

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

For one week in the summer, VBS is offered for 4-year-olds through 6th graders. Over 75 children participated this past summer and learned about Esther through mission, puppet skits, arts and crafts, games, music, dance and drama. Fun was had by all!



Other Activities

During December, the Board invites families to enjoy our Advent Workshop. For two hours, happy chaos reigns while families make Christmas crafts, sing Christmas carols and hear Christmas stories and watch a puppet show. The Board invites children from a Hartford shelter to join the fun for this wonderful event.

The Lenten Family Workshop is offered on Palm Sunday each year. During this event, children and adults learn about Holy Week in creative and engaging ways, including



watching a puppet show, experiencing the Last Supper, walking the labyrinth, creating images that represent Jesus and witnessing the empty tomb.

The Board also sponsors a book sale where adult and children's books are available. Proceeds from the sale go towards the purchase of new additions to our library.

Library

The Board of Christian Education is responsible for maintaining, updating and encouraging the use of our Church library. Our library contains videos and DVDs for children, adults and study groups, books on Church history, theology, family life, parenting, prayer, spiritual life, death and dying, social issues, as well as reference books. It also offers children's Bible storybooks, activity books and books to help teach the Bible. New books and resources are continually being added. The library is open whenever the Church is open and the room is not in use for a meeting. Books can be checked out, using the checkout system to the left as you enter the library. Take advantage of our library - it is a great resource!

2008 - 2009

Board of Christian Education

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Kate VanDerzee, Director of Christian Education

Board of Christian Education 2008 - 2009

We are very blessed at First Church to have many talented and dedicated people who share their faith with our Church family through our Christian Education programs. Please take a moment to read about the activities of the Board of Christian Education. We welcome your ideas and suggestions!

*Members of the Board of Christian Education
Kate VanDerzee, Director of Christian Education*



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The Board of Christian Education, working with the Director of Christian Education, is responsible for:

- Planning and making recommendations to the Church Council concerning the educational policy and curriculum followed at First Church.
- Recruiting teachers for the Church School which meets each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Providing support and training for teachers and managing the Church School program.
- Staffing crib and toddler rooms for 9:00 & 10:30 a.m. services.
- Recruiting teachers and child care volunteers for the 9:30 a.m. summer program.
- Providing and maintaining a library for the Church community.
- Sponsoring seasonal programs.
- Overseeing the church school mission projects.
- Organizing Vacation Bible School during the summer.

Church School

The Church School runs September through June for over 200 children, three-year-olds through 8th grade. Over 50 caring volunteer teachers (both adults and teenagers) make our Church School a warm and happy place for children to learn about the Bible and God's love for them.

Children attend the beginning of worship in the Meetinghouse with their families unless there is a special program. After the passing of the peace, the children and teachers go to their classrooms. Within the classrooms, there are various types of worship and fellowship, including singing, making crafts, reading stories, discussing the Bible and other ideas, and enjoying each other's company. In

June, the classes plan and participate in the Church School Celebration Sunday worship service in the Meetinghouse.



Gather Round is the curriculum used for our four-year-olds through sixth graders. *Gather Round* is a Bible-based curriculum which aims to nurture children and youth in their faith formation by helping them know, love, and follow God, by engaging them in the language and habits of worship, by respecting them as partners in ministry, and by encouraging them to engage directly with scripture and outreach. The children in the three-year-old class use lessons from *Bible Lessons for Toddlers*.

Sixth, seventh and eighth graders have the option of participating in our puppet troupe or the Explore program. In the puppet troupe, skits and songs are written, rehearsed and performed in church, during the church school hour for the children, and at other events throughout the year. In the Explore program, the children experience a variety of units of study, including learning about world religions, prayer, music, mission and self-worth.



During the summer, the Board offers church school and child care for all children. A "rotational" model of curriculum is used during the summer.

Child Care

Child care is provided in the crib and toddler rooms from 8:00 a.m. through noon every Sunday. Our hired child care provider works with the volunteers to ensure the youngest children in our church have a loving and safe environment to play in.



Please register your child for church school and crib/toddler care if he/she is going to participate.

Mission Projects

The Board is involved in a number of mission projects throughout the year. Annual projects include the Christmas Giving Tree, Christmas Eve gift giving and One Great Hour of Sharing collection banks. Each year the church school also participates in a large scale mission project. In the past, we have supported Heifer Project, Church World Service, Hartford Food Systems, Haitian Health Foundation and Fred Wish elementary School. This year we will be supporting the "Giving Hope" program through Church World Service. The money raised by the class sales, children's offering and special gifts from congregation members will all go towards empowering child-headed households through education and training so they can learn how to support their families as the parents have died from AIDS. These mission project funds will also raise money so families can learn about hygiene, latrine and malaria prevention.

Each church school class also participates in their own mission project. In the past, the projects have included:

- Collecting canned foods for the Horace Bushnell Food Pantry;
- Sponsoring a toiletry drive for the South Park Inn homeless shelter;
- Collecting health kit materials for victims of natural disasters;
- Initiating letter writing to military personnel stationed abroad.
- Making blankets for children whose parents are in prison.

This year we look forward to many more inspiring class mission projects.

