

Religious Education 2022-2023 – Lyn Bradeen

The Religious Education committee, which includes **Lyn Bradeen** as chair, our coordinator of Religious Education, **Leigh Baltzer**, and also committee members **Pam King**, **Robyn Charam**, **Gayla Godby** and **Rev Steph** — met regularly during the year, accomplishing much. Leigh was also supported this year by **Sean DeNapoli** and **Molly Stevens** as RE assistants.

“Sunday Adventures” was structured with children given age appropriate classes. The younger group (ages 3-5) and the older group (ages 6-10) both enjoyed the UUA Soul Matters program which explored different themes throughout the year. The themes of the Soul Matters 2022/2023 program included:

2022-2023 Themes

September: Belonging
October: Courage
November: Change
December: Wonder
January: Finding Our Center
February: Love
March: Vulnerability
April: Resistance
May: Creativity
June: Delight

We began the year going over the contents from the Summer Adventure bags that were given to the children in June of 2022. The children gathered a trinket or something special from their summer vacation that they could use as a show-and-tell prop to relate a summer adventure they experienced to the rest of the Sunday Adventures group.

In late fall, we started making preparations for the Christmas Pageant. This year the RE committee decided to make panels out of the main pageant scenes, with cut out face holes for the children to pop their faces into. While this was a team effort, Gayla Godby went above and beyond in helping to research and produce the actual panels themselves. Once we had the panels custom made for us by Weston Graphics, the children worked hard on painting them. Each week, we reviewed the story of the given panel, and then set to work to paint it. By the end of November, we had reviewed the whole Christmas story and painted all the panels. It was quite a feat of teamwork and creativity. Here are some photos of the final creations:

BEFORE...



DURING...



AFTER! 🧡



BEFORE...



DURING...



AFTER! 🧡



BEFORE...



DURING...



AFTER! 🧡






Rev Steph wrote the script, which included a role for Sam Bam Ham and herself as narrators. Sam and Rev Steph narrated the Christmas Story while the kids “acted out the parts” by standing behind the panels and placing their faces in the pre-assigned characters’ openings.

The Christmas Pageant was performed on December 18th, and was well received by members and guests alike.

Because Christmas fell on a Sunday this year, Rev Steph decided to make a Christmas card video for the parishioners to watch on Christmas Day. Rev Steph, Leigh, Newton the Puppet, and Mark Slawson created a beautiful Christmas greeting.



The YouTube link is here: <https://youtu.be/4pHWfCBz5ik>

In March, Ardith Wieworka organized a visit from the New England Wildlife Center. Jack Banagis came to Cushing Hall with Falco the red tail hawk, Valley the sulcata tortoise, a bearded dragon, and other exotic reptiles. He taught the children about each of the animals and why they needed help healing and recuperating in the Wildlife Center. The children were able to touch some of the animals at the end of the presentation. Here are some photos of the exciting day! 



In April, Mary Collins and Robyn Charam generously provided over 150 stuffed eggs for the kids to find. Mary also shared her traditional festive Easter bonnets, juice, and treats for the children's enjoyment.



In early May, we held our annual Lemonade for Womanade fundraiser. The kids made signs and we raised over \$80 for the local charity that helps women in short-term need.

In late May, the children helped the adults replace the flags at High Street Cemetery. We had a warm, sunny day and a wonderful turn out - lots of dedicated families and children participated to replace the old flags with new ones.

The last part of our report is announcing that the RE committee has decided to continue using Soul Matters for our RE curriculum for the 2023-2024 year. The 2023-2024 themes will explore:

September: Welcome

October: Heritage

November: Generosity

December: Mystery

January: Liberating Love

February: Justice & Equality

March: Transformation

April: Interdependence

May: Pluralism

June: Renewal

At our final Sunday service on June 18th, we will hold our annual Flower Communion. During Sunday Adventures, the children will decorate flower cookies made by Gayla.

We hope you have a good summer! See you next year!