

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Director of Christian Formation

Tommie Moore

Christian Formation for our youngest...

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a faith formation experience for children ages 3 to 12 years old. Catechesis is based upon the belief that young children can and do experience God. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd's work is done in an Atrium, an environment created to nurture children's spirituality. This is done by proclaiming the Gospel through the parable method, prayer, singing, silence, and exploring liturgical events. Hands-on materials are used to help children and adults reflect together upon the great mysteries of the Christian faith.

We are fortunate to have as our certified catechists: Natalie Sparks Bullock, Tricia Edmonson, Mary Howard King, Joellen Murphree, Kamme Riddle, Stacy Carroll White, and Marrion Winders. Assisting in the atria each Sunday are Ashley Arthur, Sue Ann Averett, Tori Darsey and Emily Jackson.

Michelle Hester, who serves as our volunteer Coordinator of Children's Ministries, works closely with our catechists and assistants. In that volunteer role, Michelle works to enrich existing programs and explore new Christian Formation opportunities for our children through study, service and worship. Among other duties, she is responsible for developing, planning and coordinating programming for children (1st through 6th grade); recruiting, retaining and training adult volunteers; coordinating and scheduling Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and coordinating Jr. EYC efforts. Michelle is a retired pre-school teacher and has a passion for religious education and formation. She and her family have been involved in ministry at Christ the King ELCA for many years. For all who give so freely of their time in Catechesis, I am deeply grateful for their commitment.

For our youth in 7th – 12th grades...

Participants in this class explore topical, Bible-based lessons based on current events and other trending subjects that have an immediate relevancy to youth. In 2017, with the wise guidance of Josh Westmoreland, our youth delved in to such topics as: How we can avoid waste (and greed!) during a time of year that's meant to refocus us on the simpleness of grace; the #MeToo movement sparked a national conversation about inappropriate or undesired contact and how to find the courage to find their own voice and give voice to others when it's needed; how do we as Christians turn to God and one another for support during stressful times.

As you can see, our time with your children is very full and our conversations with them are always enlightening. We look forward to our time with them in the new year, as we continue helping them explore and learn to live out their faith.

For adults:

"The Sunday Lectionary" class, led by the very capable Les Alvis continued in 2017 with a strong following. This class studies the Biblical texts appointed by the Revised Common Lectionary and is made for those who wish to journey deeper into the message and meaning of each Sunday's lesson. The class critically analyzes the Biblical texts, asking questions such as: Who wrote the text and when was it written? What is the historical and social context of the text? What was the author's intent in writing the text? The class then discusses what the texts tell us about God and what the texts mean for us today. This class meets year-round

in the south breakout room of the Parish Hall on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. and all are invited to join in for the weekly, lively discussions.

Education for Ministry is a 4-year course studying the entire sweep of the Christian tradition from the earliest period to the present. Participants learn the disciplines of biblical exegesis and interpretation, systematic theology, church history, ethics, liturgics, and ascetical theology. Through study, prayer, and reflection, EfM groups move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom. Participants are given weekly assignments to study with the help of resource guides. In the weekly seminars, members have an opportunity to share their insights and discoveries, as well as discuss questions which the study materials raise for them.

We are fortunate to have Pam Carman and Ken Murphree, both EfM graduates, serving as co-EfM mentors. Their role is not that of a teacher but as a guide for the group as they navigate the study material. I am grateful for the leadership, experience, knowledge and discernment Pam and Ken bring to their role as mentors.

Daughters of the King hosted a *Day of Reflection* in December at the Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center in Cullman, Alabama. This was their third year to offer a retreat and they hope this offering will continue.

The 2017 budget for adult and youth Christian Formation was \$3,195. Of that amount, we spent \$2,985.98 on our youth curriculum, supplemental materials, Education for Ministry mentor training, scholarships, Vacation Bible School and Advent wreath making supplies. The 2017 budget for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was \$1,100. Of that amount, we spent \$183.28 on atria supplies and material repairs/replacements.

My deepest thanks to all of the volunteers for sharing their gifts through teaching during 2017. They are a dedicated group of folks and it shows! I encourage you and your children to take advantage of the Christian Formation offerings in 2018. And if you have ideas about topics for Christian Formation, I welcome your input!