

## **Faith Formation Coordinator Report for Council**

**January 17th, 2016**

**- Sara Gross Samuelson -**

### **Families/Young Children**

- Godly Play's reception in worship during Advent was mostly positive. After listening to feedback from leaders and a few parents, it seems that if we are to approach Godly Play in worship again next year, we need to also look at continuing to offer some sort of activity/exploration time for that age group during the 9:30 hour to make it possible for parents to still engage their own faith on Sunday mornings.
- Christmas Eve worships went well, with excellent feedback from families regarding the engagement of our youngest ones in worship. The stars in the sanctuary for Epiphany are from the Christmas Eve service and were created by our families!
- Godly Play in the new year looks a little different, with stories not happening every Sunday and instead there being some Sundays with an extended wondering/response time that will also include a chance for children to engage in an experiential worship experience on their developmental level with songs, prayers, story and hands-on prayer stations. We're calling it "Worship and Wonder" and I am hopeful that this might engage our children in a different way than Godly Play stories so that they might continue to grow in their desire for exploration and curiosity around their faith.
- I've been working with Bethany Lenihan in continuing to grow the families group and look at offering more opportunities for parents to engage with one another both in fellowship and in formative conversation.
- Faith 5 Dinners dinners will continue this year, with one being led by the Mission Action Team around the ritual and practice of Blessings on January 31<sup>st</sup> and another on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Middle/High School**

- Confirmation continues to be led by Pr. Tim and Pr. Jesse from Milwaukie Lutheran. On the Sundays where there is not Faith 5 or a Cluster Youth Event the focus will be on providing opportunity for our middle schoolers to engage in deeper relationship with one another, hoping to lay foundations for further deep conversations to come during their 8<sup>th</sup> grade confirmation process.
- We continue to partner with other churches in our cluster for cluster-wide youth events once a month. This month we are hosting here at West Linn and Jordan Beck will be returning to lead the Cluster Youth in a Theatre of the Oppressed activity. (Jordan was trained as a T.O. facilitator this past summer and is excited to bring back that training to share with the cluster).
- High School events will be streamlined in the New Year. The focus will be on monthly opportunities to engage in fellowship and relationship with some guided check-ins and faith conversation. For example, in February we're going inner tubing on Mt. Hood. I'm also hoping to gather all the seniors to go to lunch and

check in about their upcoming transition as well as host a gathering for Senior Parents to help prepare for our community's milestone blessing of their graduation.

### **Adult**

- I'm currently helping lead one of our Sunday morning Faith Enrichment Hour opportunities, Animate: Practices! Though balancing my time between that and Godly Play has meant that Pr. Donna is leading a few sessions as well.
- I'm working with the Faith Enrichment Team on the plan for Lenten mid-week series (which comes FAST this year!) and beginning wonderings about what happens at the 9:30 hour during sabbatical.
- As mentioned in the above section, I'm hoping to engage parents at some specific stages, one of which is the parents of Seniors this spring. I'm also hoping to collaborate with parents of confirmands on some fellowship and formation opportunities as well as continue to work with the families group in a way that supports the parents in their access to resources, relationship and opportunity for formation.

### **All Generations**

- Faith 5 Dinners continue to happen and I'm hopeful that this might continue to grow as an opportunity to engage our faith across the generations!
- I've launched a special space on the website and am aiming to be more intentional about pointing all generations towards Faith@Home resources for our liturgical seasons. Still on my radar is engaging households in conversations about their use and getting feedback on what more might be helpful in offering this manner of resources to our households.
- The activity table space at the back of worship is something I've taken up with a renewed energy following the Advent season. My aim is to stock the tables (large and small so that ALL SIZES are welcome) with quiet activities that are reflective and prayerful in nature but still engage those among us that receive/listen/observe better when their hands are engaged! I'm hoping to spend some time with others with backgrounds in education thinking critically about how to guide that space and guide our use of it in a way that is both inviting and continues to set our community up for a deep engagement in worship.
- I'm delighted by the beginnings of the public conversations around Karl's letter to the congregation and am hopeful to continue engaging conversation with members and friends around the call process with the support and good courage of the council in engaging the community in this way!