8:55-9:35 pm     Male Adult Leader Meeting	1:00 am            Lights Out
	11:00 pm          Devotion Time on your way home!	
<i>Morning</i>		<i>Morning</i>
9:30-10:45 am    Breakfast Buffet		8:30-9:45 am     Breakfast Buffet
11:00 am          Mass Gathering		10:00 am          Mass Gathering
12:30 pm          Go in Peace, Serve the Lord!		11:30 am          Go in Peace, Serve the Lord!