

# **118<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in Utah, 2022**

## **Report of the Youth Faith Formation**

**Submitted by Karen Gleeson, Diocesan Youth Director**

Members: The Rev. Kurt Wiesner, The Rev. Christopher Szarke, The Rev. Pablo Ramos, Karen Gleeson, Sara Baese, Ingrid VanZanten, Shannon Bramblet

Mission: The Faith Formation Committee supports the faith formation of children, youth and their families in all congregations of the Diocese of Utah.

Goals for Youth Faith Formation:

- Provide support for congregational faith formation leaders, both lay and clergy
  - Through diocesan workshops
  - Sending interested people to trainings which they can share with the Diocese
  - Bringing in knowledgeable people from the wider church for training and support
- Support the programs for faith formation for junior high and senior high youth as well as their families
- Celebrate the gifts and presence of the young people in this Diocese
- Evaluate the needs and desires of the parishes for the children of the Diocese
- Help families understand the connection of positive mental health with their faith

Actions:

Ministries that were supported by Youth Faith Formation:

Summer of 2022 – Supported youth mission trip to Alamosa, Colorado to address systemic, rural poverty and provide care for children’s ministry. Eleven youth from three congregations joined together with YouthWorks who organizes Christ-Centered Mission Trips for youth. The mission trip was led and organized by Youth Director Shannon Burke and Mother Holly Huff from St. Mark’s Church.

Fall of 2022 – Youth Faith Formation supported Godly Play training and helped finance four leaders from the Diocese that were certified to become storytellers to implement this wonderful children’s formation program to their churches.

Findings: After we offered our mental health support event for our youth and their family members in March of 2022, we recognized the need to continue to offer events that are geared for the whole family.

Events that were offered in 2022/2023:

October of 2022- Family BBQ night hosted at San Esteban where we played group games and Rev. Daniella Lee led an activity with the youth exploring ways of using the camera lens to see the world in a different way.

November of 2022- Soul Care Family event at the Episcopal Conference Center. Three different spiritual practices were offered: A mindfulness labyrinth walk with Julie Vesley, spiritual leader and teacher. A spiritual meditation led by Brian Cunningham, mental health care provider, and intentional prayer led by Father Tyler Doherty. We wrapped up the evening with pizza and conversation.

January, 2023 - We had a great turn out for our family January event. We collaborated with St. James and enjoyed a delicious catered taco bar and broke off into our smaller age groups for activities. Younger kids participated in a sensory walk while youth in junior high made vision boards. High schoolers talked about the upcoming EYE (Episcopal Youth Event) in July of 2023 while the parents had time to enjoy conversations with each other. We all rejoined together for a nice campfire outside and roasted marshmallow for s'mores.

Recommendations for upcoming topic discussions for 2023: We would like to offer events centered around our beloved community, including anti-racism and topics on justice. We will be collaborating with Father Pablo Ramos as well as other guest speakers. We would also like to encourage our community to engage in a Diocesan wide service project on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January 2024.

It is our continued hope and prayer that our youth in the Diocese:

- Have a relationship with God
- Have a loving, safe, inclusive community to share and express their concerns
- Know how to pray and grow spiritually in worship and outreach
- Have relationships in the church across generations
- Gain knowledge of the faith, practice, and spirit of the Episcopal Church

To learn more about other youth/family and young adult events, please see reports for Youth Ministry and Camp Tuttle. Also, visit our website at [www.episcopalyouth.org](http://www.episcopalyouth.org)