

Religious Education Annual Meeting Report 10.25.20

2019-2020 Year

The year kicked off with our annual RE Committee retreat in August under the leadership of Wil Rivers and Cara Coffin as Co-Chairs and Jim Williams as Council Liaison. Arthur Freeheart, Esther Katz, Ron Tavernier, Shelby Hunkins, Rebecca Rivers, Pam Boyle and Sally Hoose are the RE team members.



The 52 children and youth and 61 adult teaching team members participating in RE programming, engaged with Spirit Play for our PreK-1st graders, Love Will Guide Us for 2nd-3rd graders, Maker Space for 4th-6th graders, Our Whole Lives for 7th-8th graders and Youth Group for 9th-12th graders. Spirit Play classes focus on learning from stories which focus on our 7 Promises and 6 Sources. The Love Will Guide Us Class learned to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Our Maker Space class utilized a 5-week workshop rotation model and focused on the topics of solid waste, animal care with creation of

cat sleeping box for the Potsdam Humane Society, immigration issues, and food security where they created a bee hotel for our pollinator garden. Our OWL class utilized the Middle Level Our Whole Lives curriculum for accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality.



The Youth Group met weekly. They did a cleanup of Riverside Drive in October, provided the worship service on May 17th with the theme Gratitude During the Pandemic and created a chalk art mural on the church sidewalk in July.

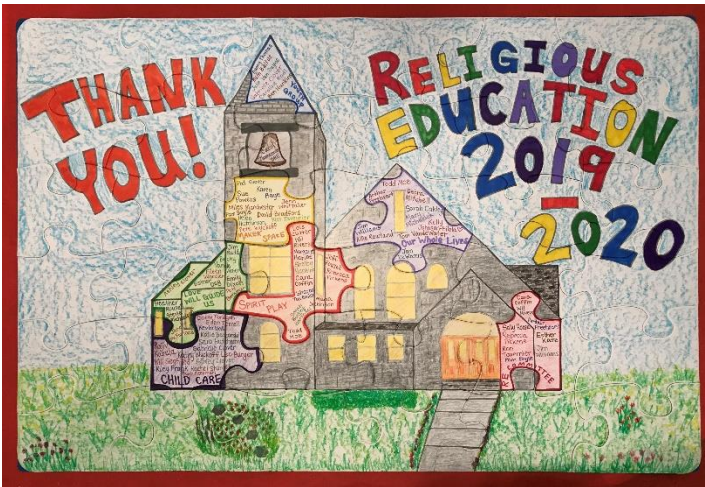
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March religious education classes moved to online programming. We offered an Afterschool Storytime, the

MakerSpace group met and created a video for the RE Sunday Worship Service. The OWL class and Youth Group met weekly for socializing.

For the congregation, we hosted a Pizza Party and Game Night in January, a Sledding Party in February, Everybody's Birthday Party in March and via Zoom in April we offered a Scavenger Hunt, Dance Party, Pictionary and Trivia Night. The children and youth also participated in (5) multigenerational worship services during the year.



Carol and Shelby continued as the staff team for religious education. Carol completed her sixth year as Director of Religious Education. She continues to be the Vice Chair of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Seaway Chapter where she is responsible for creating a fall retreat program and offering



monthly online meetings. She also was on a team with UU ministers and LREDA colleagues to plan the regional UUMA/LREDA retreat in May 2020. She attended LREDA Fall Conference in November 2019. She participated in many webinars offered by UUA to support the RE program in moving to a fully virtual program.

Shelby supported the Spirit Play class and developed (5) new story baskets. She also supported the Love Will Guide Us teaching team and gathered all the supplies and materials need each week. For the Books and Cooks summer program, she created the weekly curriculum outline shared on Facebook and

recorded all the stories which are available on the church [YouTube channel](#). She is now a member of LREDA.

2020-2021 Year

We will be fully virtual for the upcoming church year utilizing Zoom meetings. We will be offering an RE Choice model for this year and using the Soul Matter monthly themes. We will meet twice a month via Zoom and children and youth will have an opportunity to choose which space they would like to participate in. The choices will be Legends and Myths – a story time space, Creativity Realm – an experiential space, Wisdom Keepers – an education space. We will also be offering Taking Flight – and OWL alternative for the youth who were unable to complete last years OWL program due to the pandemic. The youth will be meeting virtually on a biweekly basis. We will also be hosting a virtual Children's Chapel on the third Sunday of each month at 9:30am. We are also exploring a self-directed experience utilizing Padlet.

The religious education program will continue offer congregation wide programming too. We hosted a Stuffed Animal Sleepover in September. We have plans for a Story Walk in the spring and are exploring other opportunities.

Carol and Shelby will be attending LREDA Fall Conference virtually at the end of October. They will also continue to stay up to date on how to best provide virtual programming for our children and youth. They will be looking into offering our annual Holiday Pageant as a virtual experience.

As we continue to live with COVID-19, our religious education program is adapting in the moment. We are learning as we go. We will be utilizing new ways of doing and being together. We are committed to making this year engaging, fun and spiritually meaningful. May it be so.