

Middle &
High School
Youth
Ministry
—
The
Union Church
in Waban
—
Overview
and Calendar
—
2016-2017

When you go through
DEEP waters, I will be
with you.
— Isaiah 43:2

August 31, 2016

Dear Youth, Parents and Friends of the Union Church,

This year is going to be amazing!

As many of you know, the church's Youth Ministry Task Force – with input from youth, parents and the wider congregation – worked hard last year to lay the groundwork for a sustainable youth ministry. This summer, we have been building on that solid foundation, creating new teams, structures and programs for our middle- and high-school youth in the coming year. This year we hope to go *D.E.E.P.*, living into the mission statement developed by the Youth Task Force. Below is an overview of that mission, as well as information about new Youth Ministry Teams, and the emerging program and calendar for the coming year. We hope you'll be as excited about these good developments as we are!

THE MISSION—*Developed by the Youth Task Force and embraced by the congregation:*

The Youth Ministry of the Union Church in Waban is a fully welcoming community that sees all young people as beloved children of God who can live out God's love in the world. In our ministry, young people are invited to:

- **Develop** authentic relationships with other youth, caring adults, and God;
- **Embark** on a spiritual journey grounded in the life, teachings, and community of Jesus Christ;
- **Explore** how their gifts and questions can contribute to the life of the church and the flourishing of all creation;
- **Participate** in meaningful service and joyful mission as part of this community of faith.

THE TEAM

The program will be supported by the newly-forming **Youth Ministry Team**, made up of caring, responsible adult volunteers, who will run events and build relationships with youth. This year's team is co-chaired by **Christy Lang Hearlson** and **Susan Hunt Stevens**. We will also depend on a **Youth Ministry Spiritual Support Team**, who will pray for our youth and their concerns, and offer encouragement and support to our volunteers. The program will be supervised by Amy Clark Feldman, the Union Church's new Associate Pastor for Youth and Families.

THE PROGRAM

Youth in middle and high school are invited to participate in the intergenerational life and mission of the Union Church. We will also have special programming with youth in middle and high school, including:

- Regular Sunday morning class
- One fellowship event per month
- One service event per month
- Exploration of Faith (Confirmation) every two years

The attached ***Middle and High School Youth Events Calendar*** provides an overview of the fellowship and service events planned and in-the-works. We hope you will put these events on your calendars and plan to join in! Please note that many of these events are also listed on the full ***Fall 2016 Children, Youth and Families Calendar***, and that some (e.g. Common Cathedral or the Thanksgiving Community Dinner) include both a youth-centered experience, and/or the opportunity to serve with adults and younger kids, allowing the whole family and community to participate together.

A Note about Sunday Mornings: The Teacher and Christian Education & Formation teams have also been busy sharing ideas and planning for the coming year! Jaap VanReijendam will be the lead teacher for the 6th-9th grade classroom, with a wonderful team gathering to teach, support and guide the youth in their explorations of the Bible and their faith. This year we encourage youth to remain in the sanctuary during worship on Communion Sundays (the first Sunday of each month), and will be working to involve them in the leadership of worship in meaningful ways.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year, as we gather together, serve people and share God's love with our youth and wider community — and we are glad and grateful for your involvement and support!

To learn more, or support or share ideas with the Youth Ministry Team, please contact co-chairs Christy Lang Hearlson (christiane.lang@gmail.com) or Susan Hunt Stevens (susan@huntstevens.com). For information about Sunday morning teaching, or about our ministries to children, youth and families more broadly, please don't hesitate to reach out to Amy Clark Feldman (amy@ucw.org). We're always glad to hear from you!

With Peace and Gratitude,
The Youth Ministry and Christian Education Teams

Fall 2016 Calendar

Middle + High School Youth Events

September

FALL KICKOFF PARTY!

Friday, September 23, 6-8pm at Union Church in Waban (UCW)
RSVP by Tuesday, September 20 to Christy (christiane.lang@gmail.com)
No Cost. Bring friends!

What to expect: The time of your life! Come for a cookout, games, music, and an orientation to the year's program.

October

FALL CAMPING TRIP

Saturday, October 1- Sunday, October 2
RSVP to Mark Smith (mark@dogwoodlanefarm.org)
Cost: TBD

What to expect: Tents, sleeping bags, hiking, s'mores, fall colors, and other adventures! Enjoy the great outdoors on this overnight trip led by Kevin Johnson and Mark Smith (and chaperoned by additional adults).

COMMON CATHEDRAL PREPARATION AND SERVICE

Saturday, October 29 at UCW (time TBD)
Sunday, October 30, after worship on Boston Common

What to expect: Serve hungry neighbors in Boston by preparing food on Saturday, and serving it on Sunday to the Common Cathedral congregation during worship on Boston Common. Youth are welcome to attend one or both days.

November

HEIFER FARM OVERNIGHT & SUNDAY SERVICE

Friday, November 11– Saturday, November 12 (Overnight — Veterans Day Weekend)
Saturday, November 12 — Sunday, November 13 (Heifer Weekend)
The Heifer Farm in Rutland, MA

What to expect: This is always a favorite! Expect a weekend of unforgettable learning about poverty and hunger, and about how Heifer International addresses these problems by giving animals to families around the world. Details are still being finalized, but please save this weekend for a youth overnight (likely Friday to Saturday), a possible event on Saturday, and then a Heifer-themed service at the church that the kids and youth will help to lead.

COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER PREPARATION AND SERVICE

Friday, November 18, 6-8pm, at UCW
Saturday, November 19, with opportunities between 10am –5pm and dinner at 2pm, at UCW

What to expect: On Friday evening, youth will gather to help bake and prepare for the Community Thanksgiving Dinner held at Union Church every year. On Saturday, youth are invited to return as servers or children's activity leaders at the dinner.

December

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY AND WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE

December 14, 15, or 16 (TBD) at 6pm

Location TBD

Cost: Free

Bring: A wacky, weird, or wonderful wrapped gift under \$10

What to Expect: A jolly good time! Gather with friends for food, Christmas-themed games, and a white elephant gift exchange.

CHRISTMAS MITTEN-TREE SERVICE PROJECT

Throughout December, with delivery of gifts on December 18th

What to Expect: Youth will help sort and deliver gifts to neighbors in need, including to our friends at the Waban Health and Rehab Center. We hope to plan a meaningful time for youth to meet with some of the residents.

January – June

COMING SOON!

Please stay tuned for a full schedule and contact Christy Lang Hearlson (christiane.lang@gmail.com) or Susan Hunt Stevens (susan@huntstevens.com) with questions or ideas.

Parents, a vibrant youth ministry needs your support. The Youth Ministry Team will need help with food, decorations, transportation, chaperoning, and much more. Please let Christy or Susan know which events you would like to help with!