**Youth Ministry Opportunity**

August 1, 2014

Dear Pastor,

Since becoming Bishop, one of my genuine joys has been the opportunity to interact with more of the people in “Gary’s World.” I have had the privilege in the last year to connect with parents, congregational youth staff, LOMO staff and campers, and with children at many of our Amazing Grace Day Camps.

With the advent of the Director of Youth & Family Ministry position six years ago, Youth & Family Ministry has become a priority in our synod. I wish to both continue and build on this tradition.

As our young people strive to grow up whole in a broken world, there is a need for youth to connect with their parents and/or grandparents in a meaningful way. I believe enhancing family communication through faith formation strengthens families and provides a solid foundation for our youth.

Imagine parents & grandparents with their younger family members growing closer together as they laugh, learn, and develop faith skills. These faith skills are specifically designed to help youth understand their purpose, how to stand strong against temptation, and over time grow them into faithful leaders for the church.

With that in mind, I am pleased to announce the start of a new initiative entitled, **“Faith Advance.”**

Faith Advance is a four-event experience designed for 5th through 8th grade students and their parents and/or grandparents.

I plan to offer the first synod-wide Faith Advance experience during the first half of calendar year 2015. All synod congregations are welcome to participate. I have chosen to hold the first Faith Advance in Central Ohio, as a result of congregations in that area asking for such of an event. Future Faith Advances will follow and locations will be selected based on geographical interest.

There is no limit on how many participants can register from any one congregation; however, overall space will be limited. Please see the enclosed flier for more information and for registration details. Questions can be directed to our Director of Youth & Family Ministry, Gary Pecuch. He can be reached at the synod office at 614-464-3532 or by email at [gpecuch@southernohiosynod.org](mailto:gpecuch@southernohiosynod.org).

I hope and pray that you will consider involving your congregation in a Faith Advance. This will be a beginning venture as we strive to raise and equip the next generation of synod youth. We Are Church Together!

In Christ,

**Suzanne Dillahunt**

**Bishop, Southern Ohio Synod**

**FAITH ADVANCE 2015**

Each Southern Ohio Synod congregation is encouraged to become involved in **“Faith Advance.”** Faith Advance is a four-event experience designed to provide youth and parents and/or grandparents an opportunity to grow closer together as young people further their faith formation. In addition, youth will acquire necessary faith skills designed to prepare them for the good works the Lord has prepared in advance for them to do.

As events build on each other, participants are asked to make a commitment to attend all four events of the Faith Advance experience.

**Who:** For youth 5th through 8th grades, their parent(s) and/or their grandparent(s).

**What:** Faith Advance Participants will havefun together in the presence of the Lord **while developing** Building Relationship Skills, a Biblical self-esteem, a personal faith web, an attitude of gratitude, written standards to live by, self-awareness, a heart for service and much more!

**When:** Participants are asked to make a commitment from February to April 2015.

**Where:** Kickoff event will take place at KDB (similar to Dave & Busters) located in Easton Town Center. The remaining events will be at David Lutheran Church, in Canal Winchester.

**Why:** Here are some participant thoughts from the pilot experience…

*"Thanks so much for the Faith Advance weekend! My kids are psyched to come again."*

Jen Jarman, Director of Faith Formation, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Cincinnati.

*“What an absolutely wonderful experience! The kids and parents raved about it all the way home. The Faith Advance program is a tremendous gift.*“

Carrie Hosack, Youth & Family Director, Zion Lutheran, Valley City.

*"Thanks for offering the Faith Advance. It was an awesome event. People are still talking about it and expressing their pleasure with the whole experience.”*

Matt Pittman, Youth Director, Advent Lutheran, Columbus.

*“What a great program. [Gary is] really, really good at this; in any normal situation we'd never find or afford somebody of [his] caliber. We're very lucky to have [him] around.”*

Lee, Church Council Member, Faith Lutheran, Wilmington

*“I had to send a note to let you know we had a great time at the Faith Advance. My daughter told me that ‘this was the best weekend ever!”* Sue, Parent, Zion Lutheran, Valley City

**Cost: $100 per family**

**(**Although the true cost of the event is close to $100 per person, we are hoping that home congregations will supplement the event costs at $50 per family, with the Synod to cover the remainder of the costs such as, staffing, programming, multiple family members).

**Have questions or a special situation? Contact Gary Pecuch at 614-464-3532 or gpecuch@southernohiosynod.org.**

**FAITH ADVANCE**

**Program Timetable**

**Early August 2104:** Initial information mailed out to all congregations

**September 15,2014:** Registration opens and remains open until all spots are filled

**November 1, 2014:** Detailed information is sent out to registrants

**February 7, 2015**

**Faith Advance Kickoff Event**

KDB, Easton Town Center

Saturday 10:30 am to 3 pm (meal provided)

Faith Advance participants will be begin their journey learning and growing together while taking time to enjoy the many arcade activities at KDB, Easton.

**February 21, 2015**

**Faith Advance Session II**

David Lutheran, Canal Winchester

Saturday 1:30 to 4:30 pm

Families will have an opportunity to have their picture taken with the Bishop

**March 14, 2015**

**Faith Advance Session III**

David Lutheran, Canal Winchester

Saturday 1:30 to 4:30 pm

**April 18, 2015**

**Faith Advance Session IV**

David Lutheran, Canal Winchester

Saturday 10:00 to 1:30 pm (meal provided)

**Sessions II, III, and IV** will be comprised of developing skills in the area of building relationships, Biblical self-esteem, understanding the concept of love languages, written standards to live by, incorporating spiritual disciplines, an attitude of gratitude, understanding service, prayer, Bible study methods and more

**Faith Advance**

**Registration Form**

Student’s Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Congregation Name, City \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian/Grandparent Information**

(Please circle relationship)

Mother / Stepmother / Guardian / Grandmother Father / Stepfather / Guardian / Grandfather

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cell #:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Cell #:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cell carrier:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Cell carrier:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Knowing the cell carrier (Verizon, AT&T, etc…) enables us to send text messages,**

**via computer, to your cell phone**.

You can register by sending this form to Gary Pecuch at the synod office along with any checks made out to: ***Southern Ohio Synod***. Please include on the memo line: **Faith Advance**. Registration will remain open until all spots are filled.

Attn: Gary Pecuch

Southern Ohio Synod

300 S. Second Street

Columbus OH 43215

**Pastor: Please make copies of this form for multiple families.**