



Hey everyone!

Spring Retreat 2024 is coming up, and we are so excited for this weekend. May 3-5th we will be at Camp Joy El in Greencastle, PA for a weekend of worship, deepening connection, small groups, and fun!

Why go on a retreat? Well, daily life is noisy. Even though our lives may all look different, we each have lots of distractions, responsibilities, worries, and hopes. Often life can get so loud that it can become difficult to listen for and to God. Getting away for a weekend makes space for us to refocus on God and to connect deeper with each other. God is doing good things, and we want to teach ourselves to keep an ear out for that. Retreat is one way we do that. Spring retreat is also tons of fun! I hope GCN Youth students and friends can be a part of this weekend!

#### **More Info:**

This weekend is open to Middle and High School students (6th-12th grade). We will meet at GCN Friday evening and return Sunday afternoon. We will have 4 worship services (Friday night, Saturday morning, Saturday night, and Sunday morning) and times in small groups to dive deeper. We'll play group games, have a Saturday night variety show, and have access to fun afternoon activities like go karts, a zip line, and open gym time. There have been so many fun stories that come from retreat, and I hope students will join in on the fun again or for the first time this year.

#### Speaker:

Derek Parson, the worship pastor at Bel Air Church, will be our speaker. He has a phenomenal word from God on his heart, and we are in for a real treat. Pastor Derek will be leading us through a conversation about faith. Who is God? What does God think of us? How can we connect with God at retreat and in regular life? We'll get to hear messages about those questions talked about by Pastor Derek plus talk ourselves in small groups.

#### Small groups:

Speaking of small groups, our fantastic GCN Youth leaders are excited to care for your students! They regularly lead small groups at youth group, but retreat is a unique space for groups to dig deeper.

Our youth leaders are also committed to creating a safe environment for all students. That means that they will be following GCN Youth's student safety plan and will reinforce student behavior to be safe as well. For more info about our safety plan, contact Pastor Lauren.

How to Sign Up:

Registration is open now! If your student registers by April 7th, they are eligible for the early-bird discount! If your student invites a friend, both the student and the friend are eligible for the bring-a-friend discount!

Early-Bird Rate: \$120

Early-Bird + Bring-A-Friend Rate: \$105

Regular Rate: \$135

Registering by April 15th guarantees that you will get a t-shirt!

**HEAR THIS:** We don't want money to be the reason a student does not join retreat. We believe that God will provide, and we want to partner with you if money is a problem. Reach out to me (Pastor Lauren) with any questions or needs.

Registration is on our church website under the "Spring Retreat" calendar item. Payments can be made online or by check. Please turn in checks by April 21st at the latest. You can mail them to the church (8921 Warfield Road Gaithersburg, MD 20882) or you can give them to Pastor Lauren in person.

I have this sense that God wants to not only be present with us at retreat, but that God wants to totally awaken something in the lives of these students and leaders that will have a lasting impact. That is not reliant on whether your student has previously participated in youth activities or has a history with the Church. God wants to meet us in a new way, and I think retreat is a beautiful way to say "here we are, God".

You all are in my prayers. Those are not just words. I pray for the students who are here, the students who are close by, and the students who are not yet here. God loves them deeply, and GCN Youth would be thrilled to welcome them in.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this retreat.

[Pastorlauren@gburnaz.org](mailto:Pastorlauren@gburnaz.org) or (410)459-3635

Pastor Lauren