

Annual Report 2019 – YOUTH

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2020 marks the beginning of my 2nd year being a part of the vestry and specifically as the liaison to our youth ministry. I really had no clue what I was getting myself into. In retrospect, it was nothing like I imagined it. It was better!! I made a point to myself to be involved with the youth program on a regular basis. Whether it be handing out clues, providing a meal to the youth group, or just simply being there, I wanted to make a point to be more of a “yes” person and find a way to help where possible. I have to say, St. Matts, we have a wonderful group of kids, parents, leaders, and clergy. It has been truly amazing getting to watch such a wonderful group come together regularly. As well, it has been my pleasure getting to know these kids and serving my church community through vestry. In review:

- 2019 was a year of great change in the youth group. Ongoing restoration within the undercroft was continued including painting, new furniture, decorations, WIFI, and a new ASSISTANT PRIEST!! It should be noteworthy that our youth played a major role in selecting and working on all the aforementioned details.
- We kicked the year off with our Blu Gnu scavenger hunt in February that had been rescheduled from the 2018 holiday season.
- Youth group met regularly and carried on some traditions like laser tag, the Superbowl party, as well as serving at the Pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday, and performing the Passion of the Christ on Palm Sunday.
- We saw two great youth group members graduate and celebrated them in May during the annual (spring) youth Sunday. This particular youth group gathering welcomed a large oncoming 6th grade group (6-10 new youth) as well as a “fair well” to the graduates.
- Over the summer, the youth attended the movie Aladdin and held a game night.
- In the background during this time, youth played pivotal roles within the search committee for a new assisting priest
- In August we held the annual Fall Youth Retreat. The theme of the retreat was “draw the circle wider” and focused on the Good Samaritan lessons. We had a great turnout and the Youth (and adults) made memories that will last a lifetime.
- A new driving policy was drafted by the Youth Committee and was submitted and approved by the vestry in 2019.
- Planning for weekly youth group meals was refined to accommodate a much larger and culinarily diverse youth group (dietary restrictions). This planning even resulted in adult supervised youth cooking for themselves (YAY!).
- The regular youth group meeting time was officially changed to 5pm to 7pm in order to allow more time for youth to finish homework and prepare for the upcoming week. More changes to scheduling could be coming in the future but no plans have been official as of yet.
- We officially welcomed Father Tommy with a potluck meal and game night in October.

- Also in October, the youth group hosted a Halloween Costume Party for school aged kids within the church that benefitted the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The event was a major success and resulted in a huge quantity of toys hand delivered to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Due to its success, this event could come back as an annual event.
- We enjoyed the annual turkey hunt in November as well as the triumphant return to the December Blu Gnu scavenger hunt.
- Youth Group has started back for the New Year already, and we're looking forward to some exciting things in 2020!
-Some things to get excited about for 2020 include a Skate/Super Bowl/Laser tag party, Shrove Tuesday celebration, the introduction of rising 6th graders in the fall, another amazing retreat, and new ways the youth can give back to the community.

In closing, Fr. Tommy will be taking on more leadership within the Youth Group and Youth Committee in the coming year. Our major goal as a ministry is to put more policies and procedures in place that serve our youth group and set it up for growth and prosperity in the New Year and beyond. We really want to make an emphasis on drawing the circle wider and building a place that our youth of the church can discover themselves individually while finding their place amongst their peers(with God's help).