



A missional community called to love and live in Christ

Handbook 2026-2027

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Youth Ministry! In this handbook you will find information about youth programs, answers to frequently asked questions, information about trips and ways to support the youth program at Brownson. As detailed as this handbook is, it is important to know that things may change. Please read the weekly email blasts that are sent out and if you are not receiving them, please reach out to me. We will also post updates on the Brownson app and the Brownson Youth Instagram page. Make sure you are connected so you are getting the most up to date information!

I am very much looking forward to a great year and want to thank you for your support and encouragement for me and the youth at Brownson. I hope to build and develop meaningful relationships with and among the youth at Brownson, grow our relationship with God and to help us connect with the greater congregation and community. Never hesitate to reach out if you have questions, concerns or words of encouragement.

Erin Pollock

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About Brownson Youth

Brownson Youth seek to live as Christ's disciples through our ministry, mission and fellowship with one another, with our church and with our community.

We seek to follow His path through five intentions:

- To call young people to be disciples of Jesus Christ.
- To respond to the needs and interests of young people.
- To work together, youth and adults, in partnership.
- To be connected to the whole church, community and the world.
- To include all young people, reaching out and inviting them to belong to the community of faith.

Summer Opportunities

Massanetta Springs- Middle School Retreat- June 24-27, 2027.

Located in the heart of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, Massanetta Springs transforms the faith journey of hundreds of middle schoolers every year. This three-night retreat is specifically created for middle school students who have completed grades 6-8 with worship, recreation, encounter groups, and workshops centered on a theme. Cost is approximately \$450 (scholarships and financial aid are available) and includes programming, housing, meals, t-shirt and transportation. **Registration and fees are due March 14. More information will be shared at the Spring and Summer Preview Meeting on January 10.**

Montreat- High School Retreat- July 25-31, 2027.

Montreat is located in the mountains of North Carolina and, over a six week period in the summer, hosts over 5,000 youth for their annual conferences. Brownson has a long history of participating in their youth conference and many alumni will share that it is one of the most impactful experiences they had during high school. Students who have completed grades 9-12 can participate in the 6 night trip, which includes study, worship and recreation. Cost is approximately \$500 (scholarships and financial aid are available). **Registration and fees are due March 14. More information will be shared at the Spring and Summer Preview Meeting on January 10.**

Appalachian Service Project- Mission Trip- July 11-17, 2027.

This opportunity is open to ALL middle school and high school students involved in Brownson Youth. This weeklong trip provides critical repair to raise homes out of substandard conditions. It empowers youth, connects them with the larger world, helps them build lasting relationships and answers God's call to serve. Cost is approximately \$400 per person (scholarships and financial aid are available). **Registration and fees are due March 14. More information will be shared at the Spring and Summer Preview Meeting on January 10.**

Can I bring a friend? What are policies for their participation?

Absolutely! Friends are always welcome to attend any regular youth event at Brownson. Giving Erin a heads up about it is always a good idea so shoot her a text or an email in advance if possible. For big events, like trips, retreats and over nights we ask that friends attend youth group at least 4 times before the event so that the adults and other youth group members can get to know them. For the really big events (like Montreat, Massanetta and missions trips) we ask that youth be involved for the whole year. We do require a completed emergency form and code of conduct for anyone participating in an off-campus event.

How can Brownson Youth be supported financially?

Every year we hold a Pancake Breakfast for the church. This delicious fundraiser helps raise money for the youth's summer programs. We have three goals with this fundraiser:

1. To significantly lower the cost of the Appalachian Service Project Trip. (\$4,000).
2. To cover activity and food costs for a week at Montreat (\$1,500).
3. To be able to reduce the cost of Massanetta by \$200 for each child participating. (\$1,500)

These big goals will support our youth as they grow, learn, deepen their relationship with Christ and serve those in need. All youth are needed to help with the Pancake Breakfast!

Student Leadership

Youth Elders and Student Leadership Team

Each year, two rising juniors are selected by the youth ministry team to become members of Session as youth elders. Youth Elders serve on Session for one calendar year. They are also part of the Student Leadership Team, which is made up of current and former youth elders (typically 2 juniors and 2 seniors). This team plans youth events, gives feedback, has input in planning, and is a vital part of the youth ministry team at Brownson.

Deepening Discipleship Opportunities

High School Bible Study- "Arise and Shine"

All high school youth are invited to meet at PineScone in Southern Pines from 7:30-8:15 AM on Thursday mornings throughout the school year. This is a time of devotions, prayer and building relationships with and in Christ. We all need a little mid-week pick-me-up so get some coffee, tea, a scone, a sandwich and join us for this time of fellowship and devotions.

Sunday Night Youth Group

Youth Group meets in the youth suite (upstairs in the Cornerstone/Office Building) 5-7pm almost every Sunday night of the school year. A typical night consists of fellowship, games, a meal, a Bible lesson/devotion and small group discussion time. We strive to create a safe and welcoming space for young people to spend time with each other and talk about their faith. We work to make connections to each other and to God. We have fun, we pray, we eat and we grow.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation class is a year-long process that seeks to strengthen understanding of faith and the church. Typically taken in the 8th or 9th grade year, this class dives into big questions of faith and allows youth to explore what they believe through studying Scripture, discussion and service. Each confirmand is assisted by a covenant partner, an adult member of Brownson, who walks beside them throughout the class, offering wisdom, guidance and support.

Sunday Morning- Faith Lab!

Brownson Youth are invited to a new faith formation opportunity on Sunday mornings 9:30-10:30 AM in the youth suite. In Faith Lab! we will explore how our faith connects to music, art, media, service and our greater community. Youth will engage in creative projects, service opportunities, faith conversations and spiritual practices as they learn about how their faith connects to different parts of their lives.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I stay up to date?

1. Weekly youth emails- the BEST way to know what's coming up! If you would like to be added to the email list please let Erin know (youth@brownsonchurch.org).
2. Brownson Youth Instagram- @brownson_youth
3. Call/Text/E-mail Erin Pollock
Cell: 443-223-8930.
Email: youth@brownsonchurch.org

What paperwork is involved?

All participating youth will need to have the emergency information form on file with the youth director. This form provides personal information, medical information, a photography waiver, a transportation release and a communications agreement. This form is mandatory for any youth going to an off-campus event. Pick one up at the Fall or Spring Kickoff or ask Erin for a copy. For overnight trips, a copy of an insurance card must also be provided with any registration materials and the emergency information form.

How does registration work for events and trips?

Registration process:

- Paper registration forms must be mailed or turned in to Erin Pollock. Online registration will be used whenever possible.
- Registrations are not complete without a signed registration form, a completed emergency information form and a deposit (if required).

Payments:

- Payments are due on or before the registration deadline. If payments are late, we may not be able to hold your spot.
- If you know a payment will be late, please communicate with Erin Pollock before the registration deadline to ensure that registration will not be cancelled.

Minimum/Maximum Participants:

- Trips and events may require a minimum or maximum capacity for registration numbers.
- If a trip does not meet the minimum, it will be cancelled, and all money will be refunded.

Cancellation Policy:

- Deposits for trips are non-refundable.
- If you cancel after the registration deadline all monies are non-refundable.
- If space can be filled by someone on the waiting list, payments will be returned minus money lost for changes in registration (late fees).

Accommodations may be made for extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the youth director.

How can the youth get involved?

There are many opportunities for youth to engage in the church outside of youth group. Youth can serve as ushers, help with the kid's ministry, serve donuts at Higher Grounds, or participate in the music ministry. Two youth Elders are elected every year (one boy and one girl) to serve on Session as youth representatives. Bible studies and small groups that meet throughout the week are great ways to connect with other youth, adult volunteers and Christ.

How can parents help?

Many hands make light work, and we expect the parents of the youth to volunteer in some capacity throughout the year. We need help with transportation, or providing meals for Sunday night, or help leading a small group, or chaperoning an off-campus event. If you have a gift (organizing, fundraising, planning, encouraging, creating) then we can use it! Parent volunteer sign-ups will be available at the Fall and Spring Kickoffs and emails will be sent as things arise throughout the year. But perhaps most importantly, parents can be involved by bringing their kids to youth group, encouraging them to connect with their leaders and their peers and by working along with the youth staff and volunteers to guide and grow their children's faith.