



**A PLACE WHERE
ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN
FIND SPACE AT THE TABLE**

WORSHIP · FELLOWSHIP · GROWTH

Refuge Youth Retreat

February 21-23, 2020 at [West River Retreat Center](#) - 5100 Chalk Point Rd, West River, MD 20778

A weekend for 6-12th grade youth to retreat from the everyday in a secure space getting closer to God.

Refuge Youth Retreat's planning team unites members of various United Methodist Churches throughout the Baltimore Washington Conference. While our home congregations are at different stages of the discernment process for the inclusion of LGBTQIA individuals, the leadership team of Refuge Youth Retreat is united in welcoming all people into full participation and leadership regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, nation of origin, immigration status, socio-economic status, and political ideology.

2020 Theme: Refuge

Theme Verse: *Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. (NLT)*

Registration: Register online at [refugemd.com](#) starting September 1, 2019.

Register as an individual or as a group. If you are part of a youth group that is attending, we recommend you register as a group. Space is limited and is on a first come first serve basis.



GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Arrival time should be on Friday from **7 – 8 PM**.
- Departure time is on Sunday after lunch, no later than **1 PM**
- Only paid registered guests are permitted on the grounds during your stay.
- We do not allow infants or children under the age of 10 during the retreat.
- The cost for Refuge Youth Retreat will be **\$160 for each participant** for Early Bird pricing. Fee increases to \$180 after November 1, 2019. This covers the cost of lodging, all retreat activities, 5 meals, T-shirt, and materials.
- The \$60 retreat deposit per individual must be paid **at the time of registration**.
- The retreat balance must be paid by **January 24, 2020**.

Accommodations and Grounds:

- Lodging – There are 5 log-style lodges, each sleeping 32 people. Each lodge has eight separate bedrooms with bunk beds, a furnished central meeting room and conveniently-located bath facilities. Three of the five lodges offer a snack area with refrigerator, microwave and coffee pot. One of the lodges is handicapped-accessible.
- Activities - Weather permitting, we plan to do have available for Saturday Afternoon the Giant Swing, Climbing Wall, and The Corinthian Trail. All participants will not be able to do all of the activities, but will get to pick and choose based on availability. Refunds will not be issued due to inclement weather/not getting your activity choice. See <http://www.bwccampsandretreats.com/westriver/retreats-events/activities/> for more information on these activities!
- Please do not rearrange the furniture in any areas without permission.
- Please do not enter other's cabins, kitchens or other private buildings.
- We ask that all guests adhere to the following while at West River Center: 1) Be kind to the people you're with. This means extending the utmost in courtesy and respect to those with whom you share the site. 2) Be kind to the place where you are. This means caring for the buildings and grounds, using equipment appropriately, and respecting the facilities and grounds around you. If you need to post items on walls or doors, PLEASE use only blue painters tape. Duct tape and regular masking



tape damage the finishes on doors and walls. Remove ALL tape and residue before you leave.

- Please park in the main parking lot and overflow lot (at pool) only. West River or Refuge Youth Retreat cannot be responsible for damage to vehicles due to falling limbs. The areas by the lodges are designated as Loading and Unloading ONLY.
- Please remember to lock your vehicles. Refuge Youth Retreat is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal property.
- West River Center recycles! Please make use of the recycling receptacles in each building.
- Prior to your departure, spend a few minutes gathering the trash generated by your group. Place it in a large bag and leave it by the back door. DO NOT place trash outside except in the dumpster in the main parking lot. We would ask that you take any potentially smelly trash (leftover food, snacks) to the dumpster. Please close all windows and turn off all lights.
- Pets are not permitted on grounds. Notify us in advance if service animal accommodations are requested.

Meals and Food:

- Meals are prepared by the West River staff and served cafeteria style.
- Shoes and clothing must be worn at all times.
- After the meals, we ask that you do not take any food or dishes from the dining hall.
- If guests in your group have specific dietary needs, please notify refugeyouthretreat@gmail.com as early as possible, but at least 4 weeks prior to the retreat, and West River will do their best to accommodate their needs.



CODE OF CONDUCT:

To provide the best experience, all in attendance agree to the following:

- I realize that I am an important part of Refuge Youth Retreat. I commit to a sense of caring for others as was taught by the example of Christ's love for all people. I will show respect to all participants from all churches.
- I will seek to be open and honest with each other. Refuge is a place to take off our masks, be ourselves, and be accepted for who we are.
- I commit to giving each other grace and not judging one another. I will respect the spiritual growth of all participants in all scheduled events, which are designed to make the most of my retreat experience.
- Negativity weighs us down, so strive to communicate in a way that is filled with hope and encouragement.
- I will not act or behave in a way that creates significant distractions or disruptions to other participants or staff.
- I will be alert to any potential safety risks and take action to prevent injury to other participants or myself.
- To respect others, I will not use tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vaping, illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, knives or weapons of any kind while on retreat.
- I will support the retreat staff by encouraging my group's youth and adults to follow the Code of Conduct and schedules.
- I will respect the privacy of others by not entering into private areas of cabins not assigned to me.
- To respect the people of the community and other campers from diverse denominations, I will dress and behave modestly.
- I will respect others by avoiding inappropriate sexual activity. I will not engage in sexual misconduct, which can include inappropriate comments, gestures, or physical contact.
- I have read and understand this Code of Conduct. It is out of respect for God, myself, and others that I abide by these rules. If I violate these rules, I may be denied the privilege of participating. I may be asked to leave (without reimbursement of expenses) at the request of my group leader or the Refuge Youth Retreat Staff.



Health Care and Emergencies:

- There is no Nurse on duty. Groups should provide their own First Aid kit & transportation to a hospital should the need arise. Groups must provide their own adults currently certified in first aid and CPR, who are responsible for the health needs of the group. Phone numbers and locations of local EMS providers, clinics and hospitals should be acquired before you attend.
- Groups are responsible for gathering and maintaining information on all members of the group that includes name, address, emergency contact names & numbers, and any allergies/health conditions/restrictions. For minors without a parent/guardian on site, group leaders should also have a signed permission to seek emergency treatment. Group leaders are responsible to inform Refuge Youth Retreat and West River Retreat Center of any allergies or restrictions of their group that may affect camp services provided (i.e. food service, program activities).
- Groups are responsible for informing Retreat Host of an emergency.
- The Safe Sanctuary policy for this event is that each participating group must follow the Safe Sanctuary policy from their local congregation. Individual registrants will fall under [Asbury UMC Arnold's Safe Sanctuary Policy](#) ← Click Here

Photograph/Video – Parental Permission

- During the Refuge Youth Retreat we may photograph or video the youth and then use these images for public viewing including the website and promotional materials including social media. Your child's name will not be mentioned. If you do not wish to have your child's image appear in such things as photographs or a video, please notify the Registrar in writing. It is assumed that parents and guardians give their consent unless such notification is received.



Frequently Asked Questions:

Can I send my youth without a leader? Yes, however our hope is youth groups will be bringing their own leaders. We have a limited number of spaces available for youth to attend without a leader. For instance a church doesn't have a viable youth group but has 1-2 youth they'd like to send, please attend. Another example would be that a youth who is marginalized in some way discovers Refuge Youth Retreat but doesn't feel accepted at a church, they may register as an individual.

What is included in the cost? The cost for Refuge Youth Retreat will be \$160 for each participant. Fee increases to \$180 after November 1, 2019. This covers the cost of lodging, all retreat activities, 5 meals, T-shirt, and materials.

How many adults can attend with youth? This is a *youth* retreat. Do not bring extra adults who are just looking for a weekend away from home. Bring the required number of adults to be compliant with your Safe Sanctuary policy.

How are youth being roomed? For this retreat, youth attending with their youth group will be assigned rooms by their Youth Leader. Youth attending without a youth group will be assigned rooms together. We have rooms for those who identify as male, female, and non-binary.

Does everyone need to participate in all activities? Yes.

Will middle school youth be grouped with high school Youth? Yes. We can all learn a lot from each other.

How are leaders being screened? Each church is responsible for following their own Safe Sanctuary guidelines.

Can we pay less if we can only be there for Saturday? No. The cost of the retreat is for the full retreat and everyone is to participate in all activities.

Do leaders pay the same cost as youth? Yes. Each person attending pays the same cost. Individual churches may elect to defer costs at their own discretion.

Can I get money refunded if someone can't attend due to illness? No. We can not offer refunds as Refuge commits to the facility for a certain number of attendees and won't be refunded.

Are cell phones allowed? The use of cell phones during scheduled activities is NOT permitted. A goal of the retreat is fostering the youth's relationship with God. The planning team believes this can more effectively be done without our cell phones. If a youth needs to bring a cell phone, call parents/guardians when you arrive and then turn it off and put it in your bag for the duration of the weekend. Individual groups are responsible for enforcing this



policy with their own groups. *Exception: An adult leader may bring a cell phone and keep it on their person for emergency use only if prescribed by their Safe Sanctuary Policy.*

How will medications be handled? There is no Nurse on duty. Groups should provide their own First Aid kit & transportation to a hospital should the need arise. Groups must provide their own adults currently certified in first aid and CPR, who are responsible for the health needs of the group.

Groups are responsible for gathering and maintaining information on all members of the group that includes name, address, emergency contact names & numbers, and any allergies/health conditions/restrictions. For minors without a parent/guardian on site, group leaders should also have a signed permission to seek emergency treatment. Group leaders are responsible to inform Refuge Youth Retreat and West River Retreat Center of any allergies or restrictions of their group that may affect camp services provided (i.e. food service, program activities).

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What message will the speaker share? The 2020 Theme is “Refuge” and the theme verse is *Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.* (NLT)

The message the speaker will share is intended to create an atmosphere that is inclusive and be about fostering the youth's relationship with God. While we are an inclusive retreat, the main speaker topic will not necessarily be about these issues.

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SAMPLE Schedule:

FRIDAY

- 7:00 Arrival and Check-in
- 8:10 Welcome & Orientation
- 8:30 Students: Team Icebreaker Games
- 9:00 Meeting #1 (*Worship and Speaker talk*)
- 10:30 Campfire
- 11:30 Small Groups (*Youth Group Leaders use speaker provided questions and determine how to break up their groups*)
- 12:00 Cabin Time / Curfew

SATURDAY

- 7:30 Leaders' Meeting
- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 Meeting #2 (*Worship and Speaker talk*)
- 10:00 Small Groups
- 10:30 Breakout Session #1
- 11:45 Group Photo
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Afternoon Activities
- 5:30 Dinner
- 6:15 Breakout Session #2
- 7:30 Meeting #3 (*Worship and Speaker Talk*)



9:00 Small Groups

9:30 Beach Party!

11:00 Free Time

12:00 Cabin Time / Curfew

SUNDAY

7:30 Leaders' Meeting

8:00 Breakfast

8:45 Pack-up

9:00 Breakout Session #3

10:00 Small Groups

10:15 Meeting #4 (*Worship, Speaker and Communion*)

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Groups Depart



Suggested Packing List:

Bible (a hard copy, not one on your phone)

Flashlight

Spending money (Camp Store)

Extra Sneakers (likely to get a pair dirty and need a backup)

WARM clothing for weather

Pajamas

Bedding (twin sheets/blanket or sleeping bag)

Pillow

Toiletries: toothpaste + toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo, soap, comb, brush, etc.

Towels

Wash cloths

Warm jacket

Rain gear, poncho + umbrella

Small alarm clock

Shower Shoes

Beach Attire -- i.e. Hawaiian shirt, modest swimsuit, beach towel draped over shoulder, flower lei, etc. Remember it's February (brrr) at a Christian retreat. Skimpy swimsuits/clothing will not be permitted for any gender identities.

DO NOT bring pets, alcoholic beverages, fireworks or illegal substances. Any individual or group found to be in possession of these while on site will be asked to leave immediately.