

Dear Parents and Guardians of our Youth,

Winter Retreat is a week from tomorrow, and we cannot wait for our adventure in the mountains with the youth. It's not too late to sign your youth up! Thanks for reading the following information to learn more about the theme for the weekend, logistics, those fun medical release forms we need to keep everyone safe, and a top secret request.

Seek First the Kingdom

At FBCP, we spend a lot of time talking about our call to bring about God's kingdom in Pasadena as it is in Heaven. This year's retreat will provide a deeper look at what it means to seek God's kingdom and the difference between a kingdom and a castle. Castles are meant to keep some people in and the rest out, but the Kingdom of God is inclusive and beautiful beyond our imagination. We have created immersive and reflective experiences for our youth to explore what it means to join God in Kingdom work by loving others and themselves well. Because it's Martin Luther King Jr. Day that Monday, it's even more appropriate that we reflect on expansive and restrictive views of God's kingdom. Mark Fields will be our speaker throughout the retreat, and he brings a ton of experience working with youth from diverse backgrounds as a director for Young Life in Pasadena. I'm honored to call him friend. Warren Tang (husband of Pastor Leslie!) will be leading worship, so, needless to say, the music will be fantastic and his presence will only make our time more special. What a lineup!

Collaboration is the Kingdom

This year we joined two other churches to plan our retreat (Claremont United Methodist Church and First United Methodist Church of Pasadena), so I've been meeting with their youth pastors to design the experience from the ground up. It's been a beautiful example of kingdom work as the three of us collaborated. Our churches share enough important values to make the work exciting and compelling, but we are different enough that we also have distinct perspectives and traditions to share with one another. That all seems fitting. Kingdom work is not about making everyone the same; on the contrary, it's about engaging with others so that we might understand something outside of ourselves. Each of our youth groups will bring different understandings of identity and faith with enough common ground to have really meaningful discussions and interactions. We can't wait for them to get together and collaborate as the adults have already been doing!

Logistics

As a reminder, the retreat takes place January 18-20th. We will meet at FBCP on Saturday at 8:00 AM to load up the cars for an 8:30 AM departure. We will have some light breakfast foods for youth as well. You can bring your youth and all their stuff to the side driveway of the church on Holly Street (you will see us there!). We will return on Monday at 1 PM, but I will text you with any updates about our return if we hit traffic.

Packing

[Here](#) is a packing list. Please make sure your youth has warm clothing (jeans in the snow are not warm!). If you need help getting anything for your youth, please let me know. I have some extra sleeping bags and various items that they can use if needed. Please note that youth will have the wonderful chance to disconnect from technology while we are up there, but you will be able to reach any three FBCP adult chaperones by phone. The address for the campsite is 3191 Radford Camp Road, Angelus Oaks, CA 92305. You can check out the camp online at www.campskymeadows.com

Medical and Liability Release Forms

Please make sure you [fill out this online release form](#). The great news is that this form is good for a year to cover all FBCP youth activities in 2020! We must have these forms completed before we leave Pasadena, so please **submit yours by Friday, January 17th**.

One Final and SECRET Request

During the retreat, the youth will take time to reflect on the unique ways God has created them. Would you take a few moments to write a brief letter to your youth telling them two or three things you especially love about how God has made them? You can email it to me or give it to me in person (secretly!) when you drop off your youth that morning. We will surprise them with these letters during the weekend.

Feel free to reach out with any questions.

With joy and gratitude,

Pastor Lindsay