

Peace Council: Worship and Education Time Change Recommendation

Worship – 9:30 am (beginning September 18); **Hospitality** – 10:45; **Adult Education & Sunday School**: 11:10–11:50

(On the 4th Sunday of each month various Committees of Peace will meet during the Education Hour)

Key Issue: How do we best strengthen and promote the educational priorities of Peace to equip our members with essential skills for faith life and ministry?

For Congregational Reflection and Discussion:

How do we provide the best spiritual formation for our children – aware of how little time seems available? How do we respect the demands on our parents and yet ensure quality education and nurture for them too?

Can we provide Parenting Classes or ‘How Faith forms and shapes a Child’s Life’ classes on Sundays?

The Teaching Staff is critical (we will need minimally 6 adults who can rotate). The congregation must be educated about and respectful of the responsibilities of Sunday School Teachers --more is required than just showing up. (Background checks are essential and have been done in the past. ‘Trustline’ is one resource that could be utilized.)

Beyond Sunday morning education Sunday School teachers create relationships with our children which encourage the child’s development and add additional adult care to their growth and well being. To experience life from a young age, in an intergenerational community that accepts you as you are – is invaluable and all too rare.

Consistent participation builds stability in the children and the Sunday School program, encourages the teaching staff and promotes the growth of the congregation with new families. Regular adult participation strengthens faith, the mind and our community. We know from various experiments during the past two years that adult education and Sunday School prior to worship does not work. (Dilemma: Why is church not considered a ‘commitment’ like sports or other extracurricular activities?)

We hope to offer multiple adult educational opportunities on Sunday mornings based on needs and interests. It is possible that a class could meet at Starbucks.

We believe it is important to involve our children in the worship life of Peace. In addition to the Small and Tall Services we seek to incorporate them in simple and frequent ways within worship. The thematic connections between Worship, Children’s Time and Sunday School will continue. Nursery care will be provided.

The Hospitality Time remains important for the goodies, connections and vitality it provides. Hospitality will intentionally close at 11:10 so members can choose which class to attend or head home.

Concluding all classes by 11:50 allows everyone to be home by noon.

If initiated on September 18 , a Congregational Evaluation occurs 4 months later at the Annual Meeting.

Our thanks is due to Pr. Anita, Charlene McPherson, Pr. Elizabeth and Deacon Christine Johansson for articulating the elements of this proposal; and to members of the Mom's Group and Women at Peace who participated in initial reviews.

Blessings, Pr. Steve

Baptismal Promises

Parents and congregations make several promises during a child's baptism:

To nurture their identity as a Beloved Child of God,
To live with them among God's people of faith,
To teach them the Word,
To celebrate the Holy Meal with them,
To strengthen them in faith and prayer

so that they learn to

Trust in the grace and Spirit of God,
Embody the compassion of Christ,
Grow in the dignity of who they are,
Care for others and the creation,
Work for justice and peace.

However the reality for most families today is that they spend no more than one or two hours in church weekly. From a statistical perspective, with only one hour out of a hundred waking hours in a child's week devoted to faith nourishment, the impact will be minimal. How best do we encourage children and parents?

Supporting Parents

Parents are – and need to recognize – that they are the primary faith educators in their children's lives. Parents need faith deepening, congregational support and spiritual resources. But with hectic lives, endless pressure on children to succeed in school, and increasing loads of homework and extracurricular activities parents ask, "How can I be responsible for faith education too?"

Sunday School offers the faith connections children long for. The Big Questions start when we are very little. Caring teachers, a happy and safe environment, the joy of learning with friends (and the curriculum matches what happens in worship too!) create the faith encouragement every child needs. Soccer is fun but 30 years from now the seeds sown in Sunday School will be of infinitely greater value.

Meanwhile Adult Education offers parents a chance to rest and reflect on 'Parenting as a Spiritual Endeavor'

or study the Bible or other classes presented. Parents are equipped with skills and confidence to 'raise up their children in grace' as they enjoy the company of friends and delight in the sanity of adult conversation.

Powerful promises are made in Baptism – each one offering profound strength and vital wisdom to our children.

Let us give our children hope and our parents love.

God will guide our journey into God.