

May 2021  
DRE Board Report

Hello all,

I'm so very grateful for all the work you put into creating our new policy for outdoor gatherings. So many parents have contacted me and signed up for our RE gatherings and are so grateful and excited. We have five families coming to this Sunday's backyard gathering, which seems like the perfect amount. We will have one more backyard gathering, plus a hike and a beach afternoon. Looking at the sign-ups so far, we have five families signed up for different gatherings who have not been involved at all this year. It's so good to see them jumping back in! We're all so excited.

I sent little gift packages to the middle and high school youth this month that included a card, bookmark, sunflower seeds and gift certificates to Sweet Cakes. I want to make sure that they know that we're thinking about them and we're here for them still. I know so many of them have struggled this year, feeling isolated and powerless. So I'm glad I finally sent out something for them. I plan to put together little end of the year gifts for them to pick up as well.

DL and I have been planning the bridging and moving up service and I've been in touch with all the families who have kids who either changed schools during the pandemic, or are going to a new school this coming fall. So we have a little group of Kindergarteners, a couple 6th graders, one soon-to-be 9th grader and possibly one or two high school graduates who will be joining us for our June 6th service. I've been happy to see that a lot of kids and parents are excited about this idea and I'm happy to be honoring the kids who have made or will be making major transitions during this most challenging year.

Also, along those lines, we've started talking about the possibility of offering OWL next year. Bethany and I are both excited to go to an OWL training so that we can be facilitators. We're meeting with the folks at Peacedale Congregational to talk about potentially collaborating with them, so we can get a big enough group of 7th-9th graders. I need to start reaching out to parents to tell them about the program and get them excited about it.

I've loved facilitating the story gatherings this month. We had one last week, and it was just delightful to hear all the stories that came up. It's such a wonderful way to get to know the history of the congregation, as well as a little more about the congregants. I'd love to keep doing this story gathering into the future.

We are planning to do a major shift of the RE classrooms, and I'd love to get a crew of volunteers to help with it. We'd like to swap the two halves of the main RE classrooms so that the front half is the crafting room, and the back is the quieter circle space where we start our day together. This means lots of emptying of cabinets and moving of furniture.

I've been loving my weekly meetings with DL. From the beginning, they've been something that I look forward to every week. And recently, we've started having our meetings while we walk, which is a huge improvement over Zoom! I feel so very supported and cared for in this new position during this strange year. And I've had wonderful interactions with many congregants now, during coffee hour, via email and during our story gatherings. It's starting to feel like home here. So thank you all for that love.

Take care and enjoy these beautiful days,

Lee