



CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEWSLETTER

ORCHARD RIDGE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

JULY, 2009

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WHAT IS IT ABOUT CHILDREN?

Children are spiritual beings who come to us as gifts from God. Beliefs about the Spiritual Nature of Children include:

1. Children have an innate connection to God.
2. Children have a natural openness to mystery.
3. Children have an amazing capacity for awe.
4. Children are receivers.
5. Children love what is real.
6. Children are wonderfully humble.

(*The Way of the Child*, Wynn McGregor)

Children's innate connection with God and their propensities for spirituality need to be affirmed and nourished. This is our number one priority as we develop programs and experiences for our children and youth at ORUCC.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

We offer a number of ways for our children to be together, build community and grow in their faith. One opportunity is through our **9:00 Sunday School** program. In each one of the classes we strive to offer experiences that are developmentally appropriate for

each age group. Children spend lots of time in hands on activities. We create a space for them with the hope that they will make a connection with God and feel loved and accepted. Children travel with the same two teachers for the whole year. This helps the children develop strong and healthy relationships with adults from our congregation. With parents and children coming regularly to the 9:00 hour (parents enjoying Adult Spiritual Formation programming and/or time connecting with other parents or church folk), friendships are being built, support and care is being given and received, and faith is being deepened. Having Sunday School at 9:00 allows everyone the opportunity to be able to worship at 10:00 and move into that time of worship feeling more prepared and hopefully more attuned to God's Spirit.

WHAT'S BEING OFFERED

The four Sunday School experiences that will be offered at 9:00 this fall are:

Three and Four Year Olds, "The Worship Center"
Kindergarten and First Graders, "Following Jesus"
"The Worship Center" and "Following Jesus" classes are exciting programs that help children experience God while learning about God. They use a sensory-motor style of storytelling as a primary means for encountering God, so God is experienced, not just learned about. They give appropriate freedom, so young children can respond to stories of God through continued working with the story figures and art materials.

Second and Third Graders, "The Way of the Child" and "Learning How to Use My Bible"

The Way of the Child is a wonderful, enriching program that helps children develop their own relationship with God, providing opportunities for children to experience and practice spiritual disciplines to nurture that relationship for a lifetime. After a gathering time where children listen and discuss a Bible story or spiritual discipline, children choose different

reflection stations to go to that all relate to the theme of the day. They choose among the following reflection stations: Gazing, World, Reading, Journaling, Painting, Sand, and Art.

In January, 2010, 2nd and 3rd graders will receive their own Bibles from the church. Then during Sunday School they will learn how to use their Bibles with the hope that the Bible will become their lifelong companion. Through storytelling and activity stations, children will have opportunity to learn about the different stories of the Bible, ask questions, and offer their own perspectives.

Fourth through Sixth Graders, “Exploring Practical Faith Issues”. Children will discuss and explore practical issues including family life, peers, friendships, etc. and how our faith helps us grow and develop in these areas.



CHILDREN'S MUSIC/MOVEMENT/RHYTHM

We are excited to start a children's music ministry program this fall. Julie Mazer has been hired as our Children's Music Director. She will work with children (preschool—middle school) during the **10:00 hour** after the children's moment in worship. She will spend 50 minutes with the children (most likely splitting the children into two groups).

SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION

On Sunday, September 13 we will have our Sunday School registration and orientation meeting at 9:00 a.m. At this time children and parents will learn more about the Sunday School experience, the children's music program, and visit the classrooms.

TUESDAY NIGHT PROGRAMMING

We will continue with Soup and Service on Tuesday night for our elementary/middle school children. We will meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from 6:00 to 7:30 (supper at 6:00, programming at 6:30). Last year we worked on a number of service projects including making fleece blankets, baking for the Ronald McDonald House and we did some drumming with Nani Agbeli.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday School Teachers for the fall include: Julie Luecke, Barbara Stretchberry (three and four year olds)

David Heise, Amy Fewel (Kindergarten, First Grade)
Jeanne McLellan (2nd/3rd graders)

We need one more teacher for 2nd/3rd grade (preferably a male). We need two teachers for 4th-6th grade class.

All the Sunday School rooms are set up by Tammy and ready to go for each week's lesson. Teachers simply need to review the game plan/lesson and be prepared to share that with the children.

We also need two leaders to help with Tuesday Night Programming for the elementary/middle school youth.

Last year we had one age group meet (3rd-6th grade). It has not been decided yet if we should offer two groups for Tuesday night, one for 2nd/3rd grade and the other for 4th-7th. If we decide to offer programming for 2nd/3rd graders we will need two more leaders. Tammy helps to organize the plans for these evenings.

CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of bulletin boards in our Sunday School rooms that would be fun to spice up. Children, youth, parents, families are invited to think up a design and decorate!

NURSERY NEWS

Symone Adeyemo is leaving as our nursery care provider. She will be finishing up her studies at Edgewood this fall. We will miss Symone and her wonderful ministry with our children.

We have hired Sarah Jones, a junior at UW-Madison, who will start Sunday, July 26. She joins Allisa Brown, our other nursery care provider.

Nursery care is provided from 8:30-11:30 a.m. every Sunday morning and will be provided on Tuesday evenings when there are adult programs being offered.

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

The United Church of Christ Wisconsin Conference offers a middle school retreat every fall at Pilgrim Center. The **Knock-Knock Retreat is Friday, November 20-Sunday, November 22.** Parents please put these dates on your calendar and plan for your middle schooler to attend. It's a very fun retreat!

We will continue with Tuesday evening programming for our upper elementary and middle school children. Due to the fact that we only have a few youth in 7th/8th grade, we have decided to wait another year until we offer confirmation. Next fall, 2010, we will then offer our year long confirmation program for 7th-9th graders.

HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

YOUTH SHARING IN WORSHIP

After our youth get back from their mission trip to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi they will be sharing about their trip in worship on **Sunday, August 16.**

YOUTH PLANNING TEAM

A youth team made up of Vaunce Ashby, Bob Ansheles, Jackie Eveland-Psyck, Ken Psyck, Chris Reise will be meeting in the fall to plan and organize youth activities and experiences. We hope to have monthly gatherings for high school youth starting in the fall.

TRU FUNCTION (MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ROCK/PRAISE BAND)

Tru Function will start back up again this fall with rehearsals starting in September. Tru Function rehearses every Sunday from 11:30-1:00 p.m. They play in worship on the first Sunday of the month and on that day rehearse at 8:30 a.m. (not at 11:30).

There is always room for newcomers! So if you are in middle school or high school and have interest in singing or playing an instrument in Tru Function let Tammy or John Pray know.

AUGUST GATHERINGS

In addition to Sunday morning worship, don't miss out on our Church gatherings in August:

Monday, August 17: At Lakeview Park in Middleton. Bring your own supper. There is a "splash" park and play structure for kids and adults to enjoy. ☺

Tuesday, August 25: Games, singing, and treats at Orchard Ridge UCC, starting at 7:00 p.m.



AN ONGOING DREAM FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT ORCHARD RIDGE UCC—

(inspired from *Real Kids, Real Faith* by Karen Marie Yust)

*Our children and youth will not only discover a safe place to belong but a community that challenges them to discern their purpose and vocation in life as children of God.

*Our children and youth will learn how to resist those aspects of our American culture that have already disappointed us with their empty promises and stress-inducing effects.

*We, alongside our children and youth, might work together toward understanding how we are to live our lives as spiritual beings.

Summer Blessings!
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