

From the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries

By Liza Hawkins

First of all, thank you to everyone who has welcomed me and introduced themselves! It is an odd time to be coming into this position, and I am so grateful to Sandy and the rest of the church staff for their work keeping folks connected.

I have spent a lot of time discerning the way forward as we head into a season where we are hoping to move back to in-person gatherings, but we are generally continuing to spend much of our time on screens. After conversation with parents and pastors, I want to trim down our "digital calendar" but still keep some events online for a variety of opportunities. It is my hope that this makes our face-to-face time together easier to prioritize and more meaningful. We are scheduling many of our ministries on a once-a-month basis. Our midweek check-in time will continue every Wednesday as usual during November.

Children's Sunday School

For the first four weeks of November, we have a kit of coloring pages, craft items, and activity sheets for families to use at home as they watch worship online or attend worship in person. The last Sunday in November begins the Advent season, which will start a new kit!

November 1, 8, 15, 22 - Take Out Sunday School (kits picked up at Trunk or Treat, at Nov. 1 worship, or picked up from the administration entry)

November 22: Snacks and Songs fellowship on Zoom, time TBD

November 29, Dec 6, 13, 20 - Advent at Home (kits picked up from the church)

STAKK AND SLY upcoming events

Every Wednesday Midweek Check-in on Discord

This Saturday, Oct. 31 Trunk or Treat - 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. in the church parking lot

This Sunday, Nov. 1 Confirmation Sunday - 1:00 p.m. in the meditation garden. All youth families are invited to attend, but we will hold to the 70 person maximum, so please register with the church office if you plan to attend!

This Sunday, Nov. 1 STAKK (5th and 6th grade) - 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. online

Sunday, Nov. 8 SLY (7th-12th) Pumpkin event 5:00 - 6:30 p.m., details TBD. Save your old Hallowe'en pumpkins for this!

Sunday, Nov. 15 Confirmation Class, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Confirmation

Confirmation is an incredibly important ministry. The pastors and I have been in conversation about how we might begin doing Confirmation differently. Confirmation is about affirming one's baptism, learning about the Bible and theology, and becoming a full voting member of the congregation. It's also about cultivating spirituality and each student's relationship with God, each other, and the church. While there are important things to learn such as the commandments and the creeds, each student also brings their own experiences, gifts, and interests to the program. Because of this, we are going to begin working with a model that is more student-driven than in the past. We will gather once a month as a class to teach lessons and have conversation, but students will have more self-guided assignments and projects going on outside of class.

Confirmation Classes:

- November 15: 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
- December 13: 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
- January 10: 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Why the switch to Discord?

I first entertained this idea when several youth began suggesting it as an alternative to Zoom. I checked it out, and I am really excited about it. It provides a space for youth to hang out and connect with each other even outside of scheduled youth group times. We had our first hangout recently and it was a lot of fun!

The best thing about this is, moving forward, *all information, resources, and video meetings will be in one central location*. We have had a lot of snags with Zoom links expiring or getting lost in e-mail inboxes, and this will eliminate that confusion. I know it's a bit of a pain to create yet another online account, but this will be a super useful platform for us.

Discord has apps available for smartphones, tablets, and computers. You can also use a regular internet browser. All activity is monitored by me and Pastor Katherine.

1. Create a free Discord account
2. Follow [this link](#) to our private server and our #start-here page
3. Read our introduction to the server, give it a thumbs up!
4. Head over to the #introductions channel
5. Explore and hang out!

Thank you for your welcome, your presence, and your patience as we work to make this a meaningful season for everyone. As always, feel free to reach out to me directly if you like!

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