

Faith Formation 2/4/26

Present: Nancy Gillombardo, Gordon Landefeld, Kate McFadden, Jerry Parker, Caleb Peters, Katie Wetherbee, Susan Wherley

- Katie offered an opening prayer
- **Introductions/Recruitment**
 - All present introduced themselves and shared their experience with Fairmount/FF
 - 5:30 meetings on the first Wednesday of the month continue to work well for the group
 - We are welcoming new members → feel free to invite congregation members to join Faith Formation at any time!
- **Ecumenical Lent Series: "RISE UP! The Power of the Beloved Community"**
 - Wednesday evening gatherings with four other churches through Lent:
 - Shiloh Baptist Church
 - Christ Episcopal Church
 - St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
 - First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland
 - Kickoff event: Mardi Gras at Fairmount **February 17th**
 - Ash Wednesday **February 18th** worship service at Christ Episcopal Church
 - Wednesday weekly structure thereafter will be 6:30-8 PM: worship, teaching, prayer for the first half followed by dinner and fellowship for the second half
 - Rotating between churches each week
 - NOTE: Because of this series, there will be no weekly faith formation programming at Fairmount on Sunday mornings during Lent, nor will there be Lent bags/booklets
 - Please keep an ear to the ground about congregational satisfaction with these changes (namely if anyone specifically misses Lent bags/booklets)
- **Youth Summer Update**
 - Middle Schoolers
 - Plan for middle school youth to attend the Montreat Middle School Conference in Tennessee (if we have 5-6 youth sign up)
 - Maryville College - July 15-19
 - High Schoolers
 - Not going to DR this year given ongoing discernment with Bridges to Batey
 - Pastoral staff met with youth and families to explain this decision given youth connection to DR trip
 - Kate is exploring options with youth and their families for a trip that will be likely around one week
 - Frontera de Cristo border immersion trip at the Arizona/Mexico border
 - Most youth have expressed interest in this experience
 - Appalachian immersion trip with a church in Kentucky
 - Nancy shared institutional memory about prior requirements (in the 1990/2000s) for participation in youth programs and fundraising events to be able to travel with Fairmount
 - She wishes that we saw more of the youth
 - Kate shared the changing cultural landscape of modern youth and the challenges of instituting fundraising requirements with how busy youth are and how much pressure they are under with activities
 - Katie volunteered to help teach parents about how to talk to kids about stewardship and financial responsibility
 - Suggested starting with Club 4/5 and middle schoolers (teach 'em young!)

- **UPCaM (United Protestant Campus Ministries)**
 - Dinner Church scheduled for **February 8th** at 6 PM at Covenant Presbyterian Church with Fairmount Youth: all are welcome!
 - Kate will be leading worship, Caleb plans to attend
 - Anticipating approximately 20 students
 - Nancy, Oona, Kate, and Susan will be providing dinner
 - Goal remains for Fairmount to sponsor Dinner Church once per semester: this involves cooking dinner and being present for worship and dinner
 - Kate shared that she remains hopeful for further involvement by Fairmount in this ministry, which is doing meaningful and important work supporting young adults in our community
 - Serve Council and Presbytery also support this work
- **Silent Saturday**
 - Saturday **March 28th**, being planned by Kate, Oona, and Lauren
 - Community-wide silent retreat, with offerings including yin yoga, guided meditation, sound bath, reading room, craft room, three meals, entry/exit singing circles, and a time for dialogue and reflection at the conclusion of the event
 - Need two types of volunteers:
 - Ushers: registration, welcome, and orientation to the space/event
 - Kitchen: breakfast, lunch, and dinner
 - Volunteers get to participate in Silent Saturday free of charge!
 - Please let Kate know if you would like to participate, also please help recruit other volunteers from the congregation!
- **Discovering the Spiritual Wisdom of Trees**
 - Book by Leah Rampy and Beth Norcross
 - William Birkett Williams lecture scheduled for **May 13th** by one of the authors
 - Alycia Ashburn is planning a book study in the 6 weeks leading up to the lecture
 - Participants are asked to attend at least 4 out of 6 weeks
 - Plan for simultaneous online and in-person discussion
 - Alycia and Nikkie Monah are also planning more Spirituality in Nature walks for spring
 - 2-3 walks throughout the spring semester, starting in late February
 - Goal to have a walk for children running parallel to a walk for adults
 - Parents have time for reflection and inspiration
 - Kids are learning, moving, finding God in all things
- **Women's Retreat**
 - Tabled until next month
- **No Strangers Club**
 - Tabled until next month
- Closing prayer deferred to joint council meeting, for which we were very nearly on time!