

Youth & Children's Stewardship Program to Benefit Inspiritus

In January, the Faith Formation Committee of St. Andrew met to outline our goals for 2021. While we continue to meet virtually for Sunday School, Confirmation Class and SLY/STAKK, we challenged ourselves to create new and meaningful experiences for the younger members of St. Andrew. Another goal is to integrate the youth and children's activities more closely with the vision and mission of the church as a whole. Said another way, we want the children to support and participate in the same types of activities as the adults, just in their own, unique way. We used our Mission Statement: *In Christ, we Worship, Grow, Love, Serve, and Send* to guide our goal-setting and decision-making process.

This led us to the idea of a new youth stewardship program with Inspiritus. All children at St. Andrew will be encouraged to be generous with their time, talents, and treasures to benefit families in Middle Tennessee through the enrichment programs offered by Inspiritus. Sunday School offerings will now be sent to Inspiritus, along with a special collection as part of Vacation Bible School in the summer. This spring, be on the lookout for a Seed Packet & Garden Tool Drive to support Healthy Gardens. In 2020, Inspiritus had 204 gardens in 3 communities in Middle Tennessee. The children and youth of St. Andrew will also plan a "Day in the Garden" this spring, where we dig in the dirt and help prepare some of the garden beds for planting.

Another popular enrichment program offered by Inspiritus is called My Canvas. This is for low-income children and uses art enrichment, led by an Art Therapist, learning to cope with daily stress and frustrations, while fostering self-esteem. Like so many others, during the pandemic, Inspiritus has become creative with how these programs are delivered. Currently, they are using take-home art kits and could benefit from a supply drive by the children of St. Andrew. In 2020, Inspiritus delivered take-home art kits to children in the Oncology Unit at Centennial Children's Hospital and expressed an interest in doing so again, with the support of St. Andrew.

We also plan to support the Inspiritus Food Bank by donating non-perishable food items, Fuel Bags, and even extra produce from our own gardens this summer. Watch for produce drop-off days over the summer. A few families will take turns delivering fresh produce to the food bank in Nashville.

Janet Arning, Middle TN Regional Director for Inspiritus, expressed excitement and gratitude for the new ways that St. Andrew plans to support the mission of Inspiritus. She said, "We continue to be grateful for the many supportive people at St. Andrew. We rely heavily on the expertise and generosity of so many of you. We're excited for the children of St. Andrew to join in on the fun!"

Jeana Butler
Faith Formation Chair