

2024 Annual Report from Children's Faith Formation

We're doing a "NEW THING!"

Beginning January 6, 2024 a new worship service began which targeted young families. It took place in the Parish Hall during the 10 am hour (running concurrently with the traditional Rite 2 Eucharist in the church.) Following months of work by a worship team consisting of Fr. Bernie Pecaro, Fr. Paul Kane, Liz Ryan, Barbara Filipowski, Deborah Cartwright-Clough, Charles Bennett, Paul Lopez, Ellen Kentner, Bobby McKeehan, Janet Thompson and John Putnam, this half hour Eucharist service was tailor-made for the "wiggles" in our congregation and community. Consisting of prayer, scripture stories, hymns and praise the service was named "Family Prayers & Praise" and it included Christian Formation for children during and after the service. Children are encouraged to engage in the liturgy, scripture skits and ministry in ways that are exciting and active.

Using familiar songs that the children sing in the St. Paul's Day School Chapel services, the little ones and their families participate each week, with readers singing the lyrics that are displayed on the screens in the Parish Hall. The children become actors in the rhyming Bible stories wearing simple costumes and repeating or miming the actions that are narrated.

The Prayers of the People are prayers that are written on strips of colored paper to make a chain (that now encircles the whole Parish Hall) and can be printed on a whiteboard to be lifted up by the whole congregation.



Children bring up the gifts of homemade bread and grape juice for Communion and all children are invited to stand at the altar with the clergy and help during the consecration of the elements, lifting their hands as instructed by our celebrant.

A soft rug and stuffed animals provide a place for babies and toddlers to play, welcomed within the worship space. And "shaker eggs" are handed out so everyone can participate in the final upbeat song that sends the children to make a craft that will help them learn more about the scripture story and become a visual reminder of their lesson of the day.

There are even "kid-friendly" snacks to enjoy as fellowship is an important part of this service.

Attendance has proven that families (from babies to great-grandparents!) have found a place to play and pray together. Parents have told us that their children look forward to Sunday each week!

During the summer this year, we held our annual VBS and just as the world enjoyed the Summer Olympic Games, we enjoyed the 2024 St. Paul's Episcopal Olympic Games!!! Beginning with a runner lighting the Olympic caldron with his "torch"! (Cue "Chariots of Fire" music!) The week saw us

**Family
Prayers
&
Praise**



**10 am
Sunday**

**"Wiggles"
Welcome**



“hosting” teams from many different sports and learning from Bible stories about the apostle Paul. The “Training Camp” provided all our young friends with theme-appropriate crafts, games, snacks and music. And everyone, 80 participants and volunteers, had a fantastic time!

With Family Prayers & Praise on hiatus, we held “Popcorn and Parables” on Sunday mornings during the summer (as has been our tradition) and the smell of popcorn enticed more than one adult to watch cartoon videos that told the Parables of Jesus.



We enjoyed the Blessing of the Trick or Treaters on the last Sunday in October and saw our “Trunk or Treat” in the parking lot after the 10 am service grow to include many more cars and even a Delray Beach Fire Engine! Trick or Treaters in costumes (as well as the adults who accompanied them) got their sweet-tooth satisfied!



Christmas brought a return to our traditional Christmas Pageant during the Christmas Eve family service. The Spengler Family (a Day School family) stepped up to be our Holy Family with 9 mos. old Sienna in the role of Jesus! Fr. Bernie, aka Angel Gabriel, angels and shepherds, 2 kings (one took a wrong turn) and some stuffed sheep gave us a visual image to go along with the scripture read beautifully by Kamani Bostwick and Lukas Linebaugh.

It has been a year of growth and joy and we are so blessed!

Respectfully Submitted,
Liz Ryan, Children’s Faith Formation Coordinator

