

2018 Youth Ministry Annual Report

The verse I chose for our Youth program for 2018 was; “*For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.*” *Matthew 18:20*. While there have been many events where we only had two or three students attend the events, none the less, 2018 has been a year of progress within our Youth program.

We had a very busy winter! In February, we had a Super Bowl party, a Senior High Retreat to Johnsonburg, and of course the West Jersey Presbytery 30 Hour Famine at Trinity Presbyterian in Cherry Hill.

As we moved forward into Lent, the Senior High students committed to starting a contemporary worship service on Saturday evenings. They carried through with the theme they learned about while on their Johnsonburg retreat; “What is Your Mission?” The services were a success and the students’ and I decided to continue them on a regular basis. However, to try and save ourselves from burning out, we chose to schedule the services once a month, rather than once a week. We would now call them our “Second Saturday Services” as they would be held the second Saturday of every month.

In the spring, the Club J students painted “Kindness Rocks” and enjoyed hiding them around the grounds of the church during their Easter party. The Senior High students and I went to see “I Can Only Imagine” in theaters with some of the Wenonah Youth.

The summer gave us some challenges with the weather. We had several “Movies in the Park” trips planned, but got rained out of a few. We did manage to see *Moana* in June at the Wenonah Park. It was a great event and we had a really great turnout of kids and parents. We also played mini-golf in the summer at Gino’s one night. We tried to have a pool party at the Federici’s house not once, but twice, but got rained out of both dates.

As we pressed on to the Fall, in September we began our “Second Saturday Services” with the older students. We also started to refer to that group as the “SNL Squad,” or the “Salt & Light” Squad.” It was important to me that those middle school aged students who were ready to move up to participate in the events with the older kids, didn’t feel left out because they were not in “Senior High” and yet they were really getting too big for the Club J events. So by referring to the older kids as the SNL Squad, I believe it allowed our middle schoolers to feel more accepted into that group.

A very humbling event for me to reflect on, was how the whole church came together to help me accomplish the goal of making over 250 Salvation Bracelets to take with me on my mission trip to Haiti with Miracle Ear. I loved teaching the kids what the bracelets meant and seeing them learn where Haiti was in relation to Cuba. I loved seeing the kids work with other members of our congregation to make all those bracelets. Finally, when it was time for me to leave, to have the opportunity to witness our kids lay hands on the bracelets and help bless them for kids of Haiti, who they had never met, was a beautiful sight.

The remainder of the Fall, we built scarecrows and had “Friendsgiving,” complete with all the foods served in *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving*. As we finished out the year, we finished up with our Youth Group Christmas party. The Club J and SNL Squad kids came together to make 7 tie blankets for some of our Special People from the church. We were very grateful to several members of the congregation, who came to help us with this project as well.

As we look forward to 2019, I am excited about several of our events. We will continue with our “Second Saturday Services,” enjoy bowling, movies, and parties. Of course we have our “Souper Bowl of Caring” and the “30 Hour Famine” as well. However, the biggest event to come in 2019 will be Triennium in July. I am so excited to take 7 of our Youth to Purdue University with about 50 other students/ leaders from our West Jersey Presbytery for a week to help them grow their faith with thousands of other Presbyterian Youth from around the country. This will be my first Triennium event, and I couldn’t be more excited to experience it alongside of our kids!

The 2019 verse I have chosen to represent this year for myself and the kids is; *Romans 15:2* “*We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.*” It is not an easy thing to live as a Christian in today’s world. However, this world needs more people to shine their light of Christ. My hope is that each day the youth of this church continue to shine their individual lights that God has given them so they can encourage others in their daily lives to follow their example.

I thank you for another year to have the opportunity to help guide the students of our church along their faith journeys.

Respectfully Submitted by Becky Schad 1/20/2019