



Confirmation Letter

2018 NE MN Synod Journey

Welcome to the Synod Journey!

We are so excited to have you on this faith Journey! There will be 460 youth and adults from 41 congregations on the Journey with you. How will God be at work transforming our lives this year? What will this Journey change for you? What will this Journey change for your young people? I am excited to see what the Holy Spirit will be up to in and through each and every one of you!

Registration Updates: Additions/Substitutions/Cancellations

It never fails – youth change their minds or “things” come up and you need to do changes. 😊 Here is how to handle changes in your group:

- **Additions/Waiting List:** The Synod Journey is full and we are not able to take additions unless there is a cancellation. Youth who still wish to register can be added to a waiting list. If a cancellation occurs in your congregation or another congregation on the Synod Journey AND there is space both on your bus and hotel configurations, we can do a substitution. Email Catherine to add a youth to the waiting list.
- **Same Church Substitutions:** If you have a cancellation in your congregation group, you can do a same-gender substitution by filling out a "Change Form" and sending to Catherine. You can only do a non-gender substitution if your hotel assignment allows. Please note - actual hotel assignments may be different than what you put on your request form! Contact Catherine to see if a different-gender substitution will work.
- **Cross-Congregational Substitutions:** These are substitutions where there is a cancellation in one congregation that is filled with a participant from another congregation. Because congregation groups will be assigned to service projects in Houston based on the number in their group, cross-congregational substitutions will only be allowed if the congregation with the cancellation is willing to "adopt" the participant from a different congregation during the service experience in Houston.
- **Cancellations:** Please notify Catherine as soon as possible if you have a participant cancel. Remember that each payment is non-refundable. If a substitution is not found for someone in your group who cancels, you will lose the payments made for that person up to that point.

Confused?!? Bottom line: Contact Catherine if you have or would like to make any changes!

Adult Leader Trainings

ALL adult leaders are expected to attend one fall training and one spring training for the Synod Journey. You are welcome to bring additional adults as well. Fall Training dates/locations are:

October 7: 9:30am – Noon, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Virginia

October 8: 2 – 4:30pm, Trinity Lutheran Church in Brainerd

October 15: 2 - 4:30pm, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Cloquet

Registration and coffee/snacks begins a half hour before the start time listed. For planning purposes, please register your congregation! You can find the link at www.nemnsynod.org/SynodJourney. Directions are also on the website.

Other Training Opportunities

Equipped adult leaders make all the difference! For additional (but not required) training, check out these upcoming opportunities (details can be found at the given links):

ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza, “Finding Forward”:

Jan. 26-29, 2018 in Houston, TX

www.elcaymnet.org/ext18

Join children, youth and family ministry leaders from across the ELCA for this annual conference! Inspiring keynote speakers, informative workshops (including some Gathering specific workshops), networking and renewal are all part of the experience. PLUS, the event is held in Houston...an opportunity to get to know the city in preparation for next summer!

You will hear us say at the Fall Trainings that we think this event is so valuable to leaders that they should include the cost for attending the Extravaganza in their fundraising. We also want to help you get there! The synod offers ten, \$200 scholarships to assist adult leaders registered for the Synod Journey in attending the Extravaganza. To apply for a scholarship, fill out the form at <http://tinyurl.com/SJExt18> by October 31. If there are more than ten applications, we will select recipients by lottery. You will be notified by November 5 if you have been selected or not.

Practice Discipleship Trainings: www.practicediscipleship.org

Practice Discipleship began as an adult leader training initiative for the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering. This website contains five years’ worth of free training resources! The resources are available as webinars, short videos and scripted curriculum. We particularly encourage you to visit the archives for 2012 that include practical trainings for Your Role as Leader, Strategic Planning, Lutheran Theology, Leading a Small Group, and Planning for the Unexpected. You can do these trainings on your own or as a group of leaders!

Background Checks

All adult leaders on the Synod Journey are required to submit to a background check by October 15. This is a requirement for our stay at Texas A&M-Galveston...and a good practice. To submit your information, go to the “Registration Forms” tab at www.nemnsynod.org/SynodJourney, and click on the “Submit Your Background Check Now” link. Choose the “Synod Journey Adult Leader” option. The form takes 2-3 minutes to fill out. Please note that they use “applicant” language rather than volunteer – don’t worry, we’re not hiring you! *(The company we use is located in Florida, and was closed for Hurricane Irma. We are finalizing the process with them this week, and the link will open by September 29. Any updates to the process listed above will be on the website.)*

Please note: If you were an adult leader on the 2015 NE MN Synod Journey and are still at the same congregation, your background check is still valid and you do NOT need to submit to this background check.

Since background checks are confidential, we are not able to share our findings with congregations. We HIGHLY encourage congregations to also perform their own background checks on leaders.

Email Updates

The primary mode of communication will be via “The Synod Journey Update” email list. Every adult leader that entered an email address on their registration worksheet will be entered in this database. The first email was sent September 19 to let you know your congregation was registered. If you did not receive that email, check your spam filter first...then contact Catherine to be sure your email has been entered correctly. I encourage all adult leaders, and other pertinent leaders in your congregation, to be included in this list. You can be added to this list by emailing Catherine.Anderson@nemnsynod.org and ask to be added (include your church and city in the email). These email updates will be sent out as needed. Be sure that at least one adult from your congregation group is on this list and checking their email regularly!

Website, Facebook Group and Social Media

Website: All information for The Synod Journey can be found on the website at www.nemnsynod.org/SynodJourney. Mailings, Bible studies, Gathering links, Email Updates, Training Event Handouts and more.

Facebook Group: We have a closed Facebook Group for adult leaders. Search for “NE MN Synod Journey 2018 Adult Leaders” and request to join.

Social Media: Facebook: www.facebook.com/synodjourney
Twitter: www.twitter.com/synodjourney

Bus Assignments

You will receive your bus assignments at the Fall Training events. Over the course of the year, we ask bus groups to gather 1-2 times for group building, and adult leaders to discuss common goals for their bus time. Each bus will be assigned a Bus Captain to coordinate these meetings, and to be a primary communicator to your bus group from our planning team during the travel portion of the Journey.

Bible Studies

We expect congregation groups on the Synod Journey to meet at least once a month to prepare for the Journey. The primary source of curriculum for these meetings are the Getting Ready Materials prepared by the Gathering. The Synod Journey Worship Team has also prepared supplementary resources and an overview of how to integrate all the resources not only for your Synod Journey participants, but your entire youth group and congregation. Additional training for these resources will be provided at the Fall Training events. Links to all Gathering materials and Synod Journey resources will be posted on the "SJ Resources" tab at www.nemnsynod.org/SynodJourney by October 1.

Payment Schedule

On the first page of this confirmation letter is a schedule of payments, with the amount due at each payment time. Please check this for accuracy and contact Catherine Anderson if you have any questions. The Payment Schedule is:

First Payment (with registration):	\$250 per person
Second Payment Due February 1, 2018:	\$450 per person
Third Payment Due May 1, 2018:	\$550 per person

Remember, each payment is non-refundable!

All Things ELCA Youth Gathering

You can stay up to date with news on the Gathering in three ways:

- **Gathering Website:** www.elca.org/youthgathering
- **G-News:** Sign up on the Gathering website for these monthly updates from the Gathering staff and planning teams.
- **Facebook Page:** www.facebook.com/youthgathering

We are registered as a group on the Synod Journey, so all communications from the ELCA will come to the synod office and we will forward pertinent information to you.

Mission Investment Fund

A Youth Ministry Demand Investment account with MIF is a great way to build competitive interest on your fundraising and access your funds at the Gathering. For more information, visit www.mif.elca.org/youthministry

Questions

The Synod Journey Planning Team is here to walk with you as you prepare for the Journey! Don't hesitate to contact us with questions – no question is too small! Below are email addresses and phone numbers to best direct your questions:

Registration, Housing and General Questions:

Catherine Anderson: 218-724-4424 or Catherine.Anderson@nemnsynod.org

Adult Leader Training Questions:

Laura Anderson: 218-879-4647 or laura.zion.youth@gmail.com

Forms and Payment Questions:

Marilyn Hull: 218-724-4424 or SynodJourney@nemnsynod.org (email is best to reach Marilyn)
Marilyn is serving as the Administrative Assistant for the Synod Journey and will be handling all the processing/verification of your registration, payments, covenants, forms, background checks and more. She is not fulltime, so it may take a couple days for her to respond to your questions.

Please DO NOT contact the ELCA Youth Gathering office with your questions! We have a very unique group, and their answers might not pertain to you!