

RE Calendar 2016-2017

9/11	Intergenerational-RE Open House & Registration
9/18	RE classes begin
9/25	
10/2	<i>Traditional Communion: 4th-8th remain in worship</i>
10/9	Holiday NO RE Classes / NO Nursery Care
10/16	PK-5th World Religion workshop
10/23	
10/30	
11/6	<i>Alternative Communion: 6th-8th remain in worship</i>
11/13	Intergenerational: Leaf Raking Sunday
11/20	PK-5th Holiday Lesson- Thanksgiving
11/27	PK-5th Holiday Lesson- Advent Wreaths
12/4	<i>Traditional Communion: 4th-8th remain in worship</i>
12/11	
12/18	Intergenerational- Christmas Pageant
12/25	Holiday NO RE Classes / NO Nursery Care
1/1	Holiday NO RE Classes / NO Nursery Care
1/8	RE Winter Sign-Ups
1/15	
1/22	
1/29	PK-5th Social Justice workshop
2/5	<i>Traditional Communion: 4th-8th remain in worship</i>
2/12	
2/19	Holiday NO RE Classes / NO Nursery Care
2/26	
3/5	<i>Alternative Communion: 6th-8th remain in worship</i>
3/12	PK-5th Holiday Lesson: Purim/Spring
3/19	
3/26	Intergenerational: RE Spring Sign-Ups
4/2	<i>Traditional Communion: 4th-8th remain in worship</i>
4/9	PK-5th Holiday Lesson: Passover
4/16	Holiday NO RE Classes / NO Nursery Care
4/23	
4/30	
5/7	Intergenerational: Music Sunday
5/14	Intergenerational: Affirmation
5/21	PK-5th World Religion workshop 2
5/28	Holiday NO RE Classes / NO Nursery Care
6/4	<i>Traditional Communion</i>
6/11	RE Sunday & Picnic Celebration

Getting Started...

Children can be registered for the program beginning Sunday September 11, 2016 and any time after that. Classes start Sunday September 18, 2016 and run through June 11, 2017. Children are welcome to attend grade-appropriate classes without being registered, and visiting friends and relatives may always join in the classes. We ask that families who are ready to participate in the program complete a registration form, available in each of the classrooms and in the church office.

RE Committee:

Bethany Knoettner
Megan Kane
Andrea Flaherty
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Jenn Smagula
Erin Nielson
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Welcome to Religious Education

First Parish Church United
Westford, MA

Program Overview 2016-2017

Here at FPCU, we delight in the lifelong journey of spiritual growth & development. In addition to worship, fellowship, outreach and committee activity, we offer Religious Education (RE) programs. Our program for Nursery Care through Middle School is a cooperative one, classes are facilitated and assisted by volunteers that include high school students, parents to children in the program, and other adults who love to work with children in this capacity.

*A minimum of 10 Volunteers will be needed every Sunday there is RE class & Nursery Care.
Please sign up!*

Curriculum Philosophy & Overview

FPCU is affiliated with both the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association. We believe RE classes should present religious content and knowledge with sensitivity to the diversity of belief that is present in our congregation. We encourage families to discuss the lessons with their children and help them to see the lesson through the family's own belief structure.

The Religious Education Committee is committed to providing meaningful lessons that educate our total church community (children, teens and adults). Our liberal RE program embraces the three threads that weave our program together:

- 1. The Judeo-Christian Heritage**, which is taught in the primary grades through Bible stories and exploration of important holidays. The primary grades also include a study of our denominational affiliations- the UUA and the UCC.
- 2. Comparative World Religion:** Our Middle School program focuses on the many religions in the world today. By examining and comparing various religions, and visiting local places of worship, students are able to expand their understanding of others and of themselves. Our primary grades are also introduced to a world religion each year through workshops and various activities.
- 3. Social Consciousness**, which runs throughout all grades. Church and community outreach projects provide children with the opportunity of putting their faith into action. These range from local needs (e.g. leaf raking) to supporting global organizations (e.g. Heifer Project) in an effort to relieve suffering around the world.

Class Time

* **RE classes for children in PK through Grade 8** meet most Sundays, during worship hour. Everyone gathers together at the start of worship in the Sanctuary, then children are invited to leave for RE class during the second hymn. Adults are welcome to walk their child to class and stay as long as they like. Children remain in classrooms until worship is over-those in PK-Grade 5 must be picked up by a parent; 6th grade and older will be dismissed and sent to meet families in the function hall. High School meets once a month in the Function Hall/Dining Area.

* **We value family worship time** and plan intergenerational services throughout the year. At these times we are blessed by the enlivening presence of the children for worship!

Special Programs

There are approximately 3 WORKSHOPS each year; 2 focusing on World Religion and 1 focusing on Social Justice. There are also a number of group lessons and holiday lessons planned throughout the year. Group Lessons & Workshops allow for great hands-on learning, cooperation and team work amongst the children PK-5th grade.

* The **World Religion workshops** focus on the world religion of the year; they expose children to the different traditions and customs and teach them about the beliefs of that religion. Through stories, visual aids, activities and crafts the children learn about the ways of others; relating to the similarities in their own lives while recognizing and appreciating the differences as well. **This Year's World Religion Focus: Baha'i**

* The **Social Justice workshop** focuses on applying Christian values, recognizing current issues/events, helping others & making a difference. The lesson that takes place helps the children gain a

better understanding of the issue/event at hand and helps them to appreciate the importance of values-theirs and those of others.

* **Group Lessons** are flexible and fun. They occur on long holiday weekends and sometimes on Sundays of each school vacation week. The lessons revolve around a theme, usually seasonal based-not necessarily religious-focusing on the time of year or a specific holiday that is near.

* **Holiday Lessons** are based on a specific holiday and focus on how that holiday is celebrated. This year's Holiday Lessons include: Thanksgiving, Advent, Purim/Spring, and Passover/Seder.

RE Highlights

Christmas Pageant: (12/18) RE students get dressed up and act out the story of Christmas

Affirmation: (5/14) Students are affirmed during a worship service that they create & lead

RE Sunday: (6/11) RE students lead worship, sharing everything they learned in RE classes throughout the year

RE Offering

A collection basket is passed around at the start of each RE class; The RE offering is separate from the Church Offering, as the RE students get to vote on where their offering goes! The offering is split 50/50, going to an out-reach program and an in-reach gift for the church. Out-reach programs in the past have included The Heifer Organization, and Lutheran Services for New Americans: Backpack Drive, and partnering with Habitat for Humanity. In-reach gifts in the past have included the swing and slide structure in the Nursery, and helping towards the compensation of our Nursery hire. You're continued support is greatly appreciated.