

Growing in God's Garden Together



Children and Youth Programs
at Avon Congregational Church
2011-2012

Growing in God's Garden Together

If our church community were a garden, you would find every kind of plant here — vegetables and flowers and fruits and herbs. Some of us would be just emerging from the soil; others would be high-yielding shrubs or flowering vines. At Avon Congregational Church (ACC) we gather to cultivate our faith, to find friendship and meaning for our lives. Our children sing and play and learn as they experience the warmth of this community of Christ followers. We seek to understand the Gardener's plans for us as we draw strength from His nurturing hand.

Most importantly, our garden is rooted in the larger community as a symbol of hope — a place of grace and outreach, love and forgiveness. We stand where we have stood for hundreds of years, a cornerstone of history, faith and assurance.

Gardens are places of promise; they yearn to grow and persevere. As caretakers of this ACC garden, we have both the blessing and the responsibility of its harvest.

God gave us the gifts of life and love, the gifts of friendship and fellowship. It is up to us to nurture His gifts through worship, stewardship, and fellowship. This year there are several events in the making that will help us to grow God's love inside and outside of our congregation as we tend to each other and to ourselves. In keeping with our theme, the Church School mission events and programs will focus on harvest and gardening. This year we'll support Heifer International and the Avon Food Bank as well as other local food charities. So keep your eye on our church calendar and join us in God's Garden!

In Christ's Love,
Jennifer

Our Christian Education committee is blessed to have so many share their God-given gifts with us. If you would like to become involved in the ACC Christian Education Ministry or have other questions or comments, please contact Jennifer deSimas at 678-0488 or ceminister@avon-church.org.

Vision and Purpose of Christian Education at Avon Congregational Church

The purpose of our Church School is to impart to each child a way of life that demonstrates the fundamental lessons of Jesus Christ:

- Joy comes from giving of oneself, not acquiring for oneself.
- Joy comes from cooperation, not competing to see who is better.
- Joy comes from our faith in God, and gives us strength.

In addition, we teach our children that

- ... God's name is Love;
- ... God's nature is Compassion;
- ... God's presence is Joy;
- ... God's word is Truth;
- ... God's will is Peace;
- ... and God's gift to all is Eternal Life.

The Board of Christian Education envisions that all young people enrolled in the Avon Congregational Church School over a number of years will have a solid Biblical background including, but not limited to, the following:

- Old and New Testament Stories
- The Holy Spirit
- The Ten Commandments
- The Lord's Prayer
- The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40)
- Doxology
- Gloria Patri
- The Sacraments of Baptism and Communion
- The Cycle of the Church Seasons
- Mission and Stewardship
- Skills necessary to use the Bible
- Personal favorite passages from Scripture

About Our Church School Programs

Students in Pre-K through Eighth Grade are welcome year-round to come to Church School while their parents attend worship. Classes meet during the worship service—children attend the first part of the worship service with their parents, and leave with their teachers after the Children’s Message. During the summer months, classes are less structured as we join in union services with our sister church, West Avon Congregational.

Church School: Church School students study the epic stories of the Bible and learn the basic tenets of our faith through drama, crafts, prayer, singing and more. The curricula we use are chosen for their relevancy to today’s kids and the ways they engage children to apply Christian principles to everyday life. Occasionally we also teach special topics through Rotation Workshops. These dynamic sessions incorporate the theory of Multiple Intelligences. Classes attend different weekly workshops—art, drama, film, music, movement, cooking, science—as they study a particular theme or story.

Nursery/Crib Room: A place for our very youngest friends to grow in God’s love, the Nursery is for children ages 0-3 and their parents. An overhead speaker allows adults to follow the worship service while their children relax and play. The Nursery is open Sunday mornings from 9:45 until directly following the worship service.

Youth Ministry

Our youth groups meet regularly at ACC and points beyond for fellowship and mission projects. Parent involvement is essential to the success of this ministry.

- **C.I.A.**—Christians In Action—for 7th and 8th graders
- **ACCTIONS**—Avon Congregational Church Teens In Outstanding New Service—for 9th-12th graders This group also takes overnight trips for missions and retreats.

We encourage our youth to get involved in the full ministry of ACC, including serving on committees, helping in classrooms, serving as acolytes (fifth-graders and up only) or ushers, and working at church functions such as the annual Rummage Sale.

Other Christian Education Activities

- **Confirmation Class:** Classes begin in October and conclude with the Rite of Confirmation on Pentecost (May 27). This is an activity-based program of faith formation led by the pastor, open to church youth in eighth grade and above.
- **Gift Bibles** for confirmands, third graders and kindergarteners.
- **Bible Buddies:** Third-grade Church School students (and children who are new to ACC) partner with sixth graders in the springtime to learn how to use the Bible through games, crafts, cooking and more.
- **Christmas pageant:** Children of any age are encouraged to participate in our annual intergenerational Christmas pageant, a joyful, creative presentation of the story of Jesus' birth. Watch for pageant information in mid November.
- **Kids' Night Out:** A fun night for kids and parents! Children (ages 3-10) come to ACC for an evening of games, crafts, movies and more with ACC youth and adult volunteers, while parents take a night off.
- **Adult Education:** Short-term, small-group studies on varying topics.
- **Church Library:** Located upstairs in the sitting room, the Library offers children's books and family-oriented videos and DVD's as well as books on church history, Christianity, philosophy, life issues (such as marriage, work, and raising children), biographies, devotional guides and prayer books and more.

Church School Dates to Remember

2011-2012

September

- 11 **Homecoming Sunday** Church School begins today!
 - Welcome Breakfast, 8:45 a.m.
 - Church School Registration, 9:30 a.m.

October

- 2 **World Communion Sunday – Children’s Chapel (Room 5)**
Blessing of the Animals outdoor service, 2 p.m.
- 30 **Reformation Sunday – Bring Bibles to Worship for Dedication!**

November

- 6 **Children’s Chapel**
- 27 **First Sunday of Advent**

December

- 3 **Christmas Pageant Rehearsal, 10 a.m.**
- 4 **All-Church Advent Festival, 11:30 a.m.**
- 10 **Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal, 10 a.m.**
- 11 **Christmas Pageant and Dinner, 5 p.m.**
- 18 **Christmas Caroling, 4 – 6 p.m.**
- 24 **Christmas Eve Services, 5 p.m., 10 p.m.**
- 25 **Christmas Day**

January

8 Children's Chapel

29 Teacher Appreciation Sunday ♥

February

**19 Children's Chapel
Shrove Sunday**

March

4 Children's Sunday – please arrive by 9:45!

25 Children's Chapel

April

1 Palm Sunday

Palm Processional – please meet in Fellowship Hall by 9:45!

5 Maundy Thursday

Vespers service led by High School Youth, 7 p.m.

6 Good Friday – noon union service w/WACC at WACC

8 Easter Sunday

May

6 Children's Chapel

June

3 Children's Chapel