“I’m sorry, we just don’t have any youth.”
This is how many conversations Adam and I have had in our 18 months as the directors of Mt. Cross have started. Thankfully, it’s not where they ended!

Partly, it’s because camp isn’t just for kids! Unlike Trix cereal, we’re for all ages and we have programs for everyone! And partly, it’s because many of you do have maybe one or two or three youth. It’s not that you don’t have them – it’s that you don’t have a critical mass of them in your one congregation.

But if you only have one or two or three youth... how are you supposed to do community and faith formation well?
And that’s where the conversation really started. Because one congregation told us that, and then three congregations, and then twenty congregations all were telling us how difficult it was to do something meaningful in their context for middle school faith formation. Or, they had youth, just not a program that they felt worked well.

So we’re doing something about it at Mt. Cross! Next month, we’re starting our middle school faith formation program.

A few congregations decided to jump in and figure it out with us in this first year. Here’s what it’ll look like:
Youth meet three times to build their cohort (a fall retreat, spring retreat, and summer camp)

In between those retreats, four “project boxes” will be sent out to the congregations.
Each box has 5 projects in it that pass on the Lutheran faith while also engaging the youth with their families, congregations, and communities
Each project corresponds to one of the 5 ELW baptismal promises, as well as some “typical” confirmation material – Bible, theology, vocation, catechism, etc.
It brings together your one or two youth with other congregations’ one or two youth to give them a cohort, but also has a ton of flexibility with the projects that are done in your own time and way throughout the year. It’s a program that is substantial enough you could substitute it for your confirmation program, but open enough that it could be used as a supplement to what you have already.

We’re grateful for the congregations that are working with us this year! If you’d like to be one of those congregations, there’s still time—the first youth retreat is September 20-22 and we need to know numbers by September 10. Otherwise, check back with us about how it’s going and how you can join us in the future!

Our goal at Mt. Cross is to help you do the ministry you need to do. We love all the conversations we’ve had with you so far and are excited for all the conversations and ministry to come!

Rev. Sarah Erickson – Executive Director, Mt. Cross

Do you have a story that you would like to share? Send any Church Together story requests to mic@spselca.org.