

# **CHRISTIAN FORMATION**

## **Tommie Moore**

### **Director of Christian Formation**

We began 2022 with an uptick of COVID cases in the parish and the decision was made to pause Sunday School for children and youth and EYC for the month of January in hopes that the delay would allow staff, students and teachers to recover from any exposures they had encountered. Classes resumed in February. The Sunday Lectionary class continued to meet in-person and practiced social distancing.

#### **For our younger children**

"Spark, Activate Faith," is offered for our children, 3-years-old – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade which helps them connect at their level, with stories that correspond with the Sunday Lectionary. The lessons are packed with activities, interactive games, and creative crafts. My thanks to Allison Bedillion, Kelly Fleming, Liddi Pate and Cindy Smith for teaching this class.

#### **For our children in 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades**

"Connect" is offered for this age group which connects them with God's big story through videos, Bible exploration and hands on projects. Thank you to Sue Ann Averett and Michelle Hester for leading this class.

#### **For our older youth**

Using a different model than we have in the past, formation for our youth in Middle School and High School was moved to their EYC time on Sunday evenings. You can read more about this group in our Youth Director, Emily Jackson's report.

As we changed our formation model on Sunday mornings to a curriculum based offering for our young members, we began offering Catechesis of the Good Shepherd on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings. Certified catechists, Kamme Riddle and Marrison Winders, assisted by Lilly Riddle spent time with the children in this Montessori model, guiding the child's work with materials designed to help develop the child's religious life.

**Vacation Bible School** was offered for all ages June 12-15 in the evening. Programming was designed for specific age groups with common time for all groups. Thank you to Michelle Hester for organizing this offering and for all who taught the classes, prepared the meals and for those who participated.

The curriculum, "Passport to Peace" was "designed to help children make peace a way of life." "Passport to Peace" introduced them to skills they can use to become peacemakers. The children explored and practiced skills at VBS to become peacemakers in the world. The program encouraged them to continue to practice these skills at home. They read stories from Scripture to see how these skills of being a peacemaker are used and how they could use the skills in their lives.

While our children were engaged in learning how to become peacemakers, our adults explored the Episcopal Church's anti-racism training, "Seeing God in Each Other." We explored the Episcopal Church's commitment to anti-racism and racial reconciliation and discussed the concept of power and explored areas where we have power in our lives and where we may not have power.

#### **For our adults**

In the Fall, Phillip and Becca offered confirmation classes for adults and youth and Bishop Seage baptized and confirmed 1 teen and 11 adults during his annual visitation on All Saints' Sunday.

Our Sunday Lectionary class continues to faithfully meet each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the south breakout room of the Parish Hall. Led by the very capable Les Alvis and Caleb Bedillion, this class features a presentation on selected texts from the scriptures appointed for the day's liturgy, followed by lively discussion as the class wrestles with the readings to find meanings for today. The presentations and discussions aim to be enlightening, nourishing and challenging. Contact the church office to be added to the group's weekly email list.

“Theology in the Library” was a new offering in 2022. Led by Fr. Phillip this class meets on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the Library to discuss a wide range of topics (both current and past) and explored how to apply theology and find God in life’s situations and happenings.

This past Fall, we were also able to restart our Education for Ministry course with Harry Dieckmann serving as the mentor of the group. We deeply appreciate Harry stepping up to lead this course and his mentorship has meant a great deal to the participants. We currently have nine students enrolled: three 1<sup>st</sup> year students; one 2<sup>nd</sup> year student; four 3<sup>rd</sup> year students; one 4<sup>th</sup> year student. Education for Ministry (EfM) is a unique four-year distance learning certificate program in theological education based upon small-group study and practice. EfM helps the faithful encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and bring it into conversation with their experiences of the world as they study, worship, and engage in theological reflection together.

One common thread throughout this report is how much I appreciate those who volunteer their time in our Christian Formation offerings. They take the time each week to prepare and study lessons and they show up weekly to engage, discuss and connect the participants with what scripture is teaching. I also want to thank Michelle Hester, our Coordinator for Children’s Ministries, for her tireless effort in pulling together schedules, recruiting teachers, researching curriculum and making sure the teachers have the supplies and materials they need. She is a tremendous help and resource for our children’s ministries.

In 2022, Christian Formation was budgeted \$5,125 for Sunday School curriculum and supplies, EfM mentor training, scholarships, books and supplies and Vacation Bible School lesson plans, arts/craft supplies and meals. Of that budgeted amount, we spent \$3,509.17.