

MONITORING REPORT:

Ends Achievement Report

End #4

March 2018

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At First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware people of all ages: experience wonder, inspiration, fulfillment, and joy.

Interpretation: The Executive Team believes that it is very difficult to define wonder, inspiration, fulfillment and joy. They are very personal and anecdotal to the individual experiencing them. We also believe that at the best of times, experiences of wonder, inspiration, fulfillment and joy tend to be transitory. There is, therefore, no metric that can establish compliance with this end. We report compliance based on our intuitive sense that the programs that are meant to create the circumstances under which these transitory experiences might occur are offered on a regular basis. And on our intuitive sense that these programs sometimes succeed.

MEANS ATTACHED TO THE END

We believe that the following programs contribute to this End:

Worship The Worship Associates program continues to bring diverse voices into the pulpit in addition to the minister and guest preachers. Multigenerational worship once a month adds another dimension to the worship experience. The Vespers program, added this year, has been very well received and offers an opportunity for an alternative experience of worship.

Music Due to the continuing support of Counterpoint, we have been able to invite guest musicians that bring diverse genres of music to our worship services: African drummers, jazz, and music from the Beatles, Leonard Cohen, and, this spring, The Lion King.

Adult Religious Education Due to dwindling participation, the Adult Religious Education Team has decided to disband. The Adult Forum will continue as an ongoing program. Both the Human Rights and Sustainability Task Forces are planning and presenting programs throughout the year that are of interest to church as well as community members. Special events such as the White Supremacy Workshop with Rev. Hope Johnson, the For Just Such a Time as This leadership training with Rev. David Pyle, and the Child Abuse Prevention training have been well-attended by both congregation members and members of nearby cluster congregations. The ET concludes that one-time events that are integrated into the ongoing work of the program staff are the most effective adult religious education offerings at this time.

Connection Circles/Soul Matters – The Soul Matters approach to small group ministry offers participants the opportunity to move out of the intellectual and into the spiritual exploration of the monthly themes. Even people who do not commit to being in a monthly group have access to the spiritual exercises and questions. Since the themes are addressed in worship each month, the whole congregation has some common language with which to explore the themes. Several of the traditional Connection Circles (Short Stories, Cokesbury, etc.) have continued to meet and report good attendance and positive experiences.

Children and Youth Religious Exploration This year the overall focus of the CYRE program is on social justice. Children of different ages are exposed to developmentally appropriate information about issues that affect our community. After learning about issues such as hunger, animal neglect, and refugee needs, they were able to choose projects that directly address those needs. Examples include the Halloween week-end trick or treat for the Food Bank, the Pennies for Puppies collection, and the letter writing campaign in support of DACA. The children and youth were also participants in all-church events such as the “Take a Knee” last fall and the walk-out for sensible gun laws this month.

Social Justice The new organization of the Social Justice work into three focused task forces seems to be bearing fruit. All three task forces have presented education programs, as well as offering opportunities for both hands-on service and advocacy. Much good publicity has been generated from these events.