

VISION STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Meridian Street United Methodist Church

Because the children and youth are a valued part of our church family, it is important to establish a vision and a plan for their spiritual education. Therefore, the vision of the Children's and Youth Ministries is that *by the time our youth reach age 18, they will have had the spiritual education and experiences to enable them to make faith a priority in their lives as they enter adulthood.*

We want them to **embrace** God's love, **trust and follow** God in their Christian faith, and **pursue a personal relationship** with Jesus that helps them in their everyday lives. To that end, our programming will be guided by Meridian Street's discipleship model with the elements that define discipleship as our themes. We want to offer supportive programming and opportunities that encourage families to participate in all aspects of their children's spiritual growth. It is our hope Meridian Street will be a community of faith that helps our families nurture their children on their faith journey. We need to be a congregation that cares about our children's spiritual experiences and is willing to help them grow in their discipleship with Jesus.

Spiritual Goals

For each level of child and youth, we will have one important spiritual goal that guides our programming within this discipleship model. These goals are:

- Our preschoolers will learn to **embrace** God's love, by getting to know God through stories, song, activities, literature, and interactions with caring adults who lead them in Sunday School, music groups, and special programs.
- Our elementary children will learn to **trust and follow** God and the Christian faith. They will explore the foundations of our faith through engaging, interactive lessons guided by adults who model God's love. Third grade students will receive Bibles, and all children will have opportunities to serve, and through this service, understand the doctrines of the church.
- Our middle school students will **personalize** their faith. As they become more adept at complex thought, these youth will begin to articulate their own beliefs about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the roles of the Bible, prayer, and other disciplines. Students who are of confirmation age will participate in programming that will enable them to

make an informed decision about church membership and serve as a bridge from elementary programming to youth programming. Most importantly, they will begin to apply these beliefs to the everyday decisions they must make, from who to sit with in the school cafeteria to pressure to use drugs to decisions about spending part of their summer in mission. Service opportunities will be designed so that there are many ways to sample servanthood. For middle school and high school students, the ability to bring friends can help to spread the ministry and can be an important source of discipleship for youth.

- Our high school youth will be encouraged to **pursue** faith as a guidepost and anchor, so that their faith becomes a priority to them, their relationship to God is real, and they are able to apply their faith and Christian doctrines to their daily lives. Because they are exploring the world around them and sampling a variety of interests while beginning to shape career and college decisions, the opportunities and consequences of good and poor decisions have greater import. Mission and service opportunities at this level may be designed in youth-adult partnership

Discipleship Themes

Our discipleship themes will be as follows:

- ❖ **Fall 2006 Helping Others**
(A spirit of servanthood)
- ❖ **Spring 2007 Praying to God**
(Knees for prayer)
- ❖ **Fall 2007 Sharing the Story**
(A voice to speak the Good News)
- ❖ **Spring 2008 Loving Jesus**
(A heart for Christ)
- ❖ **Fall 2008 Caring for all**
(Arms of loving care)
- ❖ **Spring 2009 Living with Grace**
(A life transformed by the Word)

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*Living a faith for today
in fellowship and service*



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