

Prospectus for UUCK Religious Education Program

2014-2015

A Year of Love for the Religious Education Program

We have been hearing a lot about love lately. The theme of the 2014 General Assembly was “Love Reaches Out”. Our religion challenges us to be “Standing on the Side of Love”. Every Sunday when we gather we proclaim that “love is the spirit of this church” and that “we are the church of the loving hearts”. Love, love, love! It seemed obvious that our theme for this coming year’s religious education program for children and youth should be love. The curriculum that the RE Committee has chosen closely aligns with the theme and will certainly give our children and youth many opportunities to explore how love can be used to change the world.

Religious Education Mission

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent’s Religious Education Program is to provide opportunities for religious explorations guided by a spirit of play and our UU heritage and principles.

Our 7 Unitarian Universalist Principles in Child-Friendly Language

Each Person is important

Be kind in all you do

We’re free to learn together

...and search for what is true

All people need a voice

Build a fair and Peaceful World

We care for the Earth and all upon it.

What to Expect on Sundays...

All children in grades Kindergarten-5 start the morning in the sanctuary seated with their parents/caregivers. The beginning of the worship service is created to be friendly to folks of

all ages. It includes music, lighting our chalice, celebrations of special events in the church and the story-based Time for All Ages, following which the children are “sung out” to their classes.

The Preschool children begin the morning in the classroom. The middle school and high school youth frequently join the entire community at the beginning of the worship service.

We have many opportunities for Multigenerational Worship experiences throughout the year. They are publicized in the Chalice Flame newsletter and on the website. These worship services are carefully crafted to be engaging for children and adults. On these days children should sit with their families, although teens may opt to sit with their peers. Nursery care and the preschool class remain available on these Sundays.

Our classes are staffed by volunteer teachers and leaders who receive training and support. All are dedicated to the faith development of our children and youth.

Between services, the Religious Education Committee assures that there is a supervised art activity in the fellowship hall. No other supervision or program is offered during social hour and parents/caregivers are responsible for the care, safety and happiness of their children and youth at that time.

9:45 AM Religious Education Offerings:

Tender loving nursery childcare is offered for our youngest ones by Michelle Bores, our childcare provider and adult or teen volunteers. The nursery is available during both the 9:45 am and 11:30 am worship services. Michelle is an experienced and educated childcare provider who holds certification in CPR and First Aid. We recognize that separation between parent and child, even for a brief time, is a milestone in the lives of both parents and children. Every effort is made to make it a comfortable transition for everyone. There is reserved seating in the last row at the back of the sanctuary. Sitting there will assure that parents/guardians can be readily called if needed. The audio of the service is piped into Founders’ Lounge.

Our preschool class (ages 3 by September 1st to not yet in Kindergarten) will be using the classic UU program, *We Are Many, We Are One*. Stories, games and projects encourage children to honor themselves, their religious community, nature and cultures from around the world. The curriculum promotes Unitarian Universalist identity and the importance of a faith community.

The children in Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades will use the *Wonderful Welcome* curriculum which engages and challenges leaders and children alike to explore how and why we are willing to welcome others into our lives. We welcome not only strangers, but family, our peers, our neighbors and even entities that are not people such as our animal friends and nature itself. We do this by offering gifts, such as love, forgiveness, kindness and friendship.

Wonderful Welcome is available here:

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/index.shtml>

Grades 3, 4 and 5 will use *Love Connects Us*, a program that celebrates important ways Unitarian Universalists live our faith in covenanted community. Moved by love and gathered in spirit, we embrace our responsibility toward one another and the world at large. We encourage one another's search for truth and meaning. We strive to be active in peace-making and other efforts to improve our world. Children learn how our actions create a new heritage of connecting in love which will shape the faith of future generations.

Love Connects Us is available here:

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/index.shtml>

11:30 AM Religious Education Offerings:

During the second service, the Nursery is available for babies, toddlers and children who are in Kindergarten. See the description above for the nursery program.

Our Multi-Age Class for school-aged children is available to those who attend the second service because they have older siblings in our youth groups, because they sing in the Golden Tones choir or because coming to the second service is a better option for their family. This class will be using *Signs of Our Faith: Being UU Every Day*. Unitarian Universalism asks us to think about religion as the practice of being faithful to what you love. In order to do this, you must decide what you love and do your best to live that love faithfully every day. The program guides children to do their best to live faithful lives every day. It presents fourteen traits or values that most Unitarian Universalist love, including the quest for knowledge, reverence for life, supporting one another on our faith journeys, and public witness. Children examine how their lives do and can exhibit these traits and values, and come to understand that their faith is a living faith whose histories and teachings are fortifications for living faithfully in a complex world.

Signs of Our Faith: Being UU Everyday is available here:

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/index.shtml>

Our Middle School Youth Group (grades 6, 7 and 8) will be using *Building Bridges*. This program is a reworking of *Neighboring Faiths* (which is a reworking of *Church Across the Street*). It is a world religions program to deepen youth's understanding of the dynamic, fascinating, and varied world in which they live. It seeks to broaden their knowledge of humanity and embolden their spiritual search. The youth will be learning about different religions and then visiting some of the various faith communities.

Building Bridges is available here:

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/index.shtml>

The High School Youth Group (grades 9-12) will be using the small group ministry materials that accompany the *Soul Matters* theme-based worship program. As the monthly

themes are being examined in worship, our youth will be engaging with these same themes in their classroom. Some of the themes this year include promise, grace, wonder and integrity. The youth group's model of shared leadership, community building and putting faith into action are sure to align perfectly with the program.

Other Programs:

On Tuesday evenings, our 8th graders will be participating in *Our Whole Lives (OWL)*, a sexuality education program that models and teaches caring, compassion, respect, and justice. A holistic program that moves beyond the intellect to address the attitudes, values, and feelings that youth have about themselves and the world. Unlike many other sexuality curricula currently available, this program is comprehensive and progressive. In an inclusive and developmentally appropriate manner, it addresses sensitive topics that are typically excluded.

Our yearlong *Coming of Age: Deepening Ties Within Your Congregation* program for 9th and 10th graders is designed to acknowledge the transition between childhood and youth. It's a vibrant program focusing on the youths themselves and their unique journeys. Coming of age is a transformative experience. While exploring life's big questions, each participant strives to assume self-responsibility, gain self-confidence, experience an expanded world, understand the importance of community, and develop a personal value system. Their year will culminate in Coming of Age Sunday when the participants share their personal statements of faith with the congregation.