



youth + family ministry

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD, ELCA

Dear youth leaders, rostered ministers, and families,

For more than two decades, our synod has been committed to providing high-quality weekend events for young people throughout the year. We have heard countless stories of how these events have helped shape the faith lives of teenagers. As our Lutheran Youth Organization has grown, we have been committed to hosting events that are not only *for* youth, but *by* youth, thanks to the gifts and dedication of the students in our high school leadership development program. I am always extraordinarily proud to say that I serve youth and families in Delaware and Maryland!

As you may have noticed, the prices for FreeRide and RoadTrip have increased more significantly this year than in past years. Costs are rising in nearly every area of our event life: truck rentals, gas, supplies, outside services, and more. The venues where we host our events have been incredibly generous with us, and have committed to helping us keep housing and meal costs as low as possible, but we have experienced slight rate increases, and we expect that will continue to be the case. We have looked into other venues to see if we could experience cost savings by moving our events, but we have not been able to find spaces that would be able to hold events of our size, or provide the same level of service as we currently experience at NorthBay and the Clarion.

While the cost of FreeRide and RoadTrip are set at \$250 per person for the 2019-2020 year, we are actively exploring ways to decrease this cost in future years. This year, it is important to know the following things:

- We continue to offer the opportunity for any youth participant to apply for scholarships. This year, we will be offering awards in the amount of \$100 or \$200, with the amount selected by the applicant. We hope this will encourage conversation among the family, youth leader, and rostered ministers about the level of need for the applicant, and also invite the congregation to help make up the difference between the scholarship and the rest of the event cost.
- On the registration form, your congregation will have the opportunity to make a donation to the youth event scholarship fund. We know that not all congregations are able to make a donation, but we are hoping those that can will give generously to help offset the cost for others.
- We strongly encourage congregations to help support their youth by helping cover the cost of attending an event. In some congregations, this is accomplished through the budget. In others, individual members might give an additional offering toward youth event registration fees. Whatever works best for your congregation, please consider exploring ways to keep costs low for families who might attend.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I am grateful for your continued support of Youth + Family Ministry in our synod, and I look forward to seeing you at our events!

Peace,

Deacon Julie Stecker

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