YOUTH CONNECT

PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH CONNECTION

- 2013-2014 -

COTTAGE LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
18350 Woodinville-Duvall Place
Woodinville, WA 98077
(425) 788-1569
YOUTH CONNECT'S THE WAY TO GO!
Mid & Youth Connect Leaders................................................................. 4
Youth Connect Mission Statement.......................................................... 4
What are Mid & Youth Connect? ............................................................ 5
The Five Intentions .................................................................................. 6-7
We’re Connected ...................................................................................... 8
What’s Expected ....................................................................................... 9
The Four Parts ......................................................................................... 10-11
Parent Participation ................................................................................. 12-13
Bringing Friends! ..................................................................................... 13
Matters of Money ...................................................................................... 14
Parent Meeting ........................................................................................ 14
Calendar for the Year .............................................................................. 15
Weekly Schedule ....................................................................................... 15
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The Youth Connect Mission Statement

As youth and young adults, we respond to God’s call through the Holy Spirit to be connected to each other, the church, and the world so that our lives proclaim with joy that Jesus Christ is Lord!
WHAT IS YOUTH CONNECT?

YOUTH CONNECT is a dynamic ministry enabling young people in 7-12th Graders to experience God's unconditional love AND to have an opportunity to share that unconditional love with their peers and adult leaders AND with their families. The basis for every aspect of YOUTH CONNECT is God's love for us--enabling us to love and care for one another.

YOUTH CONNECT welcomes anyone in grades 7—12 who is willing to participate in a loving, fun-filled Wednesday evening AND Sunday morning adventure. This adventure occurs in the context of a well-designed system of ministry to give our youth the best foundation for their lives--the love of God in Jesus Christ.

During our Wednesday YOUTH CONNECT gatherings, young people enjoy fellowship through a variety of recreational activities, through preparing to participate in worship in creative ways, through group Bible studies, and through sharing a family-style dinner together.

The relationships that are formed (and practiced!) on Wednesday afternoons become complete on Sunday mornings when the young people come to be a part of the bigger family of God through WORSHIP. YOUTH CONNECT is not a substitute for, or a replacement of, our Sunday morning worship services. Rather, YOUTH CONNECT and Sunday morning WORSHIP create together the arena within which we are able to provide quality Christian nurture for young people.
1. **To Call Young People to Be Disciples of Jesus Christ**

We are called to discipleship by Jesus Christ. We respond to that call both individually and as members of a community. As individuals, we answer that call by accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, publicly acknowledging our commitment to follow Christ, and then being obedient to God. Becoming a disciple means taking risks, meeting other’s needs, and adopting a lifestyle that includes Bible study, prayer, worship, and service.

2. **To Respond to the Needs and Interests of Young People**

Young people come to the church with a wide variety of needs and interests. Responding to those needs and interests is a critical component of the Presbyterian Youth Connection. We begin by acknowledging each person as created in God’s image and then by providing nurture and support. It continues by ministering with them in ways that are relevant and have meaning for their lives.

Responding to needs and interests also means raising hard questions. It is finding the balance between recognizing where young people are and offering a challenge and a gentle push to encourage them to be their faithful best. Responding to the needs and interests of young people means not only taking their concerns seriously but also challenging them to focus on the concerns of others as well.

3. **To Work Together in Partnership, Young People and Adults**

Youth ministry is a partnership of young people and adults. It is adults doing youth ministry with young people, not just to or for them. Partnership involves adults and young people together in everything: from creating, to planning, to doing, to cleaning it all up. It is sharing experiences and visions with each other. It is trusting each other. People who take partnership seriously risk having to compromise and not always getting their own way. Partnership is hard work as well as teamwork.
4. TO BE CONNECTED TO THE WHOLE CHURCH, COMMUNITY, AND WORLD
Youth ministry does not happen in a vacuum. It is connected to the whole church. Youth ministry claims its roots in our Presbyterian heritage by being connected to other churches in the presbytery, other presbyteries in the synod, other synods in the General Assembly, and other denominations in ecumenical gatherings. Youth ministry is connected to families, schools, communities, regions, nations, and the whole world. The Presbyterian Youth Connection seeks to connect youth ministry to the whole church as an integral part of the living body of Christ, at all times and in all places.

5. TO BE INCLUSIVE OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE
Youth ministry is inclusive rather than exclusive. It reaches out to others and invites them to belong to the community. It affirms differences and celebrates common commitments. The Presbyterian Youth Connection includes many different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and ages. It is, like the nature of God, more interested in building bridges than walls. Any place young people are involved is part of the church’s youth ministry and therefore, part of the Presbyterian Youth Connection.
Evangelism, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others, is important to understanding this intention. We believe and because we believe, we belong to this community of faith. But belonging is not enough. We also reach out to others to invite them to belong, too.
YOUTH CONNECT is connected to other churches in several ways:

1. We are excited to be working with Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Bothell! Some of their young people join us on Wednesday evenings, and this year we will be sending a group of youth to serve at their Free Community Meal the 1st Wednesday of each month.

2. We are a part of an international family of thousands of congregations who offer similarly structured youth ministry programs under the name of Logos. As a part of this bigger family, our CLPC youth ministry receives the benefit of excellent resources, training, and a wealth of shared experience.

3. Our choice of name is a take-off from—Presbyterian Youth Connection—showing that we have chosen to be connected to other Presbyterian churches who share our commitment to the Youth Connect (PYC) Mission Statement and the Five Intentions of Youth Ministry. You can read both of those on pages 4 and pages 6-7 to find out what good stuff they contain!
We uphold the following as being of utmost importance.

♥ Our pastor actively participates in YOUTH CONNECT.

♥ Parental support and participation (even behind the scenes!) are essential to the success and effectiveness of this ministry.

♥ Regular participation will be encouraged...both on Wednesdays and at worship on Sundays!

♥ YOUTH CONNECT consists of four parts. These parts—each indispensable to the ministry—are:
1. **BIBLE STUDY**

YOUTH CONNECT offers creative, relevant, and interactive Bible studies for groups of young people. The Bible study time is the heart of our time together because it helps young people develop into intelligent, committed, and concerned Christian individuals. This year our youth will dive into a study of Bible characters & contexts (studying people in the Bible in their times and places...to better understand ourselves and being a Christian today.

2. **CREATIVE WORSHIP**

Youth are encouraged to participate in Sunday morning worship actively! We strongly believe that worship is for God's children of ALL AGES!! We want to ADD creativity to our worship services and we know that young people have what it takes! So—we hope to form small groups to get everyone involved in sharing their gifts & talents in ways they would most enjoy. Some possibilities are: sharing a message through words or drama, leading Children’s Moments, reading Scripture, singing, playing hand chimes or hand bells, playing other instruments (solos, duets, trios?), praying, or creating visual displays or banners.) This year we will be leading and sharing in worship at both Cottage Lake and Emmanuel Presbyterian churches. We are excited about the possibilities!
3. GAMES & ACTIVITIES

Today, when being busy and productive every minute of the day is the norm, time for noncompetitive FUN is a rare and beautiful thing! YOUTH CONNECT games & activities are designed for no other purpose in mind. We highly valued the opportunity that it provides young people to learn about themselves and each other as they recreate together. We’ll set aside time each week to just play and create! We are also open to have some additional outings and events whenever a GREAT opportunity comes our way. These activities will be selected & planned jointly by adult leaders & youth and publicized as they come up, so if you have an idea...speak up!

4. DINNER SHARED & SERVED

A shared meal together is an essential aspect of YOUTH CONNECT. During the meal time a unique sense of the family of God develops as young people and adults eat and share together week after week.

We also believe that serving others is an essential part of being a follower of Christ. So—we are excited to be able to give our older youth the opportunity to help serve meals one Wednesday a month in place of their other YOUTH CONNECT activities. This service will take place at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Bothell.
PARENTS ARE IMPORTANT TOO!

Through YOUTH CONNECT, we strive to help young people have the best life possible now and as they grow up into adulthood. In addition to caring about your children, we care about you—the parent(s)—and the extremely important relationships that you have with your children. Each of us (church and parents) is responsible to God and to our children for the quality of relationships that we provide for them. The YOUTH CONNECT time each week provides the opportunity for quality relationships to develop through God's love, with the commitment of many caring parents and other adults. Without this commitment from parents and adults, the quality of relationships that ALL young people deserve would not be possible.

Therefore, we, the YOUTH CONNECT leaders, agree to:

♥ Love God, because we realize that it is God's love that enables us to love others.

♥ Love your children, always seeking the best for them.

♥ Give of our talents and time each week. (Some cooking, some leading recreation, some teaching Bible study, some leading a creative worship team, and a multitude of other gifts.)

You, the parent, are challenged to participate actively in this process. Carefully and prayerfully consider the specific opportunities available to you in the YOUTH CONNECT ministry. If a year-long leadership position is of interest to you, please contact one of the youth leaders.
Since this is a shared ministry, at least one parent of every young person in YOUTH CONNECT must participate in the following ways.

♥ EVERY family needs to sign-up to bring dessert 1-2 times per session (depending on our dessert needs!)

♥ Dinner help sign-ups are based on the number of weekly leadership positions parents do or do not have. If neither parent is in a leadership role weekly, their family must help with dinner 3 times per session (either clean-up or washing table clothes.) If one parent is in one weekly leadership role, their family must help in the kitchen 1 times per year. If one or more parents is in more than one leadership role weekly, you do not need to work in the kitchen at all!

♥ We also ask that you actively support your child/ren by encouraging participation at Logos every Wednesday and at worship every Sunday.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Visitors are ALWAYS welcome at YOUTH CONNECT! Anyone may invite a friend to come with them. If you can let one of the leaders know ahead of time, great! If not, no big deal...since we almost always have plenty of food. We do ask that guests contribute $3 for their meal....if possible. Friends are expected to stay with the person who brings them throughout the entire evening.. If you bring a friend, you are responsible for sharing what happens at YOUTH CONNECT with them, so that they know what to expect.

If the same friend visitor more than twice, we will ask them if they’d like to join YOUTH CONNECT! We love it when young people want to come and we love it even more when they join the group! Without the commitments and support described in this handbook, YOUTH CONNECT wouldn’t be possible.
Fees cover meals, Bible study materials, music, and activity supplies. Fees are due at the time of registration. Please make checks payable to: CLPC.

Financial assistance is available through a scholarship fund so that no one will be excluded from involvement by cost. Contributions to the scholarship fund are both welcome and needed. Requests for scholarships can be made before or at the time of registration, by contacting the Director of Christian Nurture or the Pastor.

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**THE PARENTS’ MEETING**

We host one or two Parent Meetings every year because we’d really like you to attend!

**Wednesday, October 2nd, 7:00—8:00pm**
**or Sunday, October 6th, 9:00-10:00am**

We are often asked why we are so insistent that parents attend this meeting....I mean what exactly IS the big deal?? We insist because we care deeply about your children and we know that YOU are the most important people in your child's life. We also know that if we want to have a significant impact in your child's life we will need your FULL understanding and support. This is a team effort, and we can’t be a very effective team if one hand doesn't know what the other is doing!

The Parent’s Meeting provides the basis for relationships that will be deepened through the year ahead.
# CALENDAR

**WEDNESDAYS - 4:45-7:30PM**

**YOUTH & MID CONNECT:**
- **OCT. 9, 16, 23, 30**
- **NOV. 6, 13, 20**
- **DEC. 4, 11, 18**
- **JAN. '1, 8, 15, 22, 29**
- **FEB. '5, 12, 26**
- **MARCH '5, 12, 19, 26**
- **APRIL '2, 9**

**IN ADDITION:**
Youth Connect will be involved in mission/service the 1st Wednesday of each month, starting in January. Half of the group will serve dinner at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church and the other half will participate in another mission project each month.

**JAN 1, FEB. 5, MAR. 5, APR. 2**

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>YOUTH CONNECT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:45-5:20</td>
<td>Youth Creative Worship Choices (Sanctuary, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:20-5:30</td>
<td>Decorating &amp; Dinner Set-Up (Fellowship Hall)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:35-6:05</td>
<td>Games &amp; Art Options (Outside/Log Building &amp; Art Room)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:10-6:40</td>
<td>D I N N E R (Youth Room)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:45-7:30</td>
<td>Bible Study &amp; Discussion (Old Library/Couch Room)</td>
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WELCOME TO YOUTH CONNECT!