

## **From Liza Hawkins, Director for Youth and Children's Ministries**

In a year when we have not been able to worship in-person and in our church home, we dreamed up a new sort of experience for St. Andrew. We put together a Walk Through Advent with interactive stations representing the traditional themes of Advent, a turn toward Christmas, and continuing on through Epiphany. Folks have missed getting to see one another and spending time at the church, and we hope this event was a meaningful and fun chance to do just that.

The first station was about hope. Hope is about expectation for the future and preparing for what is to come. Together we painted a lovely star banner with a background of purples and blues as a way of preparing something together.

The second station was a short meditative walk to center ourselves and bring peace to our hearts. We breathed in peace, and we breathed out stress and anxiety. Pastor Katherine created a beautiful meandering path from string lights!

The third station was all about joy! We simply asked, "what brings you joy?" and invited folks to write what brings them joy on a strip of cloth and add it to our frame. I caught a few glimpses of words like family, friends, church, and books. In this time of anxiety and uncertainty, it was refreshing to see a physical representation that there is still room for joy in our lives and in our hearts.

The fourth station was similar, but the questions were about love. What do you love? Who do you love? What makes you feel loved? People added their responses to another banner with beautiful words and drawings all about love.

As the Advent stations ended, we turned to the nave, beautifully decorated for Christmas. The candles and tree were lit, and music echoed inside. It was a moment for families to spend some time in the warmth of the space so many have missed over the last many months. Folks sat, knelt in prayer, told stories, and enjoyed a tiny fraction of tradition.

The final station was a look toward Epiphany out in the meditation garden, and families were given house blessings to take home.

This year has been filled with chaos, disruption, and disappointment. It was heartening to see families walking through the stations together and leaving behind signs of hope, peace, joy, and love.