



April 6, 2011

Dear Youth Leaders & Pastors:

Very soon, you will be receiving a packet of information about **Saints Journeying with Saints**

([saintsjourneyingwithsaints.org](http://saintsjourneyingwithsaints.org)). This packet contains important information about our synod's journey to the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering together.

We hope that you will choose to participate in **Saints Journeying with Saints** but, whether your congregation chooses to travel with the synod group or go it alone, the time to begin preparations is NOW!



There are some important changes in store for the Gathering as we head back to New Orleans in July of 2012. One of the most significant will be the special focus of the Gathering as a way to encourage and challenge young people to live out and speak about their faith, especially once they come home. This time, more than ever before, the adult leaders (formerly known as chaperones) will be called upon to lead discussions and help with small group activities. The Practice Discipleship day of The Gathering for our synod group will be led entirely by the adults from our synod, led by Rev. Beth Westphal (synod coach). She will assign tasks to all the adult leaders based on their gifts and comfort level.

Another change for this Gathering is that all participants from each synod will be housed together in the same hotel, regardless of whether you arrive with **Saints Journeying with Saints** or in separate groups.

In preparation for the expanded role of our adult leaders, we will be offering a series of training events between now and the 2012 Gathering. These “Building Bridges in Youth Ministry” training events will be held free of charge to all congregations in the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod in the coming months. The events will be a mix of “face-to-face” trainings as well as online webinars that you and other youth ministry leaders in your area can participate in.

The “Building Bridges in Youth Ministry” trainings are for all youth ministry leaders, whether you are planning on attending the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering or not! However, for those groups that are planning on attending the 2012 Gathering in New Orleans, these trainings will be a great resource for your leaders!

The second half of each training event will focus on information and insight for **Saints Journeying with Saints** as well as time for general questions about The Gathering. Remember, these sessions are designed to train your adult leaders. The leaders will then return to their congregations to meet with youth and parents.

We would love to see each congregation that is considering sending youth to the 2012 Gathering represented at one of the Spring training events.

The Spring training event schedule is:

<b>Wednesday, May 11</b>	St. Paul Lutheran Church 309 Baldwin St. Morgantown, WV 26505	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
<b>Saturday, May 14</b>	Grace Lutheran Church 5 Pine St. Petersburg, WV 26847	1:00 -3:30 p.m.
<b>Sunday, May 15</b>	St. Mark Lutheran Church 141 Kruger St. Wheeling, WV 26003	2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Monday, May 16** Trinity Lutheran Church 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
1600 Kanawha Blvd East  
Charleston, WV 25311

**Thursday, June 2** Trinity Lutheran Church 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
1646 Pitzers Chapel Road  
Martinsburg, WV 25403

If you would like one of the **Saints Journeying with Saints** Team members to visit your congregation, please contact Rev. Beth Westphal or Marcie Woloshan.

Also, please feel free to contact us with any questions:

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