

Centenary United Methodist Church

Youth Ministry Statement

who we are & what we are about...

Centenary United Methodist Church's Youth Ministry's mission is:

"To love youth on behalf of Jesus in hopes of loving them to Jesus"

Our Belief...

The Centenary United Methodist Church's Youth Ministry's mission is founded on the biblical vision of the human person who is created in the image and likeness of God and whose deepest longing is for communion with God and others in love. In response to Christ's invitation to abide in him (John 15:4), we believe that the central purpose of youth ministry is to invite the minds and hearts of young people to an intimate relationship with God in Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We seek to fulfill our mission through Sunday School, worship, music, youth programs, Confirmation, retreats, missions & outreach, and relationships that live out a contemplative approach to youth discipleship. A contemplative approach to youth ministry is based on our commitment to cultivate attentiveness to God's presence of young people and in is supported in the following seven ways:

Sabbath

Just as Jesus led a life of simplicity with times for rest, solitude, and silence (Matt. 14:22-23), we also are committed to helping our youth find rest and balance in a hyperactive, overcommitted, dangerously busy culture. A life that honors Sabbath rest helps us to be more in touch with our heart and soul, more aware of the Spirit of God and more available for relationships to love. Youth blossom in the midst of adults who know how to savor the life through a Sabbath rhythm of rest, work, relationships, and play. Companions of our youth ministry seek to maintain the simplicity and sacred balance in their own lives and ministry.

Prayer

Just as Jesus' life and ministry were grounded in a desire to be at complete union with God (Mk 6:46; Jn 17:1), we also seek to ground all life and ministry in a prayerful relationship with God in Christ. We practice and teach many forms of prayer but are particularly committed to regular periods of contemplative prayer in order to be healed, inspired, and guided by the Holy Spirit. Contemplative prayer invites us to attend to God's mystical presence dwelling silently within the depths of our hearts opening our whole being to ongoing conversation and freeing us for an ever-deepening awareness of that presence in all persons, things, and events in our lives. Companions of our youth ministry seek to practice contemplative prayer with scripture each day as well as at regular times in the church life.

Covenant Community

Just as Jesus called and ministered with others in a community of spiritual companions (Matt. 10:1-4), we also encourage, support and practice in a small Youth Leadership Team, in which we all have common call to spiritual growth through Christian living and ministry to our youth. This group offers witness to a way of life that is creatively resistant to the seductions of the market culture and the dullness that can inhabit Christian institutions. Companions of our youth ministry commit to meeting each quarterly with our Youth Ministry Team for sharing, prayer, scripture study and discernment in service of our ministry to our young people.

Accompaniment

Just as Jesus sought to form disciples through a relationship of love and invitation to follow him (Mt. 4:18), we also seek to initiate young persons into the Christian faith through relationships with elders (Confirmation Shepherds, Sunday school teachers, mission trip leaders, Hoops4Him coaches, & Adult Youth Leaders) who join them in living the way of authentic discipleship. Young people are searching for spiritual guides who

are alive in Christ to help reveal to them their deepest identity and beauty as beloved daughters and sons of God and to assist them in discerning their unique gifts to be lived out in service to God. Companions of our youth ministry seek to be compassionate elders in the faith who seek our regular accompaniment for themselves and who actively model the disciplines, virtues and fruits of the spiritual life.

Discernment

Just as Jesus prayed to know and follow God's desire (Lk. 22:39), we also seek to discern and respond faithfully to the call of the Holy Spirit on our lives and in ministry with our young people. We practice and teach the disciplines of individual and group discernment so as to be fully available and responsive to the movement of God's grace in our covenant communities, allowing anxiety-driven youth ministry to become Spirit-led youth ministry. Companions of our youth ministry seek to learn and practice the spiritual disciplines of discernment as the basis for opening, listening and responding to God's call in our youth ministry.

Hospitality

Just as Jesus exhorted his disciples to "*let the children come*" (Mk. 9:35; 10:13), we also seek the full inclusion of young people and the many gifts they bring into every dimension of the church life: worship, teaching, proclamations, fellowship and service. Young people often suffer marginalization in the church and suffer the pain of not feeling accepted and appreciated for who they are. As elders in a covenant community, adult companions of our youth ministry seek not only to accompany young people individually on the way of Jesus, but also advocate for them in finding their place as fellow ministers of the Gospel in the larger community of the church and its mission in the world.

Authentic Action

Just as Jesus came out of prayer and solitude to heal the sick, welcome the outcast, and celebrate with friends (Lk. 4:18-19; Jn. 12:1), so we also seek to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in a way of life rooted in the Beatitudes that witnesses to Christ's love, passion, and joy. Communal practices of Sabbath, prayer, discernment, and accompaniment find their fulfillment in actions with youth that make visible the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Young people desire opportunities to participate in Christ's healing and liberating activity within the world (ex. mission trips, *Love thy Neighbor*, etc.). Companions of our youth ministry seek to support youth and adults in becoming instruments of God's grace who courageously resist the principalities and powers that oppress life and creatively reveal the reality of God's love.

Our Invitation...

Our Youth Ministry at Centenary United Methodist Church is intentional about offering youth and adult youth leaders space and tools, through these seven movements, to encounter the living, loving Jesus so that we may all be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. We invite all young persons into this youth ministry community as we strive to live out the *way of Jesus* and love in our world.