

Worship

"... because children do not understand, but feel, the worship service is just where children belong: tasting, touching, hearing, seeing and especially feeling." - Retired Christian educator, author and FUMC member Elaine Ward

Bringing children to worship may not always be easy, but it is an essential part of their spiritual growth. Children's presence in worship allows us all to be the whole people of God. We embrace the premise that faith is "caught" not "taught," and what better way for children to understand faith than to be a part of the worshipping community!

We want parents to grow and be fed in their faith, too. We know that sometimes that can best be done when your children are safe and happily engaged in our childcare rooms. When you are ready, we encourage you to begin bringing your child with you to one of our many worship services. Each child is unique, but generally children begin to stay for portions of worship at the age of 5 years. Worship activity bags are available with crayons, scriptural puzzle pages and quiet ways to focus energy for children ages 3-11 years. These bags can be found in baskets by the front doors of both the Sanctuary and the Chapel.

Participation for children is encouraged in ways ranging from coming down close to the pastor during Young Disciples' time, to assisting parents with ushering and greeting, to becoming an acolyte or reading the liturgy.

Children and Family Ministries team

This is a counsel of parent volunteers, staff, and pastors who meet regularly to plan, organize and implement various programs and ministries that support our goal of helping our children know God and becoming faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Important Contacts

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Children & Family Ministries

Our Mission

Making disciples who make a difference – we work to reach out to receive all children, to help them relate their lives to God through Jesus Christ, to help them grow in Christian faith and to send them into their world to do God's work.

FUMC partners with parents to achieve these goals by providing a nurturing and safe environment that encourages:

- 1) Building loving relationships with peers and Christian role models
- 2) Learning and exploring one's faith
- 3) Developing spiritual practices and disciplines in daily life
- 4) Actions of service to other

Child Care

Our childcare rooms are located on the first floor of our Education building, below the Murchison Chapel. Our paid staff is trained to give loving and professional care for your child while you enjoy church worship and activities. We run background checks on all staff members, and each room is staffed with at least one person with CPR and First Aid certification.

Free childcare is available for all church services. It can also be arranged for church events with advance notice. You can make a reservation with our Childcare Coordinator.

Education

Nursery (Infants-18 months)

Beginning with our youngest disciples, our caring staff models God's love. We know that experiencing unconditional love through relationships helps children develop the trust and confidence they need to later explore a more abstract relationship with the Divine.

Toddlers (18 months – 3 years)

Based on the individual child's readiness, he or she transitions to the toddler room. Here we introduce the discipline of communal snack, sing Bible songs and work in free-choice play centers. Children also practice the important relational skills of sharing, taking turns, and spending time away from parents.

3 years through 5th grades

We offer an hour of guided Christian education, led by volunteer church members, on Sunday mornings at 9:45 a.m. Children are grouped by age and grade. Curriculum is selected to introduce age-appropriate Bible stories from both the Old and New Testaments.

Programs & Events

Acolytes – We begin teaching our children acolyte responsibilities when they are in second grade. Our acolyte coordinator can prepare your child to serve during Sunday worship.

Advent and Lenten celebrations – We begin these special church seasons with family events. See our website for more information.

Acts of Service – We have annual mission projects and special events specifically appropriate for our youngest members. One long-running tradition is the 4th and 5th graders' assembly and sale of "Manna Bags," Intended to be given to those less fortunate than we are – they contain a day's worth of nutrition as well as fresh socks and a note from a child.

Baby Blessing and Thanksgiving – We host an annual worship service to recognize, give thanks, and bless babies born into the church family.

Baptism – We offer a two-hour class with our pastors for parents interested in having their children welcomed into our congregation with this holy sacrament. Classes are held every other month. Please contact our Director of Scheduling.

Children's Choir – Children from Kindergarten through fifth grades are welcome to participate in choir. They meet weekly on Sunday mornings from 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. to learn and prepare music to be performed in worship and for special events, as well as an annual musical performed in the spring.

Easter Egg Hunt and Picnic – We host a large egg hunt on the Capitol lawn that is open to friends, family, and the community.

Kids' Night Out – On the second Friday of every month we offer parents and kids a night out for a small fee. Children play, eat pizza, and watch a movie with our trained childcare staff while

parents can go enjoy a grown-up evening. Reservations should be made in advance with our Childcare Coordinator.

Parent Resources – We offer various tools and classes to you help you, the parent, to deepen your family's faith at home. Devotional calendars and pages during the seasons of Advent and Lent, parenting courses and book studies, and articles and advice on ways to practice spiritual disciplines are some of the ways we help equip you to become your children's faith leader.

Tweens (5th – 7th grades) – In conjunction with Kids' Night Out, we host a monthly game night called "Connect" for our kids who are pre-teens or "in between" childhood and adolescence. This group is shared between children and youth ministries and engages these growing Christians in missions, Bible study and fellowship.

Vacation Bible School – This week-long adventure for our preschool and elementary aged children is held at the end of summer. It is always a fun, energetic, and meaningful way for the children and volunteers to grow in their faith and relationships.