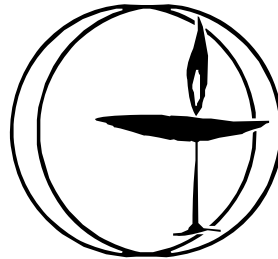


First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh



Religious Education for Children and Youth

Prospectus
2008-2009

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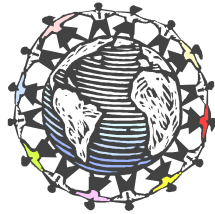
Phone: 412.621.8008 Fax: 412.621-9011

www.first-unitarian-pgh.org

WELCOME TO THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Many parents seek a church experience that can give their children a sense of belonging, meaning, and spiritual identity through their growing up years. We aim to provide a program which supports parents, children and youth in their religious quests. We strive to create a welcoming, stimulating and nurturing environment in which young people can develop beliefs, values, a sense of wonder, and the ability to begin to put beliefs and principles into action. A sense of closeness with our church community comes with active participation in our programs, and makes learning and identification with Unitarian Universalist values a natural and comfortable process. Community membership is as much an element of our program as the Sunday School classes, worship, and special events. We welcome you to our community and look forward to being with you in growth and learning.

*Jennifer Halperin, Children and Youth Ministries
The Religious Education Council*



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- ◆ We believe that each and every person is important.
- ◆ We believe that all people should be treated fairly.
- ◆ We believe that our churches are places where all people are accepted, and where we keep on learning together.
- ◆ We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.
- ◆ We believe that all people should have a voice and a vote which concern them.
- ◆ We believe that we should work for a peaceful, fair, and free world.
- ◆ We believe that we should care for our planet earth.



FROM OUR MINISTER

Providing opportunities for religious education is one of the most important tasks of any Unitarian Universalist church.

For children, religious education can help create a store of memories and feelings and experiences that build and sustain a reverence for the world, an appreciation for the meaning of religious

community, respect for one's own wondering and insights, and a true desire to make the world a better place.

For youth, religious education can provide both an anchor and a sail, helping to focus questions of ethics, identity, and relationships, one at a time when life changes very fast.

For adults—yes, religious education is something that can happen throughout one's life—religious education offers structured opportunities for reflection about meaning and purpose, transitions and journeys, justice and compassion, being of service to the world and deepening one's personal spirituality.

Becoming involved in religious education is one of the best ways to get to know other people at our church. This prospectus lists many paths open to families, youth and children, and parents. We look forward to your participation.

Rev. David Herndon

RE COUNCIL MEMBERS

2008-2009

Shelley Ross - Chair

Mary Denison

Maria Lauro

Kristen Mertz

Jan Steckel

Jennifer Parsons - Staff

Jennifer Halperin - Staff

OUR MISSION

...is to provide for our children and youth experiences that will foster and support their personal growth and learning as thinking, spiritual and ethical beings within a safe, nurturing, inclusive, and open minded church community. We expect they will develop over time a positive sense of identity as Unitarian Universalist individuals within a religious community.

OUR GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

At First Unitarian Church we endeavor:

- ❖ **To provide the experience of membership and participation in an active, loving, inclusive, ethical intergenerational community.**
- ❖ **To facilitate the development of each child as a religious thinker by fostering pride and confidence in her/his own thoughts.**
- ❖ **To teach about the values, beliefs and history our Unitarian Universalist movement, including our roots in Jewish and Christian teachings.**
- ❖ **To celebrate special holidays and life events together as a community, in the spirit of fun.**
- ❖ **To celebrate rites of passage, holidays during the year and life events as meaningful and important.**
- ❖ **To recognize and encourage the special gifts of every person.**
- ❖ **To affirm and model the value of diversity and difference within our church community.**
- ❖ **To offer opportunities for service to others to fulfill our responsibility to further the work of social justice, or a fair world for all.**



RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Register Your Child

Forms are mailed at the end of the summer to all previous registrants in our program. We need your child to be registered so you will receive our mailings and so we can plan for volunteers and supplies. Forms are available in the Mason Wing outside the RE office or click on this link to register online:

https://fs18.formsite.com/FirstUnitarianChurch/form983244941/secure_index.

We ask that you register your child even if you are not a member.

Parents Are Expected to Help

We can only function with the generous volunteer help of all our families. Join a teaching team. There are many opportunities to meaningfully contribute to our program and *we ask each family to volunteer in at least two areas each year.*

We really need and appreciate your contributions and you will be glad you participated. Volunteer opportunities are listed on our Volunteer Form, on our bulletin board outside the RE office, or call Jennifer Halperin at 621-8008.

Contribute Financially

At this time, there is no registration fee, but we do ask participating families to pledge or contribute financially to the church's overall budget each year according to their ability. Pledging happens during the fall and the fiscal year begins in January. It costs about \$150 per child per year (not including RE staff salaries) to run our program.

Bring Your Child Regularly

It is much easier for a child to experience growing connections with others and to receive the cumulative understanding of the messages in the planned curriculum if they are here regularly.

Express Interest in Your Child's Class

Visit, offer to help in class now and then, chat with teachers, and converse with your children about their classes and other church experiences. Express your appreciation to your child/youth's volunteer teachers.

Share Your Own Views

It is extremely helpful to your child to know how you think about important questions of meaning and value, even when you may be struggling with uncertainty. Most of us view religion as a process and a journey, and your child can learn so much from you.

SAFETY

Nursery

Nursery children must be signed in and out by the same person. Beepers will be available sometime in Fall 2008 for parents to be paged by nursery caregivers.

Preschool Pick-up Authorization Form

The first time you bring your preschool child to class, you will be required to fill out this form that indicates who has permission to pick up your child from class. He/she will not be released to anyone who is not listed on the form.

During the Service

Preschool children through sixth graders should be kept with you when they attend the first part of the service before they are dismissed to go to class. Teachers need the time before church to prepare classrooms and lessons.

Picking Up Your Child After the Service

Parents of children through 3rd grade **MUST** pick up their children in their classrooms after the service. Children should be met in their classrooms unless your child's teachers suggest a different arrangement.

First Aid

There is a FIRST AID KIT in the hallway outside the Gandhi Room for use of all Sunday School classes.




Code of Ethics for Teachers and Leaders

All our teachers, Youth Advisors and Nursery caregivers sign the following Code of Ethics developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association:

Adults who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of both individuals and the First Unitarian Church. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well-qualified to provide the special nurture, care and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential is to be realized.

There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Leaders play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that children and youth suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care; therefore, leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children or youth that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse. It is expected that all leaders will conform to the behavior standards agreed upon by the Religious Education Committee as well as to the laws of the Commonwealth of PA. In cases of violation of this code of ethics, the Director of Children and Youth Ministries and Religious Education Council will take appropriate action.



WORSHIP

The experience of worship is important for the religious growth of children and youth. To this end, children up to and sometimes including the Junior High group are welcomed into our regular Sunday Worship Service every Sunday for about the first fifteen minutes, where they experience the opening readings, music, a hymn, the chalice-lighting, and a brief “Time For All Ages”. They are then dismissed to their classes. *Parents of preschool children should please escort them to their class.*

About five times a year, at Ingathering, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and in January for “Children and Youth Ministries Sunday”, we hold an Intergenerational service which all children attend with their families. Each year in April our high school youth lead an entire Sunday Service. At other times, children youth and families are invited to help in the leadership of the regular service by contributing music, chalice lighting or by reading the children’s covenant.

NURSERY - Fahs Room

Care for our youngest children is provided by Stacy Gregor and Dean Steiner. We are eager to provide nurturing care to make it as comfortable as possible for small children and their parents to be in church. Child safety is of utmost importance to us. We require parents who want to use the Nursery to register their children and sign them in and out each Sunday. *We also ask that all parents who use the Nursery to volunteer as a parent helper several times a year.*

SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES

We offer classes during both our 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. Sunday services. At the 9:30 a.m. service there are classes from preschool through Junior High (9th grade), and at the 11:00 a.m. service there are preschool through Senior High classes. Classes at both services run concurrently with the service. Every Sunday at both 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. children up to 6th grade attend the first part of the service with their families and are dismissed to class after 15-20 minutes.

The Children and Youth Ministries office is the first room on the left in the Mason Wing. Jennifer Halperin, Director of Ministries with Children and Youth, and Jennifer Parsons, Religious Education Administrative Assistant, are available on Sunday mornings. Our teaching staff, with the exception of our nursery caregivers, are all volunteers. Some are veteran teachers, and some are newcomers. They are enthusiastic, dedicated, and especially appreciated by all. Please consider joining an RE team as either a teacher or helper for special events and activities.

CLASSES AND CURRICULA FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Theme: World Religions

PRESCHOOL (3-5 year-olds)/KINDERGARTEN - 9:30 am

PRESCHOOL (3-5 year-olds) - 11:00 am

Gandhi Room

Celebrating Me and My World

This UU full-year curriculum celebrates the wondrous qualities of children and the animals, objects, and people around them. It provides preschoolers with experiences and opportunities to grow in trust and caring and to develop their self-identity and sense of connectedness with all of life.

LOWER ELEMENTARY – Eliot Room

(1st – 3rd GRADES) – 9:30 am

(K – 2nd GRADES) – 11:00 am

Picture Book World Religions and A World of New Friends

Picture Book World Religions, a UU curriculum, introduces children to Hindu, Islamic and Buddhist faiths through lessons designed for 15 beautiful and engaging books. *A World of New Friends* introduces the class to the eight largest world religions through show and tell presentations and hands on activities.

UPPER ELEMENTARY – Priestley Room

(4th - 5th GRADES) - 9:30 am

(3rd - 5th GRADES) - 11:00 am

Islam and Buddhism supplemented with Holidays and Holy Days

The goals of these UU curricula are to develop an awareness and sensitivity to other cultures and religions and to expose the students to different religious experiences they may use as they shape their own spiritual path. There will be time each week devoted to UU identity and practices.

JUNIOR HIGH – Junior High Room

(6th – 9th GRADES) – 9:30 am

(6th – 8th GRADES) – 11:00 am

Traditions With a Wink

This curriculum teaches an understanding of UU faith that can replace the vague “anything we want to” statement with: “We come from a long tradition of questioning and searching. We come from a long tradition of loving kindness and good works.” We have powerful stories and visions of hope. It will teach our UU traditions, to both middle schoolers and their teachers, while adding the fun with which middle schoolers connect to issues and stay enthusiastic about their church experience.

HIGH SCHOOL – Senior High Room

(9th – 12th GRADES) – 11:00 am only

Thinking the Web

Senior High students will learn about and discuss contemporary moral issues from a UU perspective with the intention of developing and enhancing techniques of critical and creative thinking.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

COMING OF AGE

The Coming of Age program for eighth and ninth graders at First Unitarian Church is a rite of passage that recognizes the transition out of childhood. We recognize that while our youth are not yet adults, they have reached the stage of development where they are thinking and reasoning for themselves, and our part is to facilitate their emerging religious identity within a Unitarian Universalist framework. The program has four major areas of emphasis, Mentored Learning, Community Service, UU identity, and writing an Affirmation statement. Highlights of the year are a field trip to Washington, DC in the Spring (for which the group fundraises through the year), the Coming of Age Sunday service, and the ceremonial dinner the night before.



OWL (OUR WHOLE LIVES)

First Unitarian Church periodically offers this comprehensive, progressive, values based sexuality course from September to March to eighth and ninth graders. Our instructors are credentialed to teach the course by the UUA. The curriculum was developed by UU educators in collaboration with the United Church of Christ and is published by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

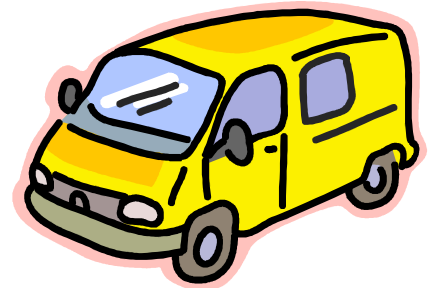
YOUTH GROUP

THURSDAY EVENINGS 7:30-9:00PM (twice a month)

In addition to Sunday morning classes, youth from ninth grade and above have the opportunity to participate in group activities. Meetings can be doing social action related activities, movie nights, ping pong tournaments, worship planning or holiday parties. Youth and advisors work together to determine the schedule for the year. There are purely fun activities, social service projects, and intergenerational worship planning as well as planning for and attending district youth events.

DISTRICT YOUTH EVENTS

Junior High and Senior High youth can participate in four Ohio-Meadville district youth conferences a year. First Unitarian Church is hosting the District Youth Junior High Con Nov. 7—9, 2008. Typically, there is a Fall Senior High Con at the end of September; a Junior High conference in November; and a combined Junior and Senior High conference in January. Youth advisors from the church accompany the youth group- parents are invited to help with transportation. These conferences offer workshops, worship, fun, new friends and joyous reunions. It is a great opportunity to meet youth from other U.U. societies and churches, and amazing to be a part of this youth led event. Our youth are active on the district level, both planning and leading conferences.



KHASI HILLS SPONSOR-A-STUDENT PROGRAM

Did you know there are over 10,000 Unitarians in north east India? First Unitarian Church has a sister church in the Khasi Hills, and we are poised to collaborate with the Education Committee of the North East India Unitarian Union in their social justice initiative to improve public education. We are proud to continue our church-wide school sponsorship program of a rural school in Kharang, in the Meghalaya Province of the Khasi Hills in India. The school was founded in 1951 by Rev. Margaret Barr, an English Unitarian minister, and has been administered by the NE India Unitarian Union ever since. Now a public school serving all children in Kharang, The Kong Barr School currently has 100 students from primary through secondary grades. This sponsorship program will provide books, uniforms, a monthly midday meal, support for teacher's salaries and the construction of a rudimentary science laboratory.



We will launch the sponsorship program in late September. For an annual sponsorship of \$45, families, individuals, group, may correspond with a student with the school, receiving a photo and letter and sending one back in return. We invite you to deepen your connection to the Interdependent Web of Existence!

PERFORMING ARTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

FAMILY CHOIR

On most Tuesday evenings there is a simple meal at 6:00pm followed by Family Choir practice from 6:30—7:30pm. The choir is led by Rev. David Herndon and is a wonderful place to make music together. The choir sings approximately once a month at the 9:30am service from September through May. All are welcome! For additional information, contact David Herndon at 412.621.8008 or email dherndon@first-unitarian-pgh.org.

CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT

First Unitarian Church has a tradition of a 4:30 pm family service on December 24th. This is a pageant that celebrates the Christmas nativity from a Unitarian Universalist perspective that is with universal theological themes of rekindling hope, joy and love in the darkness of winter in the enactment of the age-old story of Jesus' birth. There are parts for children of all ages as well as adults!

ALL-CHURCH MUSICAL

In October 2008, First Unitarian Church will begin rehearsals for Gemini Theater's *Pocahontas – The Legend of the Raven*, an original, all-ages musical theater production about the first interactions between the Algonquin tribe and the early settlers of Jamestown. There are parts for adults, teens, and elementary age children. There are acting-only roles, singing-only roles, and dancing-only roles. All who are interested can participate! Performance date will be March 7, 2009.

DANCE CHOIR

The First Unitarian Church Dance Choir is a dance/movement group that performs during worship several times a year. The group is typically made up of several adults and, for some performances, several youth. For the coming 2008-2009 church year there are plans for leading a hymn in American Sign Language, a folk dance piece including children and youth and a new piece for the Solstice Service in December. For further information, contact Jennifer Halperin at 412.621.8008 x103 or jbhalperin@yahoo.com.

ALL-CHURCH INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS

During the year, Children and Youth Ministries sponsors a number of special events. Some are holiday gatherings, some have a service component, and most include intergenerational socializing or projects. Here is a listing of special events for this school year:

UNICEF PUMPKIN DECORATING CONTEST - October 26, 2008 (after service, with refreshments). Children are given small pumpkins on Sunday, October 19 to take home and decorate. The pumpkins are set up the following week with UNICEF boxes by them for everyone to “vote” with coins for UNICEF.

HALLOWEEN PARTY - Saturday, October 25, 2008. An evening of fun for the whole family with potluck supper, a social action project and plenty of games for all ages!

HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR - Saturday, December 6, 2008. Bring a dish for a potluck supper and stay to make crafts! RE Volunteers provide materials and instructions for a number of art and craft projects to make holiday gifts and decorations. A small fee collected to cover the costs of materials.

SPECIAL FRIENDS ICE CREAM SOCIAL - February 15, 2009. A longstanding First Unitarian Church Tradition! This is a Valentine opportunity for everyone in the congregation to make new friends with our children and youth over an ice cream sundae.

POCAHONTAS MUSICAL PERFORMANCE - Saturday, March 7, 2009

PASSOVER SEDER - April 8, 2009. An intergenerational dinner and ceremony using a UU Haggadah developed by Rev. Roy Weissbard.

SPRING FAMILY RETREAT - May 1-3, 2009 at Jumonville. A weekend for the whole family. Highlights include workshops for adults, children’s activities, worship, games, nature walks and lots of time to be together.

ALL-CHURCH PICNIC - June 14, 2009. Bring a potluck dish and celebrate the end of the church year.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2008-2009

September 7, 2008	Ingathering Celebration with Potluck Brunch (both services)
September 14, 2008	First Day of RE Classes for Children and Youth
October 5, 2008	EECM Food Collection - Spaghetti Sauce
October 11, 2008	<i>Pocahontas</i> auditions, 9:30-11:00am
October 19, 2008	Pick up Pumpkins for UNICEF Pumpkin Event
October 25, 2008	Halloween Costume Party, 5:00-8:00pm
October 26, 2008	UNICEF Pumpkin Event - after worship services
November 2, 2008	EECM Food Collection - Canned Fruit
November 23, 2008	Thanksgiving Luncheon (preK classes only)
November 30, 2008	Thanksgiving Weekend (No RE classes)
December 6, 2008	Holiday Craft Fair and Potluck Supper 5:30-8:00pm
December 7, 2008	EECM Food Collection - Beef Stew or Veg. Alternative
December 21, 2008	One service at 11:00am (preK classes only) Winter Solstice Service - 7:30pm
December 23, 2008	Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal 6:00-8:00pm
December 24, 2008	Family Christmas Eve Service - 4:30pm Candlelight Service - 7:30pm Late Christmas Eve Service - 10:00pm
December 28, 2008	One service at 11:00am - No Classes
January 25, 2009	Children and Youth Ministries Sunday - Intergenerational Worship (No Classes)
February 1, 2009	EECM Food Collection - Tuna or Vegetarian Alternative
February 15, 2009	Special Friends Ice Cream Social - after both services
March 1, 2009	EECM Food Collection - Soup
March 7, 2009	<i>Pocahontas</i> play performance
April 5, 2009	EECM Food Collection - Canned Meat or Veg. Alternative
April 8, 2009	Passover Seder - 5:30pm
April 12, 2009	Easter Sunday Intergenerational Worship (No Classes) Easter Egg Hunt - 10:40am (between services)
May 1-3, 2009	Spring Family Retreat at Jumonville
May 3, 2009	EECM Food Collection - Jelly
May 31, 2009	Moving Up Sunday
June 7, 2009	Last Day of Regular Classes - Field Day
June 14, 2009	Flower Communion Sunday & All Church Picnic
June 21, 2009	Summer RE begins