Religious Education

2015-2016

Eliot Unitarian Chapel
And so the children come... Sophia Lyon Fahs

I am thrilled to see the children come forward each week for the time for all ages in worship. When I ask them questions, they are by turns thoughtful, funny, deep and silly - sometimes all at once! I am honored to be their minister. I am also thrilled to be getting to know our older children, through visits to the youth group and Sunday school classrooms. Your children share their gifts in intergenerational worship and all over the church in service - they enrich us all. I look forward to getting to know you better this year, and to learn together how to live lives of greater meaning and service.

In Faith,

Rev. Barbara H. Gadon
Lead Minister
Welcome to Eliot Chapel Religious Education

Welcome to the Religious Education (RE) program for children and youth at Eliot Unitarian Chapel. The program provides opportunities for children, youth, and volunteers of all ages to explore Unitarian Universalist heritage, identity, common values, a variety of religious traditions, and individual faith journeys in a liberal religious community. We are delighted that your spiritual journey has brought you here.

Scott Stewart,
Director of Religious Education

Christie Lee,
Assistant Director of Religious Education

Our Mission:
Eliot Chapel, a Unitarian Universalist community,
gathers to foster free religious thought,
nurture spiritual growth,
and act for social justice.

Eliot Chapel Staff

Rev. Barbara Gadon, Lead Minister
Rev. Dr. Michael Hennon, Minister of Pastoral Care
Scott Stewart, Director of Religious Education
Christie Lee, Assistant Director of Religious Education
Jan Chamberlin, Music Director
Dr. Leon Burke III, Choir Director
Charles Lewis, Administrator
Terri Burtin, Communications Specialist
Jamacia Stanfield, Administrative Assistant
Myron Simms, Facilities Assistant

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frontoffice@eliotchapel.org
facilities@eliotchapel.org
Nursery

For children under the age of two as of August 1, 2015

For the youngest members, loving care is provided by nursery caregivers during all worship services. The nursery is full of books, puzzles, toys, and fun activities for babies and toddlers each Sunday. The nursery is staffed by Heather Flick and Brenda Orr, with support from Eliot volunteers.

Beginning September 13, 2015, the nursery is open each Sunday from 9:00 am until 12:15 pm. Summer nursery hours are 9:30 to 11:15 am.

Preschool

Ages two to five by August 1, 2015

Preschool classes provide young children with an introduction to their religious community and UU faith traditions. Classes are led by volunteer teachers and include age-appropriate stories, activities, and free play. Classes will include lessons and activities from Unitarian Universalist curriculums and are offered during both the 9:30 and 11:00 am worship services beginning September 13.

Elementary

K-5th grade as of August 1, 2015

Elementary children spend the year using age-appropriate curriculum and resources to explore topics related to Unitarian Universalist (UU) identity, liberal religious values, and faith traditions around the world. Classes are led by volunteer teachers and are offered during the 9:30 and 11:00 am worship services beginning September 13.
Children’s Worship

Children in kindergarten through 5th grades attend the first 15 minutes of the Sanctuary worship service with their families before attending their Religious Education classes. Throughout the year, there are also a variety of special worship opportunities for children, youth, and adults of all ages.
Youth Groups

6th Grade
Sixth Grade Youth Group meets most Sundays during the 11:00 am service and is open to all sixth grade youth. The program is designed to provide younger youth with increased opportunities to develop relationships with other youth and adult leaders through regular participation in group activities, engagement in social justice projects, exploration of liberal religious values, and involvement in fellowship events. A variety of topics of interest to younger youth will be explored throughout the year. Youth Group begins on September 13.

Junior High
Junior High Youth Group meets most Sundays during the 11:00 am service and is open to 7th and 8th grade youth. Junior high youth will spend the 2015-2016 year exploring a variety of religious traditions through the Building Bridges curriculum. Junior High Youth Group kicks off on September 13.
Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive sexuality education program developed jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ. OWL includes age-appropriate curricula for six different age groups and is designed to educate participants and equip them to make healthy and responsible choices with regard to their relationships, sexual health, and behavior.

During the 2015-16 year, it’s anticipated that OWL will be offered to K-1st grade children. Please note that due to the nature and content of the OWL program, participation is strictly limited to registered and participating youth in the Religious Education program, or youth whose parents are pledging church members.

Senior High
High school youth (grades 9-12) are a treasured part of the Eliot Chapel community. The Senior High Youth Group meets most Sundays from September-May, usually from 10:45 am to 12:00 pm, though some sessions meet for longer periods of time, or at different times.

The 2015-2016 Senior High Youth Group begins on September 13. Youth group experiences include, but aren’t limited to, some of the following activities, which seek to incorporate the different components of Six Pillars of Balanced Youth Ministry:

- Leading a Sunday worship service
- Engaging in dialogue and activities related to spiritual and religious topics
- Participating in overnight lock-ins and regional youth events, such as CONs.
- Volunteer service in other Eliot Chapel programs
- Community-building activities
Family Roles and Expectations

Registration
Families joining us in the Religious Education program for the first time are asked to fill out a Guest Form to help us provide the best possible classroom experience to your children or youth. Families may visit three times before officially registering their children and youth in the program. Registration is completed electronically and only takes a few minutes of your time.

Attendance & Commitment
Regular church attendance and family commitment is essential to a child’s or youth’s Religious Education experience. Regular attendance best enables children, youth, and families to develop a meaningful sense of religious community and helps program staff and volunteers plan meaningful classroom activities and experiences. It is the expectation that families who register for the 2015-16 Religious Education program will make the commitment to attend church and participate regularly throughout the church year (September through May).

Pledging & Financial Support
The Religious Education program is wholly supported by and dependent on the generous financial contributions of Eliot Chapel members and friends through their annual pledges to the church’s operating budget. From time to time, a fee may be charged for a specific activity or event.

While there are no specific Religious Education fees for participation in the Sunday morning Religious Education program, it is the expectation that parents and family members of participating children and youth will support their congregation, to the best of their ability, through an annual pledge to Eliot Chapel.

For more information about annual pledges, please contact Eliot Administrator Charles Lewis at admin@eliotchapel.org.
Getting Involved

Volunteers are a vital component to the Religious Education (RE) program. Parents and family members are expected to actively support the program by providing volunteer service in order to ensure the program’s continued strength and success. **It takes over 50 volunteer teachers and advisors each year to teach the Sunday morning classes alone.**

Teaching is a terrific way to meet other individuals in the church community, explore a variety of faith traditions and practices, enhance your own faith development and beliefs, and put values such as love and service into action.

In addition to teaching, there are a variety of other ways to get involved in the program. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Substitute teaching
- Nursery volunteer
- Assisting with special fellowship events
- Carpool driver for youth events
- Greeting on Sunday
- Assisting the chalice lighter on Sunday

For a more complete list of ways to get involved, please contact Director of Religious Education **Scott Stewart** at scott@eliotchapel.org or **Christie Lee** at christie@eliotchapel.org.

**Family Ambassadors & Greeters**

Every Sunday, Family Ambassadors are needed to welcome people to the program and help everyone feel at home. Greeting is a terrific way to provide hospitality and extend a welcome to others at church.

**Chalice Lighting**

Children in 1st through 5th grade may participate in worship by lighting the Sanctuary chalice at the beginning of the Sunday services.

To sign up or learn more about these opportunities, please contact **Assistant Director of Religious Education Christie Lee** at christie@eliotchapel.org.
Getting Involved

Chalice Choir for Children
The Chalice Choir is for children in 1st through 5th grades. The choir meets most Sundays between services (10:35-10:55). If you have any questions or would like to sign your child up, please contact Music Director Jan Chamberlin at music@eliotchapel.org.

Social Justice in Action at Eliot Chapel
There are many ways for children, youth, and adults of all ages to get involved in social action and community service at Eliot Chapel. For information about current and future opportunities, contact us at socialjustice@eliotchapel.org.

The Eliot Chapel Children’s Library
is located on the north side of Adams Hall behind the Guest Center. This cozy area is a perfect space for children of all ages to find a good book about a variety of topics. The Children’s Library is also a terrific resource for Religious Education teachers and parents. Feel free to stop by, browse, and check out your next read.
Safety & Supervision

A Safe Community
Keeping children, youth, and adults safe is a high priority at Eliot Chapel. In order to provide as safe an environment as possible, the following policies are in effect at all times:

- All staff and volunteer teachers who are 18 years of age or older undergo a background check through the state of Missouri.
- At least two volunteers must be present at all activities involving children and/or youth.
- Copies of the current Eliot Chapel Safe Congregation Policy are available outside the Religious Education Office, in the Guest Center in Adams Hall, or on the Eliot Chapel website at www.eliotchapel.org/re_procedures.

Supervision
Volunteer teachers do not arrive until 10 minutes prior to service/class times. We ask that children are actively supervised by their parents or family members when they are not in class. Children should not be left unattended at any time.

Playground Use
Outdoor play is available on the playground for younger children. If you utilize the playground, please keep in mind that the space is maintained by the Eliot Chapel Nursery School and is designed primarily for children age six and younger. Parents or family members should supervise any playground usage before or after Religious Education classes.