

Trinity Charge Conference Youth Report 2023

The youth have continued to meet and grow together throughout the last year. Bekah Elmore stepped down as Youth Director during the summer and I came onboard as of August 21.

At present, we regularly have approximately 15 youth attending Sunday evening gatherings. We have continued with weekly devotionals at Cure Coffee with the high schoolers and are trying to get a middle school devotional session up and running. The teen boys have requested their own "boys' group" so that is currently in the planning stages. I have spent some time focusing on communication in ways to reach youth and help parents (this includes a monthly newsletter, website and social media posts, as well as texting chains and devotionals).

The youth attended the Jeremiah Project in Romney, West Virginia with 10 youth and 4 adults in July. We have decided to try a different project for the summer of 2024 and will be working with Appalachia Service Project the second week of July.

We are focusing on local missions this year, including projects within the church and helping in our local community. We have begun a letter-writing ministry to local shut-ins and college students, as well as working with a local nursing home to set up a partnership between the residents and our youth. We are also trying to reach youth who do not yet have a church or youth group home and are having success with this. We will continue to offer opportunities for youth to have a safe and accepting place to come and continue (or begin) their faith journey.

While I'm still very new at this position, I love the growth I am seeing and am excited to continue growing our mission within our church and community.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah R. Edwards

Youth Director

Charge Conference Report 2023
Director of Music & Worship Arts- Sara Vogeler

This last year was my first complete year as the Director of Music Ministries at Trinity United Methodist Church. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with our Choir and Worship Team throughout the whole church calendar with all the special holidays and church events we had. One of the highlights of last year was celebrating the Christmas season with a Christmas Cantata for the first time since the pandemic. It was a wonderful Cantata with two congregants providing narration and it was a special joy to have a guest violinist accompany the choir as well. We are having a Christmas Cantata again this December which everyone is looking forward to.

This past year, I invited guest musicians to come during the summer when the choir had time off which everyone enjoyed. Along with outside musicians, we also had special music from several congregants which was well received.

Regarding the church instruments, I have continued to keep the pianos tuned regularly and have been working on making a list of audio equipment that needs to be updated especially for the Rivers service. It is my hope that we will be able to start making plans to save/fundraise for those needs.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve the Lord through the gift of music and look forward to all that is to come at Trinity UMC.

Charge Conference 2023 Children's Ministries

2023 was a very active year throughout Children's Ministries. Children's Ministry was resourceful in providing programming in varied, creative, and safe ways. We try to build and maintain relationships with not only the children in our ministry, but also the families through meaningful conversations in person, through text, and email. Families reach out frequently with their prayer concerns and joys and we are blessed by the relationships we have with them.

In December, we were in charge of the interactive **Family Christmas Eve Service**. Children's Ministry was responsible for every aspect of the service including room set up, creating bulletins, planning the service, collecting and setting up props, rehearsals, sound, refreshments, and clean-up. Children and youth put on a delightful skit to serve as the message. Many other children and youth participated by leading the prayers, leading the liturgy, reciting scripture, reciting holiday poems, ushering, greeting, and providing homemade refreshments. The Children's Choir led by Kelly Smith performed two songs and small children participated in our animal parade. Two of our mothers pre-recorded a Christmas Game to be played as children were moving between segments. It was a delightful evening.

Our **Children in Action** Program is a mission minded group of 1st — 5th graders. This year saw a return to our traditional format of once monthly from 12-2 including lunch. Children learned about many outreach and mission opportunities and engaged in learning activities to practice being in the mission field. For example, youth came to speak to us about the Jeremiah Project Mission Trip they had been on and afterwards, we practiced safety skills using tools and cleaned up the outside church grounds as if we too were on a mission trip. Children painted rocks saying Jesus loves you and during our Random Acts of Kindness Day, walked around downtown hiding the rocks and passing out flowers to folks in the Taste of Smithfield. Children also bagged up food for COP, did cleaning projects around the church, stuffed shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child, and more!

Children's Ministry tries to make special days memorable for families. For **Mother's Day**, we offered a flower patch, where children could "pick" a pinwheel flower from the "patch" for their moms. We also provided a table full of special snacks for Moms between church services. For **Grandparents' Day**, special poems and cross keyrings were handed out. For Blessing of the Backpacks, special cross tags were given away as well as fun goodie bags. We tried a new program called "**S'mores and Stories**" where families were invited to an informal time outside with smores and special stories told by nursery staff. It was well-attended and we received wonderful feedback about it!

Every Sunday, Kim Orrock provides **Children's Sermons** for the 9:30 Worship service. **Busy bags** continue to be offered in the sanctuary and are kept well stocked by children's ministry. On Shrove Tuesday and during the monthly Love Feasts, special kids activities were offered in the FAC.

Wednesday Night Programs were very lively! Our **Children's Choir** was led by Kelly Smith most of the year. When she was unavailable, nursery staff Kayla Smith and Katrina Donovan stepped up to fill in. The Children's Choir performed in the community again this year thanks to Preschool Director Meredith Parks for arranging performances at the **Smithfield Christmas Tree Lighting** and the Special Downtown **Christmas Market**! The Children's Choir also performed for church services on Christmas Eve, during the Christmas Cantata, and at Easter. And during a combined church service in May. At **Kingdom Kids**, children learned about the Fruit of the Spirit, John Wesley, and classic Bible Stories. Children's Ministry hosted the **December Love Feast**, providing a taco bar supper and a **Birthday Party for Jesus**. Special crafts and activities were offered, a special Christmas Story was read to the children, Santa was on hand to take requests and pictures, we all sang Happy Birthday to Jesus, and blew out the candles in each of our cupcakes before ending the evening with an enormous indoor snowball fight! Over 120 people attended this event!

Two large community events are offered each year. At Easter, we held an **egg hunt** in the parking lot followed by cookie decorating and crafts in the FAC. The event was well attended by visitors from the church preschool and members of community! The amazing part of this program was that people did not rush out after the egg hunt. Families enjoyed the fellowship time in the FAC for well over an hour! We saw several families visit us for worship in the following weeks as well! We hosted a **Fall Festival** with lunch and activities in the FAC and the surrounding hallway. This year, we partnered with the Girl Scouts, Southside Ballet Studio, Footnotes School of Dance, Family Ministry, and the United Methodist Men to put on a wonderful event. Many youth volunteered at this event as well.

Vacation Bible School was Hero Hotline themed. The United Methodist Women and numerous church members assisted with creating decorations, setting up the sanctuary, and decorating doors ahead of VBS. 32 adults and 13 youth volunteered during VBS! It was a wonderful week that concluded with a volunteer appreciation luncheon after the last day. Many friendships were fostered during this fabulous week. After VBS, the church changed the worship schedule to have 5 Sundays of combined services. With Sunday School teachers on break, Children's Ministry created a **Children's Church** experience appropriate for Kindergarten through 5th Grade in the CAVE for space. The nursery services were relocated to a preschool room near the CAVE for safety. The rest of the year, Children's Church is held during the 11:00 service and offers lessons based on the sermon of the day.

A churchwide drive was held to benefit Operation Christmas Child. We collected more than 40 shoe boxes and dropped them off at Smithfield Baptist Church for collection.

Our loving staff in the church nursery provided care to children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. The church nursery staff also provided services for funerals, special Bible Studies, a special church council meeting, the pastoral onboarding, Ash Wednesday service, and the Maundy Thursday service. The nursery staff were thanked for their service at a special Christmas Party at the Director's home.

We always try to be resourceful in gathering supplies and needed items. This year was no different. A few ways that we obtained items for the church for free included procuring sturdy, wooden bookcases from a former church member for the MAF room to expand their library, procuring floor lamps from a Buy Nothing Facebook site for the CAVE to improve the lighting, we were gifted new Sunday School chairs from Smithfield Baptist, new preschool chairs from the Buy Nothing Facebook site, and numerous books, games, and craft supplies from well meaning Trinity members. When putting on large events, a request for donations was put out and the good folks of Trinity donated quite a few needed food items and craft supplies.

Our Children's Ministry Facebook page was used for many different reasons. We used this page to provide scriptures and inspirational sayings, to post pictures of children participating in events, and to advertise events. Parents are very appreciative of pictures of their children.

Children's Ministry attempts to use all the activity of the year to further kids' knowledge of Christ and God's Love for them.