

Christian Education and Nursery Updates

Submitted by: Trixie Steiner-Rose, Tim Robinson, Lorena Haberern

The motto of the discussions in the Christian Education task force over the past year has been Consistency, Consistency, Consistency. The most important aspect of Sunday School, in our new program, is that every child and every parent who has come to at least one of our services will know exactly where to go and what to expect of their Sunday School time. Consistent teachers will be in place each week, a consistent curriculum will be studied, there will be a consistent time and place for each age group. The individual faces of the children and the parents may change, but they will all be able to rely on a certain amount of sameness every time. We want church to be just as familiar and clear for the children as it is for the adults, we want to advertise any changes far in advance, we want to be able to anticipate any complications and address them ahead of time.

Our other goals were as follows:

- ❖ The Christian Education program must be self-sufficient.
- ❖ The Christian Education program cannot rely on the hope of getting a director who is designing and redesigning the program as they go, or who happens to be remarkably competent at understanding instinctively what the job requires.
- ❖ The Christian Education program must exist through all iterations of personnel changes; it must be able to survive an averagely competent director, or someone who leaves in the middle of the year.
- ❖ Innovation is welcome, but the foundation of the system, particularly a system which revolves around the inherent chaos of children, must be as strong and as stable as possible.

The current program that we have adapted over the course of the year is geared specifically towards the 0-7 age group. Our two new teachers, Audrey and Donna, work with the children in a collaborative space that we are calling the Playgroup Experience, using a curriculum called *Seasons of the Spirit*. The curriculum guides the children through small activities while also allowing them the freedom of play. Though the greater church remains virtual, our children are able to come to the physical location of Old First and work with our wonderful new teachers in a safe environment, allowing them to once again participate in their own form of worship while the adults are occupied with the service. Attendance has been high, and the children have been enjoying both the Playgroup Experience itself, as well as getting to reconnect with old friends. We have high hopes for our children and this program as we head into the new year.