

Christian Education Committee Report – [2019 Annual]

Submitted By: Fr. Tommy Matthews, Amanda Livermont, Crystal Furman Date: [January 2020]

Committee Members:

Fr. Tommy Matthews (Associate Rector), Amanda Livermont (Vestry Liaison), Crystal Furman (Committee Chair), Mona Livermont (Sunny's Kids Director), Various Adult Teachers & Facilitators

The board is looking for a co-director to serve a 3-year term alongside Crystal Furman who is in her final year of a 3-year term.

Connecting Through Stories into Draw The Circle Wider:

In Spring 2019, the theme was CONNECTING THROUGH STORIES. The theme for this school year is DRAW THE CIRCLE WIDER. Purpose: Our program guides participants on their journey to love Jesus at every stage as they LEARN, ENGAGE, APPLY, and PRAY. The theme and purpose have been carried through Adult, Youth and Children's Education as well as other aspects of the parish community.

Education:

ADULT EDUCATION-

In the Spring, each class studied Romans during Epiphany, as well as homelessness and isolation from Lent to the end of the school year in May. The focus was on telling our stories and relating to each other.

In the Fall, we started taking the skills from learning from each other and using them to draw the circle wider and go out into our community. The Scripture Class developed a greater understanding of how the scripture calls us to reach out to the community and world by studying the book of Acts. The Ages and Stages class focused on raising children in the church and growing our circles wider. Relevant Application learned about confirmation, but really went beyond the basics of the Episcopal beliefs.

We have big plans for the Spring and have already started on an Epiphany study with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on John. During Lent, we hope to explore the opportunities and encounters of Outreach in our parish and in the community.

Along with a renewed focus on programing, attendance has been tracked. We have an average of 23 adults per week, ranging from 16 to 29 people. We hope to increase attendance and the number of members served each week. Although attendance does not necessarily indicate success, we feel it is a good marker to track growth.

There are also many "Other than Sunday" Christian formation options. Café Theology, Wednesdays with the Word, and Centering Prayer are active and thriving. Education for Ministry (EFM) is currently inactive and looking for EFM graduates to consider taking over as a mentor. For more information, see Gini Peterson, Val Biggs or visit <http://efm.sewanee.edu/>

YOUTH EDUCATION- Youth Sunday School classes were held in the undercroft for youth 6th to 12th grade. There continues to be 3 classes, separated by grade which are Rite 13, J2A, and YAC. YAC has not been active as the kids were confirmed and don't seem to attend regularly. We hope to track age groups better in the future to prevent this from occurring again.

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION- Sunny's Kids, the Children's Sunday School Program is still going strong, under the leadership of Sunday School Coordinator Mona Livermont. She works diligently with our many dedicated and creative teachers who love our children. Their skills, experience and hard work shows. The Sunday School program continues many excellent facets including lessons of Halloween, All Saints, and St. Nicholas.

Prior to the end of the school year, we will discuss and evaluate the curriculum across all ages. Crystal, Mona and Fr. Tommy are forming a committee and hope to nail down plans for the Fall in short order.

Children's Ministries:

EVENTS- We have a few Children's Ministries outside of Sunday School as well. The Easter Eggstravaganza was a bit smaller this year due to poor weather, however it continues to be a source of anticipation and excitement for St. Matthew's and the greater community. Many thanks go to Elizabeth Livermont for organizing that event! This year, we had the festivities inside the parish hall and with limited space and smaller crowds, everyone still enjoyed themselves immensely.

VBS was held in July and was under the direction of Amanda Livermont and Terri Hurst. It also continues to draw a number of people in from our community. VBS remains a favorite activity for our children, and a favorite ministry of our youth helpers, as well as our adults, and we are so grateful for the amazing adults who make it possible. It is refreshing to see the whole parish coming together to nurture our children in these ways! **As we prepare for 2020 VBS, we're looking for a director or a group of a few people who would be willing to share the load.**

NURSERY CARE- We currently offer nursery care for our infants & toddlers (through 4 yrs old) during Sunday school & 10:30 service (from 9:15 to before communion) under the direction of our Nursery Director, Alyson Neilson, and our adult volunteers who are trained and background checked. A group of two to four adult volunteers manages the nursery each week with youth volunteer assistance from our youth group. Currently the adult volunteers are on a monthly team rotation. We have an average of 1-4 children attending the nursery on a regular basis. Also, the Nursery coordinates the Santa/ St. Nicholas Breakfast as a fundraiser. This year we spent about as much money as we made, but it was well attended and gives everyone an opportunity to slow down during Advent and truly understand the meaning of Christmas.

Goals:

2018/2020 Board Goals

The St. Matthew's Christian Education Board will focus on the following:

1. Develop curriculum that is designed to satisfy needs at every stage of life.
2. Train facilitators to include all 4 aspects of LEAP (Learn, Engage, Apply, Pray)
3. Conduct regular curriculum needs assessment and post-evaluation
4. Provide community based learning with a spiritual focus (Outreach)
5. Focus on structure and logistics being made available ahead of time and well marketed.