

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our Christian Education Ministry continues to be an integral part of Edwards Church, especially through its programs that teach and enrich our children. It is because of the support and guidance of the Board of Christian Education, and the active participation of our youth and their families, that our ministry is strong and engaging. In 2017, the Board of Christian Education was led by Terry Carl in partnership with Stephany Duplessis, Victoria Sorenson, Matt Walker, Laura Litman and Amy Plackowski. We meet every month, and occasionally hold offsite meetings to build fellowship and discuss long range planning within the CE ministry.

The board is joined by our volunteer teachers who are at the heart of our Church School. Our teachers for the school year ending in June of 2017 included: Rob DeLossa in the Youth Class, Stephany Duplessis and Jill Murphy in the Juniors Room (Grades 3-7), Heather Gray and Myrna Phelps in the Beginners Classroom (Age 4-Grade 2) and Janice Steigman from Mother's Helpers in the Nursery. For the school year beginning in September of 2017, teachers were the same except Myrna Phelps took over primary responsibility of the Beginner's Classroom and Heather Gray will teach periodically. We also extend our thanks to Debbie Clark who attends our Christian Education meetings and guides all we do.

We had a very busy year in 2017. We started January with Shane Montoya as our new associate pastor for faith formation. The transition was smooth. We decided to continue to use the Deep Blue Kids curriculum for the remainder of the school year. Rob DeLossa develops his own curriculum for the Youth Forum. Shane used a Magic Box and the stories from the *Family Story Bible* for his words with young people and it was well received!

In February, we had a Youth Mission Trip to New York City with the youth from Plymouth Church. Three youth and two chaperones from Edwards participated. Participants visited many attractions in New York and spent time serving in a local food pantry and soup kitchen. We also held a cookies and cocoa fundraiser. About \$150 was raised for NEADS.

This year's Lenten programming was based on the theme "Sanctuary, Safe Space, Brave Space." On Palm Sunday, we again hosted a parade featuring a live donkey. The Sunday School children made t-shirts for the parade, imagining Jesus's entry into Jerusalem as a modern-day march. All of the other communities that worship on the Edwards Church campus were invited to participate and it was an exciting way to celebrate Palm Sunday.

We held a confirmation class that ran through the season of Lent and in April of 2017, we confirmed three young people: Nolan Buck, Amelia Memmott Burton, and Eleanor Yeomans. Adult leadership was provided by Debbie Clark and Shane Montoya. It was in conjunction with three youth from Plymouth Church along with their adult leader, Will Tanner. It was a very enriching experience for the youth and focused on who Jesus was and why he matters. Each student had a mentor, who helped guide them through the confirmation process. Our mentors this year were Heather Gonzales, Claire Ball and Laura Litman. Confirmation activities included individual activities with mentors, a youth conference centered on the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr, attending Shane's ordination, making confirmation stoles, and writing their own statements of faith.

As summer approached, we held a Dessert Auction, had a sensory appropriate fire drill for the Sunday School classrooms and participated in a joyous send off for Nena Radtke. Nena helped us a great deal during our time of transition from summer Sunday School to the first half of the 2016-17 school year. Stephany presented her a beautiful lantern with a cross bearing flowers dyed by the youth. We ended regular school year programming on June 11 with our traditional Ice Cream Social. Thanks to Matt Walker for supplying the ice cream and toppings.

For the summer programming, Mary Memmott and Stephanie Duplessis led a "one room classroom" style summer Sunday School. Students grew their own herbs in the Seeds of Grace raised garden. They connected our shared concern for the hungry and food-related issues to Biblical stories through a curriculum developed by the Society of St Andrew, an ecumenical society dedicated to feeding America's hungry. Shane continued to do outreach with church school families by delivering tote bags to homes. The bags were stocked with ideas for opportunities to practice faith during the summer.

As we started the new church school year, we had a blessing of the backpacks. Each young person received a special backpack tag reminding them of God's love and the embrace of their church family. Other adults, especially those involved in education, were also invited to take tags. A special thank you to Stephany Duplessis for her creative spirit and support of this wonderful event. We held a parent/youth planning meeting to brainstorm some ideas for the upcoming program year. Church school started on September 24.

The church school year curriculum started with a focus on Disciples. Shane created activity bags for youth to personalize and keep in the sanctuary for use week-to-week, filled with art pads, silent fidget toys, and books. We also procured a glider chair for the sanctuary to provide a comforting space for parents with infants.

In October, we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation with a no rehearsal, impromptu pageant during worship. The pageant explained Martin Luther's story, paying tribute to the Protestant Reformation while also showcasing its relevance to the church's life today.

In November, children and youth made cookies to be used at the annual Veterans' Dinner, at which youth also volunteered as servers. Our children and youth also participated in our Stewardship drive, this year themed "The Giving Team," by designing their own "Team Edwards" t-shirts on which they highlighted their current and future roles as part of Team Edwards. These were worn on Dedication Sunday and provided many smiles to the church. As always, they helped collect the pledge forms for the coming year. After Thanksgiving, during the children's time, Dawn Sorensen led the children in starting a friendship bread that was later shared among the congregation.

During the month of December, we held our annual wreath fundraiser. This year, we were able to keep our entire proceeds of \$630 after the cost of the wreaths were generously donated. We also participated in the Gifts that Give fair by having youth volunteers at the table and making milkshakes. Donations for the milkshakes raised \$250 for Heifer.

The annual Christmas pageant was held on Christmas Eve at 5:00pm. Punch and cookies were served at the fellowship hour following the pageant. Special thanks to Debbie and Victoria for rehearsal support, and Matt, Amy, and Terry for the cookies and punch. Stephany and Laura coordinated costuming, supporting and guiding the kids before the performance, and helping with the reception that followed.

Each Sunday morning at 9:00am, the adult Bible Study group meets to explore the bible, music, faith and their connections to our lives. This group is led by Shane Montoya. On alternate Wednesday evenings, Debbie Clark also leads a Bible study.

The Board of Christian Education continues to give each child baptized at Edwards Church a copy of the book *Before You Were Born* by Nancy White Carlstrom. Each book is inscribed for the baptismal child with his or her name and the date of the baptism. The child is also gifted a welcome card from the church school. There were two baptisms this year.

We extend our sincere thanks to the members of the Christian Education Committee, the children, their parents, all church members, and staff whose support, time and talent continues to make this ministry a thriving and growing part of Edwards programming. We look forward to a new year ahead.

Blessings,
The Board of Christian Education