

TEENS OF FAITH

Faith Memorial Church

Greetings Parents,

I certainly hoped that by now everything youth related would be back to normal! Honestly, I would just be okay with having some level of control over the future of our events. But, as all of us are keenly aware, there are others dictating much of our freedom for little while longer. Things will change, but until they do, we are living in limbo land.

This is not a welcome break for me. I enjoy and am motivated by the rhythm of weekly ministry. There is no substitute for community. However, I also feel that this time has been used by God to slow some of us down and to stop the dissonance of distraction. I have certainly been afforded the opportunity to reevaluate the essentials of youth ministry and the importance of personal devotion.

Although the timeline for normal engagement with each other is somewhat unknown, we cannot delay planning for upcoming events. We must keep moving forward with the expectation that last-minute changes may be necessary. Many organizations and youth event organizers are making drastic changes to their operations in order to provide meaningful summer opportunities for teens while accommodating the ever-changing nature of current events.

Within the next week, I will be meeting with others from our denomination and OCU to decide the fate of Mount of Praise and Teens of Praise Camp. Teens of Praise is currently scheduled for June 23-28. The speaker, worship band, and camp team are already in place, but even if it is determined safe to come together as groups by that time, we must also consider the hesitation that many will have to resuming activity as normal.

Fortunately for our group, we have booked a late summer **mission trip opportunity!** At the close of last year, I scheduled a trip with **LeaderTreks on July 26th – August 1st to Dayton, Ohio.** Actually, a focus group of teens from Faith decided on this particular experience. This trip was presented to the whole group on a couple of different occasions at the start of this year. Then the virus came. All youth leaders have been waiting on word from various organizations regarding the future of summer trips.

Our mission organization, along with others, have not canceled July and August trips up to this point. LeaderTreks has informed youth leaders that a trip can be cancelled without penalty up to 30 days before its start date. This is, of course, very unusual. I have not used LeaderTreks before. I talked at length with many mission organizations at the National Youth Ministry Convention. I was most impressed with LeaderTreks approach to community engagement and focus on participant spiritual and leadership development.

Our particular trip is called the Urban Adventure Program. Different from a mission trip where you might work on one project, the Urban Adventure Program allows the youth group to partner with a few different community organizations throughout the week. Participants receive an all-encompassing view of how a city reaches out in various ways to its community. Also unique to this program, only ONE youth group is on-site each week.

With no other youth groups on site, the little travel that is required for our trip, and the late July scheduled dates, I feel that we have a unique opportunity to actually move forward with an amazing summer experience that many groups are not able to have. Although plans can change, we must initiate necessary preliminary planning. There are **15 spots** total to be filled for this trip. Within the next two weeks (**May 9th deadline**), I need everyone interested in going to sign-up by making a **\$25 deposit**. Should the trip be cancelled, you will receive a full refund of whatever funds have been paid.

The total cost of the trip will only be **\$225**. This, of course, is not the actual cost. With the cancellation of the Spring Retreat - we had more teens from Faith signed up for Spring Retreat this year than ever before - and other events over the last few weeks, we have extra funds to use for this mission trip. I know that signing up for this trip may take a significant amount of faith with some hesitation. As I think back at our international trips to places like Honduras, there are always the "unknowns" that must be worked through.

We are going to proceed in the weeks and months to come with much prayerful wisdom. I ask that all of you began to prepare for the fruitful ministry that God has planned for this summer. There are already 5 people signed up for the mission trip, and after May 16th, I will open this opportunity to teens from smaller CCCU churches that are looking for a mission opportunity this summer. Much more information and forms will be disseminated to the participants who sign up and make a deposit.

As always, feel free to call or text me at 740-415-7053 with any questions or concerns. Know that you and all our Faith families are being prayed for often. It is our prayer that this is a time of healing, maturing, growing in grace, and renewed appreciate for the community of believers and our freedom to come together for worship. We are the church, the body of Christ.

Sincerely,

Aaron



Mission Trip 2020

- LeaderTreks Urban Adventure
- Dayton, Ohio
- July 26th – August 1st
- \$225 / person
- \$25 deposit due May 5th / Can pay online!
- Cost includes all meals and extra activities
- Accommodations in church setting
- <https://www.leadertreks.org/mission-trips/dayton-mission-trip/>