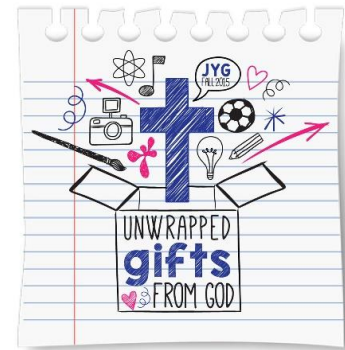




Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Living in God's amazing grace



Please pass this letter and materials on to youth ministry leaders in your congregation as it contains important registration information for the Junior Youth Gatherings.

Dear Youth Workers and Pastors,

We invite you bring your junior high youth to our synod's annual Junior High Youth Gatherings (JYG).

To aid our congregations in their confirmation/affirmation of baptism ministry, the JYG theme focuses on core ideas and concepts in the catechism. This year's theme, "**UnwRapped**", will be an exploration of spiritual gifts and the concept of vocation. Our musical guest and keynote speaker is Agape, a widely-known Christian Hip-Hop artist. He performed at the 2015 ELCA National Youth Gathering in Detroit.

From Agape's website, www.hiphopoutreach.com

"Combining rapping, dancing, storytelling and his fluency in Spanish, AGAPE* connects with his listeners in a way that they really "get it". His energy is contagious, and his stories of faith transcend differences. Even those who do not normally enjoy hip-hop, find themselves dancing to his music and captivated by his unique presentation of the Gospel. AGAPE* brings an authentic approach by translating the theological depth of his seminary training into simple songs and stories that can be understood by every listener. His passion is to bring together people of all backgrounds and let them know about God's love for the whole world."

Youth in **grades 6, 7, 8 & 9** are invited to attend JYG with their adult leaders. Some congregations confirm young people in their 9th grade year. As a congregational leader, please invite the grades of youth that make most sense for your context.

Two one-night gatherings will be held back to back, October 9 & 10, 10 & 11, 2015. Congregations will be able to register for their preferred gathering, but **space is limited, so register early!** The JYG events will be held at Refreshing Mountain Camp again in Stevens, PA, Lancaster County.

Two leaders from our synod, Beth Way from St. Andrew, Audubon, and Pastor Erika Wesch from Little Zion, Telford, are leaders of the planning team and will serve as the gathering managers. The synod office will remain the hub for registration and details coming to adult participants.

Save money and register early! To facilitate our need to obtain firm numbers in a timely manner, we are offering an **Early Bird discount**. The cost of the gathering is **\$115 if you register on or before September 25, 2015**. After September 25th, the cost will be \$125. Scholarships are available and the application form can be found at www.sepayouth.org on the Resources page. **Registration opens August 18th and closes October 2nd** or when the gatherings are full. Our registration software, Citrix,

will send an email confirmation when your registration is received into the system. Please check your spam account if you do not receive it within 24 hours.

Information and instructions for online registration can be found on our synod youth ministry web site - www.sepayouth.org. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is due at registration. Your initial payment can be made online with a credit card or you can mail in a check. All participants must also complete and return a medical release form and a gathering covenant, which have been posted online. All registration questions can be directed to Carrie Johnston, youthministry@sepa.org.

To help you in the registration process, you will need the following information when you register your participants:

- Name
- Graduation year
- Gender
- T-shirt size
- Special needs (including dietary)
- E-mail addresses (required for adults, requested for youth)
- Do any adults going from your congregation want to be small group leaders?

According to SEPA Synod Safety Policies, **ALL adult leaders attending the event must follow the state mandated guidelines for volunteers, detailed information regarding this may be found at http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/C_135249.pdf**. All background checks are due to the synod office by **October 2, 2015**. These checks are being done to *keep you and your youth safe!*

We hope to see you at our Junior Youth Gatherings in 2015!

In Christ,

The Rev. Erika Wesch
Pastor, Little Zion Lutheran, Telford