

August 28, 2017

Christian Education at Mattapoisett Congregational Church is growing up!

Traditionally, the Christian Education Committee has focused on providing a vibrant Sunday School program for our children. Now those children are growing up, families are getting busier, and we feel the need for a change. The Committee has begun a process of discussion, research, and prayer to figure out what comes next. Guided by UCC resources on faith formation, an online course called "The Changing 21st Century Sunday School," and reflection on our own experiences, we are beginning to discern a new vision. We are excited to start building Christian Education into an inter-generational ministry for faith formation, with opportunities for church and community members of all ages to participate in activities that explore, develop, nurture, and sustain our faith.

What will the new Christian Education look like? We don't know yet where we'll end up, but we have some plans for this year to move us in the right direction.

- Sunday School is not going away! This fall, the K-6 children will be following the "Travel Guide to the Beatitudes".
- On three Sundays this fall, everyone is invited to join in the study of the Beatitudes. We're calling it "Journeying Together". We'll meet before the regular worship service for an all-ages lesson from the Travel Guide, with a choice of activities (discussion, crafts, music) related to the lesson.
- The TRIADS youth group is being strengthened and energized with new leadership.
- There are three "Fellowship Friday" evening events scheduled: game night, a Halloween gathering, and Advent crafts. Everyone is welcome, and encouraged to bring a friend.
- We are exploring ways to form small groups that meet outside of church for Bible study, book discussions, or other educational experiences. Stay tuned for more information.

Why change things?

- Sunday School enrollment is declining, not just at our own church but nationally. Many churches are looking at ways to revitalize Christian Education.
- We have heard many positive responses to our recent all-ages, intergenerational services and events like Celebration Sunday, the Festival of Booths, Palm Sunday, and game night.
- It's in the by-laws! The Christian Education Committee is tasked by the church by-laws to provide Sunday School, youth education, adult education, and all-church activities.

How can you get involved?

- Come to church early (9 am) on September 24 for Journeying Together, and at 6 pm on Friday September 15 for game night.
- Tell us what we can do for you! Talk to any member of the Christian Education Committee. We'd love to hear from you.
- If you're really excited about this new direction, think about joining the Christian Education Committee. There's plenty of room for new members.

The Christian Education Committee

Tara Rajaniemi and Tracy Djerf, co-chairs

Patty Berry, Christian Education Director

Holly Gordon, Youth Leader

Claire Keene, Phoebe Girard, Jean Schneider