



UCG Parent Newsletter Fall 2014

Dear Parents,

Welcome to UCG! Whether your family is new to the congregation or just returning from summer holidays, we are glad you've joined us and look forward to getting to know you better in the months ahead. Below you will find information about our Sunday morning programs for children and youth, and ideas for nurturing your children's spirituality at home.

Registration

It's very important that we have current information about your children so that we are able to provide the very best care for them. Please complete a confidential registration form. Copies can be found in the parent binder, at the Welcome table in the Sunshine Room, or from any of our leaders. Please return completed forms to your child's leader or to the Spiritual Development Program Coordinator.

Age Groups

Nursery (Infants- 3 years)

Our nursery is located on the main level just opposite the front door. Aaryn Perreault-Laird is our Nursery staff person.

Primary Children (ages 4-7)

Our primary classroom is on the lower level just opposite the stairs. Jane McRae is our Primary group leader.

Elementary Children (ages 8-11)

Our elementary classroom is on the lower level to the right of the stairs. Roya Matsui is our Elementary group leader.

Junior Youth (ages 12-15)

Our Junior Youth classroom is on the lower level to the right of the stairs. This group shares meeting space with the Elementary group. Drew Verrall is our Junior youth leader.

Snacks

We are committed to partnering with parents and care givers to provide snack for children participating in our Sunday morning programs. We use a sign up system and ask parents to commit to bring snack for their children's class once per session. Please include your contact information so that we can remind you the week prior. (Please also be sure snacks are nut free.)

Readers & Leaders

This year we want to be intentional about offering children and youth regular opportunities to share their talents with the adult congregation as part of the Sunday Service. Perhaps your family would like to light the chalice and lead the congregation in that ritual. Perhaps your child would like to share a reading for our opening words. Perhaps they play an instrument, sing, or dance and would like to provide the Prelude & Postlude. Please see the sign up sheet in the parent binder or contact Drew for more details.

Upcoming Events

AIDS Walk For Life- Sunday, September 21st. Concert Bandshell, Riverside Park. Our efforts will help increase awareness about HIV/AIDS and raise money to provide essential services for people living with the disease in our community.

Youth Group Kick Off- Friday, September 26th @ the UCG from 7pm-9pm. Grades 7-12.

Blindfold Banana Splits & The Ice Bucket Challenge. It's as messy and delicious as it sounds. Bring your friends and a change of clothes.

Symposium for our Ministry with Children, Youth, & Young Families.

Sunday, September 28th, 12-1:30pm at the UCG. This gathering is an opportunity for parents and older youth to discuss the strengths of our current program, identify needs within our community, and share hopes for the months ahead. Participants are encouraged to bring a bagged lunch. Childcare will be provided.

Community Dinner. Saturday, Oct 25th. 5pm-8pm. This is an intergenerational gathering for folks of all ages. A meal will be provided followed by fun activities to kindle Hope- for ourselves, our family, our community, our earth, our world. Please bring a dessert to share. RSVP with Drew by Sun. Oct. 19th. See the sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

Secret Pairs

New This Fall- Join our Intergenerational Secret Pal Exchange. This is an opportunity for adults and kids to be paired with one another as Secret Pals for the duration of a Theme. Throughout September and October participants can have a third party deliver secret blessings to their pal. The identity of your secret pal will be revealed at the Community Dinner on October 25th. To participate, complete a registration form from the Welcome Table and place it in the vessel for your age group. We will draw names during Coffee Hour on September 21st.

Activities with Hopefulness.

Throughout September & October we are exploring the theme of Hope in our Spiritual Development programs. Below are some ideas for continuing the journey at home.

Tree of Hope

Make of tree of hope for your hope. Hang or display a tree branch in a common area of the home. Using a template, make leaves for your tree. Invite family members to write or illustrate things they are hopeful for on the leaves and add them to the tree. You may want to designate special time each week to make leaves together or to share about leaves that have been added during the week. This may be a time family members wish to share goals and dreams, challenges and obstacles and how family can support one another's hopes for those situations.

Nature Walk

Take a nature walk on one of Guelph's trails (The Arboretum, Starkey Hill, St. Ignatius Farm, Guelph Lake, Royal Recreational trail). Discuss ways we can practice hopefulness for the earth- our planet, our home. Perhaps you take garbage bags and gloves to collect any litter you find, or make birdseed ornaments to hang from trees. <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Bird-Seed-Ornaments>

Endangered Species

Visit the Canadian Wildlife Federation website and learn about species at risk. The website also contains many At-Home projects & Facts Sheets for families to see what we can do for wildlife. <http://cwf-fcf.org/en/do-something/challenges-projects/take-action-factsheets/>

Support Local Agencies

In addition to making contributions to our Six Weeks of Hope Campaign, local agencies also rely on volunteers for being a source of hope to those in need in our community. Here are some local agencies and projects you might want to volunteer with:

- The Guelph Humane Society www.guelph-humane.on.ca
- The Children's Foundation <http://www.childrensfoundation.org>
- The Guelph Food Bank www.spiritwind-christian-centre.ca/guelphfoodbank.htm
- Habitat for Humanity <http://habitatwdg.ca/volunteer/>

Other Resources (Be sure to check out Book & Film Titles in the Adult Newsletter)

The Hope Tree <http://www.thehopetree.com>

The Hope Tree is an amazing sculpture created by artist Carol Jeanotilla for a Cancer Treatment Centre in California. The trunk of the tree contains 48 symbols of hope from different cultures and traditions. On the website, you can click on the images and learn the story of each symbol.

“Each of the 48 symbols on the tree were chosen for their historic or cultural connection to hope or its precursors. Hope requires reflection, courage, perseverance, faith and the support of others. It is not just one thing or found in just one place.

Every culture – modern and ancient – has found the need to make a mark trying to express this concept. It is no easy task. We are all so individual about what inspires us, what speaks to our hearts.”

Music Videos

Nickelback If Everyone Cared <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IUSZyjiYuY>

Sarah McLachlan World On Fire <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzoNInZ2C1Q>

Blessings

Buddhist Blessing for All Beings

May everyone be happy and safe,
and may their hearts be filled with joy.
May all living beings live in security and in peace
beings who are frail or strong,
tall or short, big or small,
visible or not visible, near or far away,
already born or yet to be born.
May all of them dwell in perfect tranquility.
Let no one do harm to anyone.
Let no one put the life of anyone in danger.
Let no one, out of anger or ill will,
wish anyone any harm.
Metta Sutta (Stuttanipata)

Apache Blessing Beauty

May the sun bring you new energy every day.
May the moon softly restore you by night.
May the rain wash away your worries.
May the breeze blow new strength into your being.
May you walk gently through the world
and know its beauty all the days of your life.

