

# NE MN Synod Youth Ministry 2016 Fall Resource Packet

August 2016

Dear Friends and Colleagues in Ministry,

At the start of every LYO Training Camp, I have the youth look around the circle. I name how each person is anxious, wondering if they belong in that room as a leader, wondering if they will fit in, wondering if they are the only ones feeling scared and a bit lonely. Then I tell them to remember that moment – because at the end of the week we will sit in the same circle, this time as a family who has come to trust each other, love each other, and belong to each other.

You know that experience. It happens on every mission trip, every week at camp, every time we gather for extended time of being intentionally together as the body of Christ. We often name it as the “mountain top” experience. Youth (and let’s be honest, their adult leaders too...) often have a hard time returning from those deep and rich experiences, and then living their faith at home. We talk and encourage them that faith can’t be lived on the mountaintop, that it is in the valley – the every day living – that Jesus calls us to live our faith.

**But I’ve been wondering.** Is there more going on when youth (and adults) fall flat in their faith when we return from these deeply relational experiences? My wondering started, of all places, thinking about war. Memorial Day weekend I was flipping through channels and came across a PBS station showing a TED talk\* by Sebastian Junger, author of “Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging.” He was sharing how 10% of veterans have seen combat, yet 50% of veterans report PTSD issues. This means that 40% have not been traumatized overseas, and yet return home with severe issues. Why? Junger asserts that “maybe they had an experience of tribal closeness in their unit while they were overseas. They ate together, lived together, fought together. When they came home they had to give all that up, and return to a modern society that is itself traumatized and lonely. We call their affliction PTSD, but perhaps it’s simply alienation.”

*“Maybe what determines the rate of long term PTSD isn’t what happened “out there” (in battle), but the kind of society you come back to. And maybe if you come back to a close, cohesive society, you can get over trauma pretty quickly. And if you come back to an alienating modern society, you might remain traumatized your entire life. In other words, maybe the problem isn’t them – the vets, maybe the problem is us. Certainly modern society is hard on the human psyche by every metric we have.”*

- Sebastian Junger, TED Talk

**Now wonder about that in youth ministry terms.** We build faith-filled, tribal communities on mission trips and at camp where we are known, accepted, loved and deeply belong with - and to - each other. It can be traumatic to leave those intentional, affirming tribal experiences where God is clearly present and return to our “normal” society. So I wonder...what communities do we return our youth to? Where do they find those close-knit, supportive communities – tribes – in their daily lives? How are we building “tribes” for youth to return to in our congregations? How are we inviting those who have never experienced belonging relationships into our tribe? How does our faith tribe send us out into a lonely and traumatized world that desperately needs the welcome, acceptance, love and belonging we find in Christ?



This year, NE MN Synod Youth Ministry will be lifting up ways to be a more intentional tribal community of faith. At the Middle School Gathering we will gather around the theme, “iBelong” where we look at what the Apostle’s

Creed can teach us about our identity in Christ and our relationship with God and each other. Cardia Deo will focus on being “Called” into deeper relationship with God and each other as we follow Jesus together. The Discipleship Challenge invites us to WONDER deeply about our faith, about following Jesus, about faith formation, and about mission.

I am so grateful for our NE MN Synod faith tribe. The ministry you do in our congregations and communities is so vital. Thank you. Thank you for how you let the Holy Spirit be at work in and through you every day, on the mountains and in the valleys, so that our young people may know the One to whom they belong and experience a faith-filled tribal closeness that will equip them and send them out into the world to be the light of Christ for others.

In Christ,



Catherine Anderson  
Coordinator of Youth Ministry  
Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA

\*You can watch Sebastian Junger's entire TED Talk at: <http://tinyurl.com/hg5pv7e>

### 5 Websites Worth Exploring:

[www.waytolead.org](http://www.waytolead.org)  
[www.leaderslearn.org](http://www.leaderslearn.org)  
[www.youthministryinitiative.org/videos/](http://www.youthministryinitiative.org/videos/)  
[www.elcaymnet.org](http://www.elcaymnet.org)  
[www.lifelongfaith.com](http://www.lifelongfaith.com)

### Youth E-Chat

Youth E-Chat is the primary communication tool to share youth ministry events and resources in and beyond our synod. To be added to the list, email your name, church and church city to: [Catherine.Anderson@nemnsynod.org](mailto:Catherine.Anderson@nemnsynod.org)



## What's New For 2016

### New Registrar for Middle School Gathering!

Let me introduce you to...Marilyn Hull! Ok, she's not so new. ☺ I'm thrilled to say that Marilyn will continue as the registrar for the Middle School Gathering, despite her retirement last December! As registrar, all registration and housing questions should be directed to Marilyn.

The new part is her schedule. Marilyn will only be available **Tuesday and Thursday mornings** to respond to registration questions via email and phone messages. The preferred method for questions is via email – this will also be the quickest way to get a response. **Registration questions can be directed to Marilyn beginning October 4<sup>th</sup>.**

**Email (preferred): [MSG@nemnsynod.org](mailto:MSG@nemnsynod.org)**

**Phone: 218-724-4424, ext. 120**

*Please note: If you have Marilyn in your contacts from previous years, this is a new email address and phone extension!*



Stay current with synod youth ministry events and news — join the “Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA” Facebook Group!