



# **SW MN Synod - Junior High Youth Gathering November 17-18 OR November 18-19, 2023**

## **REGISTRATION INFORMATION GUIDE**

CALLING ALL Youth Ministers  
(and Pastors, Youth Directors, and Volunteers):

### ***God's peace to you! Here's the info for the JH Gathering!***

We are incredibly excited that you are looking at the materials for the 2023 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 are again offering TWO options for the JH Gathering:**  
**Friday, November 17 – Saturday, November 18, 2023 OR**  
**Saturday, November 18 – Sunday, November 19, 2023**

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.

**Our theme this year is "Where God Guides, God Provides," based on Isaiah 58:11.**

#### Gathering Features:

- Music by: Rachel Kurtz
- Speakers: Rachel Kurtz & Pastor Jodi Houge
- YOUTH LED Mass Gatherings including worship, singing, growing in faith, student faith talks, building relationships 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 starting September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and you will be able to choose your own hotel and room assignments by booking hotel rooms once you have registered.

Registration link: <https://swmnsynod.formstack.com/forms/2023jrhigh>

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

### ***QUESTIONS?***

General Gathering for Youth Coordinator: Pastor Nikoli Falenschek  
(507) 403-0494 -or- [nikoli.falenschek@swmnelca.org](mailto:nikoli.falenschek@swmnelca.org)

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

***\*\*PLEASE NOTE:***  
***Hotel Block Reservation***  
***deadline is October 13. After***  
***this date, you must secure***  
***your own housing.***

***REGISTRATION***  
***OPENS September 13<sup>th</sup> AND***  
***CLOSES ON OCT 31<sup>st</sup>!***



## ***Southwestern Minnesota Synod Junior High Youth Gathering November 17-18 OR November 18-19, 2023***

### **What YOU need to know about REGISTRATION!**

#### **REGISTRATION OPENS on September 13<sup>th</sup>**

Registration link: <https://swmnsynod.formstack.com/forms/2023jrhigh>

#### **For registration you will need to know the following:**

- **Which Gathering you will be attending (Fri/Sat or Sat/Sun)**
- **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. 13 – Sept. 30 Early Bird Registration, \$70 early bird rate! (Opens at **NOON** on the 13<sup>th</sup>)

Oct. 1 - Oct. 31 Registration continues, \$80 registration rate (Closes at **NOON** on the 31<sup>st</sup>)

Oct. 31 @ NOON Registration Closed – Any late registrations after this date will cost \$90,

you will need to contact the Gathering Registrar. **\*\*\*ANY REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED**

**AFTER THE OCTOBER 13 HOTEL BLOCK RELEASE DATE WILL NOT INCLUDE ROOMS IN THE BLOCK. You will need to secure housing on your own.**

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

**REGISTRATION COST:** \$70 per person/early bird, \$80 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/jhyg2023](http://www.swmnelca.org/event/jhyg2023) 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. 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 (no code needed).*

Step 3: The Best Western Plus will send you an email confirmation no later than November 1<sup>st</sup>, confirming your hotel accommodations.

**\*\*Note:** A block of rooms at each hotel will be held until October 13<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**

#### 2023 BEST WESTERN PLUS Rates:

All Rooms: \$124.99/night (plus tax)

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

Amenities: Pool, Hot Tub.



#### 2023 HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS Rates:

Standard Room: \$124.99/night (plus tax)

King and Queen Suites: \$179.99/night (plus 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 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, please contact Youth Ministry Coordinator:**

**Pastor Nikoli Falenschek**

**507-403-0494 or nikoli.falenschek@swmnelca.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 & Spending Money
- ❑ Money for Friday or Saturday evening supper (OR Sack supper)
- ❑ Service Project Materials (TBD upon completed registration)
- ❑ Optional: camping mat/blow-up mattress for students without a hotel bed
- ❑ Optional: money for Sat lunch on the way home



## Southwestern Minnesota Synod Junior High Youth Gathering 2023 HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

Dear SWMN Synod Attendee:

*Thank you for choosing to stay with us for the Junior High Youth Gathering on November 17/18 or 18/19, 2023!*

All reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card and must be received no later than October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. If you need to cancel, you may do so without penalty by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Cancellations received after November 1<sup>st</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 2023 gathering will be as follows:

--Best Western Plus.....\$124.99\* (plus tax) per room/per night.

--Holiday Inn Express & Suites

--Standard Room\*.....\$124.99\* (plus tax) per room/per night.

--Suite\*.....\$179.99\* (plus tax) per room/per night.

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

**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 November 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

November 17, 2023

Signature: (Required): \_\_\_\_\_

Gathering Date: (Circle One): \_\_\_\_\_

or November 18, 2023

# 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 320-444-9480**

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 2023

*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 Youth Gathering communication and promotion of the event – including printed & social media platforms.):

\_\_\_ 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. 17-19, 2023. 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 2023

*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):  
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Emergency Contact Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

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

**2023 JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING Tentative SCHEDULE: (Subject to Change)**

**FRIDAY PM-SATURDAY AM**

*Evening*

4:00-4:30 pm Start Checking In To Hotels  
 Before 7:00 Supper (on your own)  
 4:30-6:30 pm Registration At Your Hotel  
 6:30 pm Pre-Gathering Music  
 7:00-8:30 pm Mass Gathering  
 8:45-11:15 PM Nightlife!  
 8:45-9:15 pm. Female Adult Leader Meeting  
 9:30-10:00 pm Male Adult Leader Meeting  
 11:30-12:15 am Comtemplative Worship  
 12:15 am Congregational Devotion Time  
 1:00 am In your own rooms  
 2:00 am Lights Out

*Morning*

9:30-10:30 am Breakfast Buffet  
 10:45 am Mass Gathering  
 & Closing Worship  
 12:15 pm Go in Peace, Serve the Lord!



**SATURDAY PM-SUNDAY AM**

*Evening*

4:00-4:30 pm Start Checking In To Hotels  
 Before 7:00 Supper (on your own)  
 4:30-6:30 pm Registration At Your Hotel  
 6:30 pm Pre-Gathering Music  
 7:00-8:30 pm Mass Gathering  
 8:45-11:15 PM Nightlife!  
 8:45-9:15 pm. Female Adult Leader Meeting  
 9:30-10:00 pm Male Adult Leader Meeting  
 11:30-12:15 am Comtemplative Worship  
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 1:00 am In your own rooms  
 2:00 am Lights Out

*Morning*

9:30-10:30 am Breakfast Buffet  
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 & Closing Worship  
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