

Christian Formation Commission
St. John's Episcopal Church
June 2023 Report

The Christian Formation Commission met on June 12, 2023 by Zoom.

Participants: Kathy Argueso, Rebecca Connor, Bob Speelman, Susan Sunnarborg (chair), Deacon Sue Wert, Evvie Williams, Joelene Young, Rev. Todd Young

Current/Recent activities:

- We welcomed Evvie Williams as our new Vestry Liaison. Evvie has been involved with education in and outside of the church and we look forward to working with her.
- Christian Formation activities, led by Fr. Todd and Deacon Sue, are listed in the Sunday bulletins.
- The Youth Group kickoff meeting was held on May 21, with leaders Brian Connelly, Bonnie Connelly, and Joelene Young. The youth would like to meet monthly, and are interested in taking part in service projects. Some of the youth expressed interest in bringing friends. Some families were out of town on the kick-off date so we look forward to having additional participants.

Old Business:

Senior Warden Bob Speelman joined the meeting with an update from the Vestry. A Vestry member had asked if everything was resolved from some issues that arose on a 2018 J2A program trip by the then J2A high school class. Bob reported that he had looked up the information from the 2018-2019 discussion on the matter and concluded that everything was resolved at that time, with the involvement of the then Senior Warden. He also interviewed some of the adult participants and youth (now graduated) and determined that the parents, chaperones, and young adults who had been involved in J2A, and current parents in the parish have confidence in our youth ministry, and in the significant ministry and service to the youth of our parish by Joelene Young. With this matter behind us, the commission looks forward to moving ahead with our youth ministry plans. Since the Vestry's questions have been addressed, we ask for a motion of confidence in the Christian Formation Commission's plans as follows:

Whereas the 2018 J2A trip to New York City encountered several incidents of bullying and other incidents of inappropriate behavior among the participants, and

Whereas the adult leaders and chaperons of this trip dealt with those incidents in a variety of ways that caused anger and hurt feelings among participants, leaders, chaperons, and parents, and

Whereas the adult leaders, chaperons, parents, and clergy met to discuss the trip and what it meant for the future of the program, and

Whereas apologies by all parties were made and accepted and it was agreed the program should continue, and

Whereas Lou Lamb, the Senior Warden at the time, met with the teens involved unencumbered by the presence of any adults to determine their willingness to continue, and

Whereas the Vestry at the time discussed the trip and the aftermath at a regular vestry meeting and concluded the program should continue while also recommending an additional year to ensure the trip had no lasting negative effects on the participants or their parents, and

Whereas parents, children, and leaders were ultimately satisfied with the results of how the New York trip was dealt with and have agreed to continue to move forward,

Be It Resolved that the Christian Formation Commission considers the issues surrounding the New York J2A trip to be resolved, and

Be It Further Resolved that the Christian Formation Commission is to move forward with plans for a teen ministry at Saint John's led by those persons whom the Commission appoints, and with the full support of the Commission.

Children's Chapel: We had hoped to continue this ministry through the summer, but determined that it is better to take a summer break as had been done in previous years. We continue to be in need of additional volunteers to share the workload and make scheduling easier. Children's Chapel will resume on September 10.

New Business:

Looking ahead, we discussed some potential Christian Formation offerings for adults or intergenerational groups. We will continue this discussion at our next meeting. We will also follow up on possible coordination with other commissions on presentations that are relevant to their ministry areas.

The next commission meeting date is August 14 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Sunnarborg, Chair