

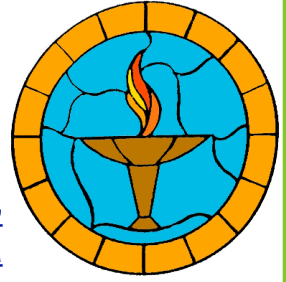
EAST SHORE UNITARIAN CHURCH

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH AND MEANING. ACTING FOR LOVE AND JUSTICE.

425-747-3780

WWW.EASTSHOREUNITARIAN.ORG
[HTTP://ESUCPARENT.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://ESUCPARENT.BLOGSPOT.COM)



Building Community

We are communal creatures. Despite US dominant culture's call for individual freedom, most people realize they need others, whether to provide services or for companionship. We need one another. With the necessity for community at our core, one could wonder why it is so difficult to be in a community, shouldn't it be instinct? The fact is we are constantly bombarded with images and role models which advocate for the opposite of community. We are subjected to endless advertisements stressing individuality. Our church is called to be a community, a radically welcoming, world transforming, continuously loving community. We work together to provide experiences and role models focusing on right relationships and love.

The essence of our children and youth ministry is about building community. First learning about the UU community (our church and the wider denomination) alongside learning about our own thoughts and feelings. This foundation gives children the chance to articulate their beliefs and build relationships of mutual respect. Next, we move into the ways that our actions affect others, we form community by understanding it takes

everyone to do the work. We grow from articulating our desires to listening to the needs of others and figuring out solutions for everyone. At the core of this community building experience is communication and consistent expectations. Through these pages you will see how children are guided to build community here at church while learning about the wider community of which they are a part. Exploring our UU theology in relationship to the world's religions gives children and youth an understanding of diversity in the world and a capacity to act morally toward all life.

Our faith is built upon covenant, to walk together, learn together, work for justice together, grow our souls together. When adults feel committed to a community they are more likely to care for that community. The same is true for our children. The more they understand their connection to the universe the more they grow spiritually and ethically. The more they grow, they more they are committed. Through Children and Youth Ministry we are transforming world with love and community.

Our program is cooperative:

All families not teaching will be scheduled to assist in the program once every two months.

Children and Youth Ministry Staff

Michelle Conklin, Director of RE dre@eastshoreunitarian.org

Chris Conkling, Youth Programs Coordinator esucytc@gmail.com

Dianne Upton, RE Administrative Assistant reassistant@eastshoreunitarian.org

Stay connected through our blog <http://esucparent.blogspot.com>

Behavior Expectations

In order for our programs to be successful and safe for everyone, we have created behavior expectations that are clear, consistent and connected.

Clear

Our expectations are stated in common language for all ages to understand, we ask parents to review these expectations on a regular basis with their children. In addition to parent reinforcement, the teachers will review expectations in class and we will have them posted throughout our classrooms. The expectations are:

- Use Kind Words
- Use materials and toys appropriately
- Ask permission before leaving the group
- Play cooperatively, no play fighting or rough play
- Participate as best you can
- Walk inside the building and when in a large group

Consistent

Our RE leaders are trained in behavior management and ESUC expected norms so that all children receive the same level of love and attention. With all RE leaders holding the same behavior expectations, our children will know more easily what to expect and feel comfortable in our RE classrooms.

In general the RE leader will remind children of the expectations and give the child a choice to meet the expectation independently or with help.

Children who chose neither option may be asked to move to a different activity or take a break from the group. The child's parent will be retrieved from church if the child continues to struggle with the expectations.

Connected

We need the parent's involvement at all levels of good behavior. Please inform the RE leader at drop off if there is anything going on at home or school that is causing anxiety. This will help leaders be more alert and compassionate.

RE Leaders and the DRE will inform parents when there is behavior that needs to be addressed in the classroom.

Parents are asked to walk their children to their RE classroom every Sunday morning and help them get settled for the day.

Parents not otherwise teaching will be scheduled to assist in the classroom once every two months, this involvement will help parents become connected with the RE leaders and classroom activities. Parents will be notified of their scheduled dates via e-mail.

The DRE and several members of the Committee for Children and Youth Ministry are trained in classroom management and special needs, please talk with the DRE to see if we can make accommodations for your child. We are here to journey with you.

Fall Focus

9am and 11am Nursery- Children as young as 6 months are welcome to our nursery. We provide one paid staff person and parents rotate as helpers through the year. Our nursery is designed for toddlers to feel safe and loved in their church.

9am and 11am Preschool will begin their fall season learning how each person is special. The group continues to learn about each others families and about the community where they live. Finally they explore how church is also like a family, emphasizing some of the special activities at church.

9am Kindergarden set out for a year of discovery by exploring the gifts each person brings to the group. Through play and activities, they learn about cooperation. They explore how cooperating in the classroom is like being part of the Unitarian church, where all people work together to make a better world.

9am 1st Grade and 11am K-First Grade looks at the many ways people are similar and different. Children learn about naming and expressing feelings. Children experience that church can be a place to help them talk about their feelings and help them to be good.

9am and 11am 2nd Grade spend the fall learning about the UU principles; respect all people, act with love, grow with spirit, search for truth, everyone votes, work for peace, and care for earth.

9am 3rd and 11am 3rd will explore stories from Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and several more. We will explore how religious stories teach us to be kind to each other and earth. We will create a fall ritual of our own focusing on UU values.

9am 4th-6th grade and 11am 4th grade begin to explore the world's religions by studying our religion, Unitarian Universalism. They will learn how the seven principles came to be, why we light a chalice to begin worship, and what values UU's teach. The children spend the rest of the year examining how other religions answer important questions.

11am 5th and 6th grade spend the fall exploring questions that do not have one answer. They learn that the UU church is a place to grow by being in dialogue with one another and hearing one another's view points. The year begins with self awareness and then grows to topics of thinking differently but acting for justice, sharing different gifts, and building community.

11am 7th and 8th grade Will begin their year thinking about journeys. They will discuss how a compass can be a guide to find your way and begin the spiritual practice our journaling. Key questions in the fall are: What does a spiritual Journey mean to me? What/Who has influenced my life? What are my gifts? How can I use my gifts well? What are the consequences of my choices?

Coming of Age

Coming of Age is a program open to all 8th and 9th graders at East Shore. It is a special 14 week program where youth are matched with a mentor and spend significant time deepening their understanding and relationship to Unitarian Universalism. It is a time for the youth to explore their personal feelings and begin to articulate their faith. **Program Registration is in December, see Michelle Conklin for details.**

Ready to Register?

You can find registration forms as well as our up to date information on our blog

<http://esucparent.blogspot.com>

Youth Ministry

What is Youth Ministry?- Chris Conkling, Youth Programs Coordinator

Youth Ministry is not just the work of the Youth Programs Coordinator, or the DRE, or the advisors. It is a community ministry. All of us have a role in helping to create a space where youth are not just tolerated, or even just welcomed, but a space where youth are supported and nurtured as they grow their souls. This is not a Ministry to Youth, but rather a Ministry with Youth. We all need to stand alongside them as they journey to discover and articulate what it is they believe, to develop community, and are given opportunities to live out their faith in their lives. East Shore's Youth Ministry strives to foster this in its various programs and activities for youth.

Please contact Chris Conkling, Youth Programs Coordinator, to inquire more about our Youth Ministry. esucypc@gmail.com or (425) 255-3149.

Youth Group

East Shore's Youth Group is the heart of our Youth Ministry. It is a safe space where youth come and can be themselves, growing alongside their peers and adult advisors through the power of community-building. They explore various forms of worship, leadership-building, social justice, strengthening youth-adult relationships, and so much more. This year, a youth leadership team has developed to shape the programming and vision of Youth Group. They are working hard to make Youth Group an inclusive, welcoming, vibrant community. Youth leading themselves alongside adult allies-it is a wonderful thing!

Youth Group meets on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:30pm.

YES-U

Our Sunday morning youth program, YES-U (Youth Exploring Spirituality-Unitarian/Universalist), provides a space for youth to come to question, discuss, and explore spirituality-both in a multi-faith context and a personal one. The group has many invigorating discussions around questions that people of all faith ask (What is holy? What happens in the afterlife? What is justice?). To expand these discussions further, they incorporate into the curriculum visits to other faith institutions. This program is a space for youth to grow their souls and to learn to articulate and explore what it is they believe.

YES-U meets on Sunday mornings at 11am.

Bridging Program

The Senior Bridging Program in the spring is designed as a series of workshops, culminating in our Annual Bridging Ceremony. This program allows graduating seniors a space to reflect on their experiences in a Unitarian Universalist community, to talk about what has shaped their spirituality, and it allows them to look ahead to the future alongside their peers. This can be an enlightening experience for youth, who might not otherwise have the opportunity to reflect on these concerns. It is facilitated by adult allies from the East Shore community.

The Bridging Program meets monthly from March to May.

And Much More...

Through out the year, East Shore hosts special retreats for youth, we attend District events, and we become involved in worship and social justice projects. We are a very active and engaging multi-generational community.

Come Join us !!!