

## **Lifespan Faith Development Interim Team**

### *Annual Report*

Submitted by Alyssa Short

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### **LFD Interim Team**

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### **Purpose of the Team**

The Lifespan Faith Interim Team facilitates the UUC LFD program during the Board's search for a settled DLFD. The LFD program is committed to creating an environment for volunteers, students, and their families that reflects our mission, Guidelines for Right Relations, our seven UU principles, and UUC covenants. Our goal is to support the development of each student to their fullest potential. LFD programs include: Children's RE classes, Middle School Youth Group, YRUU (High School Youth Group), YAC (Youth Adult Committee), Adult RE classes, Our Whole Lives (OWL), Coming of Age, and the UUC Library.

### **2021-2022 LFD Updates**

- **Registration:** 66 children and youth were registered in this year's program.
- **In Person Attendance:** Children's RE conducted Sunday RE classes in person all year (outdoors during the fall, and indoors during the winter and spring) with an average of 15 students attending in person each Sunday morning.
- **Online Attendance:** Zoom storytime was offered during the Omicron surge from January-March with an average of 8 students attending online each Sunday morning.
- **YRUU** met in person throughout the year. 8 students attended Mountain Con in March. 2 students bridged in May.
- **Adult RE:**
  - Tarot Workshop facilitated by Alyssa Short
  - Antiracism Practice Groups with Blacksburg Presbyterian facilitated by Rev Pam
- **OWL (Our Whole Lives):** A new resource called *Under Your Wing*, a series of videos that support parents and caregivers as primary sexuality educators of children ages 5-7, was shared with UUC parents and caregivers of children ages 5-7. Discussion group anticipated in June.
- **Coming Of Age:** There was no Coming of Age program this year.
- **Summer RE:** Due to unpredictable Covid numbers, RE classes will take place outdoors. This is an opportunity for our children and youth to take advantage of the UUC grounds.

- **Teacher & Advisor Appreciation:** In February congregants expressed gratitude for UUC teachers and advisors by writing words of appreciation on a display board, which is currently on display in the RE lobby.
- **Community Service Activities:**
  - It's Scary to Be Hungry campaign for the Interfaith Food Pantry
  - Reverse Advent Calendar collection for the Interfaith Food Pantry
  - The Mitten Tree warm clothing drive for the Montgomery County Christmas Store
  - Egg Hunt supply drive for the Montgomery County Animal Care & Adoption Center
  - Ongoing collection of food for the Interfaith Food Pantry in the RE lobby.
- **UUC Community Building Activities:**
  - Weaving Our Community loom, created by Derek Rountree and Brandie Lemmon
  - Stuffed Animal Sleepover, including stuffed animal participation in worship service
  - Leprechaun Scavenger Hunt, a self-guided tour on the UUC grounds
  - The Buddy Project paired 12 adult and child buddies

### **Challenges & Opportunities:**

- **Covid / Lack of Vaccines:** A changing Covid landscape and lack of access to vaccines for children under 5 led to a reduction in registration and attendance numbers. However, working as a team allowed us to offer both online, in person, and self guided activities, which allowed us to keep in touch with families across the spectrum of Covid comfort zones.
- **Staffing Changes:** The Interim LFD Team worked collaboratively to continue programs throughout the Board search for a settled DLFD.
- **Inclusivity:** The Interim LFD Team learned a lot about the diversity of our students' needs over the past several months. We plan to share our observations and suggestions with Rachel Craine, the incoming settled DLFD. We are excited to make sure that RE classes are fun and interesting too a wide array of interests and learning styles.

### **Goals for Next Year:**

- Continue to build our sense of community, especially across age groups and comfort zones.
- Ensure that our programs are engaging to a wide variety of learning styles and interests.
- Support our new settled DLFD.

**How LFD Works to Further the Mission and Vision of UUC:** The programs of LFD are designed to help our congregants, regardless of age, to grow in their personal spiritual and ethical journeys. We emphasize covenant and compassion in all programs. Through our liberal religious education, we help children and youth create a bridge between our religion and other religions in the NRV, and to discover how they can make the world a better place through their own actions.