

Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Families

Looking back at 2017, it felt very full. There were plenty of things happening. Since many activities have been reported by the Christian Education and Youth Ministry Committees, I won't belabor readers with redundant information - please read those annual reports. Nonetheless, there are a few things I would like to add with regard to our intentional ministries for Christian formation.

Our Children's Ministry supported the idea of reaching out and connecting with Emerson Elementary School for their after-school tutoring. In January 2017, a group of dedicated volunteers from Federated Church went to Emerson on a weekly basis to help students with homework for an hour - thank you to Chris Dixon, Cindee Wachter, Anjel Garcia Lopez, Ethan Yang and Lucas Miller.

Children's Ministry partnered with the First United Methodist Church for the annual Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) during the first full week of June. It was wonderful to see our children - and many other children - gathered together and excited to learn more about God's Word. Thank you to all our volunteers and teacher Kristi Wolfe, our VBC coordinator for the past two years. During the summer months (when there is normally no Sunday school), children were provided snacks and kid-friendly activities after their sermon - thank you to Sunnie Yang and Macyn Norris.

We made a change to when our Confirmation classes meet. Instead Sunday mornings during the education hour, confirmands now meet each other week on Sunday evenings for a couple hours. I would like to thank the Gausman, Lange and Norris families for willing to try something different. One of the many benefits of this change is the feasibility of doing more activities with confirmands (Annie L., Macyn N. & Riley G.). We helped Women's Fellowship with posting signs for Cookies N More, sorted cans for recycling and prepared a meal for the Columbus Rescue Mission. Another benefit is the formation of a 7th & 8th grade class for Sunday mornings. Thank you to Brenda Sand and Lisa Perrin for accepting the challenge to teach our new middle school group.

There are plenty of activities mentioned in the Youth Ministry Committee report. But one thing that was not shared - and should not be overlooked - is Doug Williams' service as a youth teacher. Doug requested to step down from teaching with the recent graduating class. While it was tempting to say no, I knew that he did not make this decision lightly. Thus his request was accepted and we want to thank Doug for his many years decades of service to our Youth Ministry. I recently learned that he was instrumental in starting this ministry when his children were in their adolescence.

There are many people to thank for the things we have been able to do with our ministry to children, youth and families. I want to thank all our teachers, among those not previously mentioned: Denny Vollbracht, Heidi Kleemann, Matt & Nicole Miller, Max & Ashli Porter, Roland Augspurger. Thank you also to the members of Christian Education, Youth Ministry and Membership & Growth Committees with whom I've had the privilege of working with.

One of the great privileges of being a pastor is being welcomed into sacred moments of life. We celebrated several baptisms and confirmations in 2017. I also got to officiate wedding ceremonies for these beautiful couples: Shelby Hughes with Brian Alther on May 27th and Kaylee Dewald with Beau Godwin on September 16th. Along with these celebrations of new life, there were celebrations of *completed* life. I am tremendously grateful for the opportunities to preside over the memorial and/or graveside services for these beloved children of God: Irene Christensen, Linda Miller, Cynthia Irby and John Neater.

Thank you Federated Church for allowing me to serve as a pastor.

God's blessing on us all,
Edward Yang