

Missouri Mid-South UCC Covenanted Youth Ministry Team 2018-2019 Annual Report

The covenanted youth ministry team is comprised of pastors, youth directors, Christian educators, and lay leaders who are active in youth ministry throughout the Missouri Mid-South Conference and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Mid-America. The team meets the first Thursday of the month (September through May) to plan youth ministry events, fellowship, and provide resources and encouragement to one another. Resources are also shared on our website, www.mmsuccyouth.org. The youth ministry team is led by Alysha Petry with assistance from the Conference Youth Ministry Resource Coordinator, Cindy Birkner, and Conference Youth Events Coordinator, Courtney Chandler. Our council representative is Cheryl Howard.

Youth Leader Meeting Discussion items: During this program year the youth leader team has had many discussions to enhance our youth ministries. We discussed and updated our ministry team's mission and purpose statement. We have discussed how to best communicate with youth and their parents, including the best apps to use. We have shared safe church and boundary training ideas for our volunteers. We have discussed what our confirmation programs look like. We have shared numerous mission trip ideas. We shared what our youth ministry programs look like during the program year and the summer. We also started discussing how to lead youth with special needs. Many of our discussions revolved around our thankfulness for the conference youth ministry staff. We would like to see the conference youth position to extend beyond this program year. The team and conference has benefited from the additional resources provided to youth ministry due to these positions. Events and training that were made possible by these positions this past year include: Youth at the Conference Annual Gathering (activities and service projects were provided), Confirmation Retreat, Suicide Prevention Training, Youth Leader Retreat, youth leader discussions at Western Association Meetings, youth activities at Western Association Meetings (including a lock-in), discussions on Owning THEIR own faith, and numerous updates to our youth website.

Youth Events Planned by the covenanted youth leader team:

Regional Youth Event

The Missouri Mid-South youth leaders that helped plan the 2018 West Central Regional Youth Event were Stephanie Delong, Paul Koch, Courtney Chandler, and Alysha Petry. 44 youth and adults representing 12 churches from our conference attended the event. 230 youth and adults from North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Germany gathered at Grinnell College in Iowa June 19-22, 2018. The theme of the event was Faith = Action. The youth were inspired to use their faith to be active in their communities to make the world a better place for God's creation, Our Neighbors, and Children (the UCC 3 Great Loves.) They participated in Workshops & Service Projects, listened to the music of The Convergence Music Project, and listened to many inspirational speakers share their stories of how they put their faith into action.

Conference Middle School Event

In November, 47 middle school youth and their leaders attended the annual Conference Middle School Event at Camp MoVal. The theme was loving your neighbor and was inspired by "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood". Along with exploring ways to love our neighbors, we enjoyed many activities at the camp. Alysha Petry and Courtney Chandler provided the leadership for this event with the help of many other adult leaders.

Conference Youth Event

In February, 70 high school youth and their leaders attended the annual Conference Youth Event at Camp MoVal. Debby Harness was the keynote speaker for the "Stress buster" themed event. Youth and adults learned about various types of stress and how we respond to them. The group also participated in various camp activities, a bonfire, games, a prayer path, worship, and a service project which provided homeless packs. Debby Harness, Cindy Birkner, and Courtney Chandler provided the leadership for this event.