

**Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**Religious Education Committee Report**  
**2010/2011**

**R.E. Committee Members**

Jim Scanlan, Chair

Mary Williamson (Stepping down to be coordinator for Community Building Activities for Expanded Sundays)

Jessica Chittum (stepping down to facilitate the Gleaning Team for Social Justice)

Renee VanGuilder

Rebecca Rowe

Kevin Schama

Janice Kasten (New member on committee as of 5/11)

Denee Mattioli (Director of Religious Education)

Scott LaVoie (Programs Trustee-will be replaced by Oreon Millard in June)

**Curriculum**

Below are very brief descriptions of each of the curricula we have been using this year.

**Preschool Class (3-5 year olds)** *We Are Many, We Are One* is a U.U. preschool curriculum which offers young children the opportunity to learn about their religious community and tradition as well as the freedom to discover and express themselves and their ideas.

**Kindergarten, First & Second Grade** *Creating Home and Wonderful Welcome* are part of the Tapestry of Faith Curricula developed by the U.U.A. Through hands-on activities and stories from our UU traditions, structured opportunities for questioning, reflecting and self expression are provided. Children are introduced to UU heritage and learn to identify our HVUUC congregation as home. Core UU values are taught which helps kids to understand and practice Friendship, hospitality and fairness.

**Third, Fourth & Fifth Grade** *Toolbox of Faith* is also part of the Tapestry of Faith Curricula developed by the U.U.A. It invites children to reflect on the qualities of our UU faith, such as integrity, courage and love as tools they can use in living their lives and building their own faith.

**Jr. Youth (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)** *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong* helps our Jr. Youth understand right and wrong and act on their new understanding. *Riddle and Mystery* introduces Big Questions. Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? Does God exist? What happens when you die? Can we ever solve life's mystery? How can I know what to believe? What does Unitarian Universalism mean to me?

**Sr. Youth (High School)** *Building Your Own Theology Volume 1 & 2* invites the Sr. Youth to develop their personal credos through a process of focusing on various theological questions. This process helps participants to grow in their ability to understand and articulate their own belief systems. *Exploring Our Values Through Poetry*. This is part of the UUA Tapestry of Faith curricula. It uses poetry as a tool in spiritual practice. It utilizes poems that are concerned with elements of the spiritual life: acute observation, conscious and continuous inquiry, the

unveiling of reality, hope and hopelessness, the afterlife, and the tenderness of the human condition.

**Adult RE** – *Birth of the Modern Mind: The Intellectual History of the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Great World Religions: Buddhism, Skeptics and Believers: Religious Debate in the Western Intellectual Tradition and Great World Religions: Hinduism.*

### **Summer RE**

- Because of budget restraints, there was no summer R.E. in 2010. The R.E. Committee in agreement with Rev. Luck feels that having no R.E. during the summer contributed to low attendance which carried on into the fall. This year (2011), we will have child care for birth through 3 years and R.E. for 4-14 year olds. For detailed information about the summer program, please see attachments.
- We held our summer R.E. kickoff on Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. Between 60-70 people were in attendance. After a dinner prepared and served by the R.E. Committee, the children planted the gardens.

### **Social Justice Projects**

- With part of the offering money that the children gave at Sunday morning services, \$100.00 was spent on groceries. The R.E. kids have challenged other groups in the church to match this donation for our “Hunger in Our Neighborhood” social justice project. The \$100.00 worth of groceries will prepare 12 breakfasts, 15 lunches and 31 dinners.
- The 2011 Summer R.E. Program is thoroughly integrated with our church-wide social justice project.
- In addition to raising and donating food from the garden, the children will also be designing and making a small meditation garden as a gift to the church. They will also be preparing a dinner for the entire congregation at harvest time.

### **Teacher Recruitment & Training**

- Over 40 adults have volunteered their time and talents to work with our children and youth this year. Attached is a list of those who have taught or assisted throughout the 2010/2011 R.E. year.
- Teacher recruitment was done during the spring and summer. It began a month later than usual because the R.E. Committee wanted to wait to see what the congregation decided about the new expanded program.

- The R.E. Committee has a policy that every effort will be made to have two teachers in every class each Sunday with the exception of adult R.E. Volunteers must be members or friends of the church with regular attendance for at least six months prior to be invited to teach. All volunteers must agree to a background check and attend a training class.
- Individual training sessions were held for each team of teachers and lead by the D.R.E. Five sessions were held in August.

### **Registration & Attendance**

- On Saturday, August 28, we held Apple Days that was the kick off for the R.E. year and served as a registration time for kids and parents. About 100 people attended the event.
- We have 52 children registered in our Religious Education program with an average attendance of 31. These numbers do not include teachers or Adult R.E.
- Adult R.E. attendance varies according to the topic and during the year has ranged from 12 to 42. The highest attendance was for the Buddhism series of classes. During the rest of the classes, attendance held steady between 12 and 18 each Sunday.

### **Policies and Publications**

- A religious education prospectus is created, printed and distributed each year to all parents and new members as well as visitors with children. This publication explains the curriculum and states policies and procedures. A copy of the prospectus is attached to this report.
- We continue, with the cooperation of the Religious Services Committee, to print a brochure for parents to help introduce worship to their children. A copy is attached to this report. This brochure will be updated to incorporate the changes that will come with the Expanded Sunday Program.
- New policies have been developed for the Sr. Youth Group and have been approved by the R.E. Committee. These policies are attached for the approval of the B.O.T.

### **Classroom Furniture & Equipment**

- All classrooms are furnished and supplied with quality furniture and audio/visual equipment.
- Safety equipment in the form of fire evacuation instructions, fire extinguishers and first aid kits are in every classroom. The nursery toys are regularly put through the dishwasher and disinfectant is sprayed on the carpet after vacuuming.

### **Senior Youth Group**

Our Senior Youth Group is functioning again thanks to Cindi Huss and Hannah Wetherill who are our new Youth Leaders. They are being assisted by others in the church who will be helping with field trips, camp outs, etc.

### **Religious Education Committee**

- The R.E. Committee meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30. Occasionally they conduct their business via e-mail and phone calls in lieu of a meeting.
- The R.E. Committee holds a retreat once a year to review policies and procedures, plan the annual calendar, consider new programs and develop the new prospectus.
- The Committee has a planned cycle for leadership and a working plan that is on file with the B.O.T.
- The R.E. Committee works to coordinate activities with the Religious Services Committee and the Social Justice Committee. We also send our chair to the Council on Committee meetings.

### **Worship**

- On Sunday, May 1, the Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> graders prepared and presented the worship service for the congregation. This is a good experience for our children and youth as it an opportunity for them to become more involved in the church community through serving. In the preparation of the service they gain a better understanding of our U.U. Principles and they gain valuable experience in leadership as well as develop poise and confidence.
- The R.E. Committee plans to work closely with the Religious Services Committee in planning for and working with our children and youth who will begin attending the services with our new expanded Sunday schedule.

## **Search Committee**

The R. E. Committee is developing an application form and a specific job description to be used in the search for the new Director of Religious Education.