

# 115<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in Utah

## Report of the Youth Faith Formation

Members: The Rev. Vanessa Cato, The Rev. Tyler Doherty, The Rev. Kurt Wiesner, The Rev. Christopher Szarke, Karen Gleeson, Brooke Parker, Terry Palmer, Sara Baese, Rhonda Dossett, Ingrid VanZanten, Shannon Bramblett, Ashley Haws

Mission: The Faith Formation Committee supports the faith formation of the children and youth in all congregations of the Diocese of Utah.

Goals for Youth Faith Formation:

- Provide training for congregational faith formation leaders, both lay and clergy
  - Through diocesan workshops
  - Sending interested people to trainings which they can share with the Diocese
- Bringing in knowledgeable people from the wider church for training and support
- Encourage a network of those in each congregation who are invested in faith formation
- Support the programs for faith formation for junior high and senior high youth in the Diocese of Utah.
- Advocate for children and youth programs and presence at Diocesan events and in the budget
- Celebrate the gifts and presence of the young people in this Diocese
- Evaluate the needs and desires of the parishes for the children of the Diocese

Senior high youth participated in a leadership-focused retreat at St. James Episcopal Church in November of 2019, in place of our New Beginnings Event due to low registration numbers. Participants had the chance to discuss and practice leadership skills in small and large group settings. Vulnerability, leadership styles, and communication were some of the topics of discussion. It is forums like this that young people get the chance to hone the skills they will need to be leaders in their current and future communities and schools. On Sunday morning the youth led parishioners in a small-group discussion during Father Christopher Szarke's sermon.

In 2019/2020 we continued GO Mondays, which is for youth in grades 6-12 to meet up on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month. This is a collaborative youth ministry that brings youth together from the Diocese of Utah for fellowship, games, music, sharing, teaching, and prayer.

We will continue to offer these monthly gatherings, but we needed to change the format to online Zoom activities. We will also offer gathering options for youth to get together in social distance settings. We updated our name to Go Virtual and we will be launching this new program with a meet and greet Zoom in September 2020. It was also shared with each other in our meeting that this program might be a more inclusive format that will give the opportunity for youth in the outlying parishes to be involved.

In early spring of 2020 we were planning a workshop for young families to get together. We invited Wendy Claire Berrie to be the guest speaker. She conducted a workshop at Rooted in Jesus, and is a very knowledgeable resource for children/youth/family formation. This event has been postponed. We are exploring ideas in offering an online program for 2020/2021.

The YFF Committee has been meeting to discuss the ever changing needs of our community amidst the current global pandemic. We have been collaborating efforts to provide online

structures for engaging families, particularly young families with school-age children. We are currently working together to create a streamlined way to distribute uniform information about upcoming and on-going youth events around the diocese including youth ministry events, GO Virtual meetings, Camp Tuttle events, young children's worship, and acolyting at individual parishes. This information will be available in a format akin to a pamphlet or brochure and will also be available in a digital format. Having a resource that includes information about all youth activities will be more effective and increase attendance across the board.

It is our continued hope and prayer that each person in the Diocese:

- Have a relationship with God.
- Know the Bible and of the important stories of salvation history.
- Know how to pray and grow spiritually in worship and outreach.
- Be able to articulate their faith.
- Have relationships in the church across generations.
- Would know what it means to be an Episcopalian
- Would have knowledge of the faith, practice, and spirit of the Episcopal Church as part of the Anglican Tradition

Submitted by,

Karen Gleeson

Youth Ministry Coordinator/Camp Tuttle Director