

**MONITORING REPORT:
Ends Achievement Report End #2
January 2019**

END #2: At First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware, people of all ages gain new perspectives and grow as informed, spiritual human beings. Our interpretation of this End is unchanged from previous years.

Almost all of the programs at First Unitarian Church apply to all of the Ends. We focus in this report on the programs that *primarily* accomplish this End.

Children and Youth Religious Exploration - In the 2018/2019 church year, First Unitarian Church of Wilmington has 67 children and youth registered. 17 Youth, 9th through 12th graders, attend regularly.

The CYRE Team and Director of Religious Education decided to restructure CYRE Groups. In general, CYRE groups were divided by the following ages/grades:

- Nursery: Infants - 3 years old
- Rainbow Walkers: PreK4 - 1st grade
- Seekers: 2nd - 3rd grades
- Questers: 4th - 5th grades
- Explorers: 6th - 7th grades
- Coming of Age: 8th - 9th grades
- Youth Group: 9th - 12th grades

Due to smaller class sizes and overlapping programs for 9th graders, we decided to change groupings to the following:

- Nursery: Infants - 3 years old
- Rainbow Walkers: PreK3 - Kindergarten
- Seekers: 1st - 3rd grades
- Questers: 4th - 6th grades
- Explorers: 7th-8th grades
- Youth Group: 9th - 12th grades

Nursery (Infants – 3 years) Infants and toddlers enjoy their Sunday mornings playing with our childcare workers in the Nursery. Our volunteers provide a warm and caring environment during worship services in the Nursery. Age appropriate toys, crafts and stories are provided.

Rainbow Walkers (PreK3 - Kindergarten) Rainbow Walkers are introduced to Unitarian Universalism through multi-sensory stories and spiritual work. They begin each morning with a Sharing Circle where they “light” a battery operated chalice and participate in Unitarian Universalist rituals. Then they share a story. After sharing snack

together, children choose their own spiritual work from a variety of options including art materials, blocks, story baskets and other materials.

Seekers (1st grade - 3rd grade) Seekers are participating in the Faithful Journeys program and focusing on our principles. Because ours is a creedless faith, defining what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist can be challenging. Our adults and youth often welcome such a challenge — indeed, a questioning spirit is part of our faith. Yet, our children need to learn who Unitarian Universalists are, what we believe, and how we live in faith. Faithful Journeys equips them with language and experiences to answer these questions and help them develop a strong Unitarian Universalist identity.

Participants embark on a pilgrimage of faith, exploring how Unitarian Universalism translates into life choices and everyday actions. Through sessions structured around the Unitarian Universalist Principles, Faithful Journeys demonstrates that our Principles are not a dogma, but a credo that individuals can affirm with many kinds of actions. Over the course of the program, children discover a unity of faith in the many different ways Unitarian Universalists, including themselves, can act on our beliefs.

Questers (4th grade - 6th grade) Questers are participating in the Windows and Mirrors program. Windows and Mirrors nurtures children's ability to identify their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about and respect those of others. The sessions unpack topics that lend themselves to diverse experiences and perspectives—for example, faith heritage, public service, anti-racism and prayer. The program teaches that there are always multiple viewpoints and everyone's viewpoint matters.

The metaphor of windows and mirrors represents the dynamic relationship among our awareness of self, our perceptions of others, and others' perceptions of us. An ongoing art activity gives children a way to respond to the metaphor creatively and concretely. Participants do guided work on individual Window/Mirror Panels in each session to explore looking inward and looking outward in terms of the session's topic. As a mirror, the panel reflects the individual child. As a window, it represents their view and connections beyond themselves to the congregation, other communities to which they belong and the world.

The Questers are a large and energetic group. Throughout their years at First Unitarian Church this cohort is, at times, challenging and forgets to practice our UU principles in their interactions with volunteers and each other. This year we are adding a variety of team building activities to help them think about their actions, the consequences of their actions, their role as a member of a group and to have some fun! When recovenanting with this group I asked them what were positive things about the Questers group. They responded that they are all friends and they respect each other. So, although they are challenging our volunteers, they enjoy church and being together!

Additionally, this group will run the multigenerational worship service in December. This helps them learn the elements of a worship service, recognize the work needed to provide a worship service and feel connected to the larger church community.

Explorers (7th grade - 8th grade) Explorers are participating in the Coming of Age program. Coming of Age is a Unitarian Universalist rite of passage focused on providing opportunities for youth to explore beliefs and values, as well as individual gifts, strengths and weaknesses. The program is designed to be mentally and physically challenging. It aids rising youth in their personal growth and understanding of self; culminating with an Affirmation Worship Service.

Youth Group (9th grade - 12th grade) Youth Group meets every other week after the worship service. Youth Group is led by elected youth leaders in partnership with the Director of Religious Education and adult advisors. This year the elected youth leaders are Hayden Laster and Joyce Salasky. Activities form a balance of social action, faith formation, worship experiences, and opportunities to gather for fun and friendship.

Adult Religious Growth and Learning

Adult Forum - continues to meet on Sunday mornings before the worship service throughout the year. A wide range of topics are discussed at this Forum.

Soul Matters – Currently we have 5 Soul Matters groups who meet at the church, and one that meets at Maris Grove. This year, in keeping with the philosophy of shared ministry, new facilitators were recruited and trained for almost all the groups. The 2018-2019 Soul Matters topics are:

Vision (September)
Sanctuary (October)
Memory (November)
Mystery (December)
Possibility (January)
Trust (February)
Journey (March)
Wholeness (April)
Curiosity (May)
Beauty (June)

Other Small Groups - There are several Connections Circles that continue to meet using an older format. In addition we have several small groups that focus on a particular theological or spiritual practice. Examples: Brown Bag Groups and Open Heart Zen Sangha.

Social Justice Task Force Programs – This year the Human Rights Task Force has initiated a monthly Justice Moment program. A brief time is allotted in a worship service once a month for the presentation of a social justice issue. Often these are by experts from community groups that are working in collaboration with First U

advocates. Longer programs that allow for more depth of understanding are also planned. Among these have been:

During Peace Week Delaware 2018, we hosted a presentation on “The Fight for Transgender Equality”. The keynote speaker was Sarah McBride, a board member of Equality Delaware, an organization committed to nondiscrimination in gender identity and expression.

The Human Rights Task Force and American Promise Delaware organized a viewing and discussion of a debate simulcast from the National Constitution Center. The topic was “Should we amend the Constitution to authorize political spending limits?”.

“Welcoming the Stranger: Refugee and Immigration Crisis in Delaware and Beyond”, was a recent forum on the state of immigration and immigration rights in Delaware and beyond. Speakers included representatives of the legal profession, resettlement agencies, and Dreamers.

Pastoral Care Associates have scheduled two programs for this year: one on end-of-life planning and one on diagnosing and preventing elder abuse.

ASSESSMENT: We report achievement of End #2.