**Annual Report for Committees, 2016 - 2017**

**Committee \_Children and Youth Religious Education**

**Committee Chair \_Keitha Whitaker\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**1st \_\_ (2nd X) 3rd \_\_ Circle year of term**

**Committee Members**

Bethany Storlazzi, Cindy Blackman, Gail Dawson, Nancy Shillington-Perez, Ginny Verne, Darrell Shier, Tim VanDenBerg, Lilith Hudson, Emerson VanDenBerg

* **Major accomplishments this year.**

Our goals for 2016 – 2017 were:

1. Have more informal gatherings.
   * We did not meet this goal this year.
2. Participate in the Capital Improvement campaign.
   * Our families all contributed to the activities around our Capital Improvement Campaign.
3. Increase attendance in our program.
   * Our year started out slowly with low attendance but we have steadily increased the number of children and youth joining our CYRE Program this year.
   * We have a healthy number in attendance at this time and we are seeing an increase in interest in our program via social media and other outreach efforts.
4. Continue to improve service opportunities for our youth.
   * Our pre-K through 5th grade students made sandwiches to serve at Food Not Bombs.
   * Our youth participated in service projects at Howlmore, the Family Shelter, and Carolina Wildlife Rescue and several of our children and youth participated in the Pride Parade.
   * Some of our youth, led by Sophia Storlazzi Johnson, advocated for elephants at the Ringling Brother’s Circus.
5. Increase our youths’ CON attendance.
   * 5 of our youth attended the Fall CON at the Mountain.
   * 7 of our children and youth attended the Congregational CON at the Mountain.
   * We sent 9 youth on the Boston Heritage Trip thanks to the dedicated energy of our parents and the youth who worked diligently to raise the funds that allowed our youth to attend.
6. Utilize website to generate interest in our faith and draw families and young people to our congregation.
   * We have maintained our CYRE pages and kept them up-to-date and relevant throughout the year.
7. Improve our use of social media to attract youth and families to congregation.
   * We have posted CYRE activities on our Facebook page with regularity this year and have seen increased interest in our program as evidenced by comments the number of shares our pages have generated.

In addition, our children and youth participated in 3 multi-generational services this year.

Our yearly CYRE Retreat and Planning event was postponed until June so we do not have a complete list of goals for 2017/2018. Those will be shared after our Retreat. We are looking forward to getting to know and working with our new minister. We are also excited about our Hogwarts Camp coming up in July. We are offering two weeks this year and registration for the first week is almost full already.

* **Please briefly describe any factors that facilitated or impeded your work this year.**
  + CYRE is fortunate to have a dedicated group of parents/teachers and other volunteers who make our program rock. Our children and youth energize our program and make all our efforts worthwhile.
  + A lack of certified OWL instructors has impeded our efforts at offering additional OWL classes. We are promoting OWL in every way possible to generate interest in this vital program for our children and youth.
* **Any special initiatives continuing into the next program year.**
  + We continue to recruit OWL instructors, teachers and other volunteers.
  + We plan to continue to increase service/social justice opportunities for our children and youth.
  + Increasing interest and attendance in our program is an on-going focus.
  + We will put special effort toward our fundraising activities as 2018 is a Boston Heritage Trip year.
* **Future dreams or long-range plans for the committee.**
  + We dream of a vibrant, fully staffed OWL program. We will continue every effort to educate our congregation concerning the need to fund and promote this life-saving program for children and youth. OWL is also part of our commitment as a Welcoming Congregation and we are anxious to meet this important aspect of our Welcoming Congregation standing.
  + We look forward to a refurbished CYRE wing and hope to see the addition of at least 2 gender neutral bathrooms, a shower so that we can host CONS in future, a conference/meeting/parent education room, an improved nursery and updated, improved RE spaces all around. (Keitha is buying lottery tickets weekly.)
* **Constraints on accomplishing these plans.**
  + See lottery ticket efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

Keitha Whitaker, Chair

Thank you for returning your report to the president by May 14th.