

## **Religious Education Committee Annual Report for 2019**

### **Main Ways in Which We Spent Our Time in 2019:**

The Religious Education (RE) Committee plans, coordinates, supports, and provides oversight for First Day School, Nursery Child Care, and Summer Activities. In the 2018-2019 school year, First Day School programs and activities were provided from the third Sunday in September through the first Sunday in June. Nursery Child Care was provided every First Day of the year as well as for special occasions. Summer activities were provided for school aged children during Meeting for Worship from the second First Day in June through the second First Day in September.

### **Highlights in 2019:**

- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Family Program coordinated by Rory Kennison (January)
- BYM Camp Day with Chris Rutkowski and John Beck which proved to be instrumental in helping at least two children to apply and go to camp for the first time. (January)
- Trip to Gunpowder Friends Meeting (March)
- Easter Day Program including pansies and Easter Egg Hunt coordinated by Megan Shook. (April)
- Family Camping Weekend at Catoctin (April)
- End of School Year Program – a play with the subject of Joseph of the Old Testament (June)
- Opening Day for First Day School. Sweet Potato Biscuits by Susie. YUM! (September)
- Five community service days by the children. Lunches for those in need, trash and recycling pick up in Wyman Dell, and toiletry kits for the homeless were activities. (February, March, May, and November)
- The Nativity of Jesus play, directed by Maddie (December).

### **Spiritual State of the Committee:**

The RE Committee members are very committed to and engaged with the children of the Meeting. They provide support and oversight to the paid staff of three people who work in Nursery Child Care and First Day School programs – Rory Kennison (January – June) and Maddie Doll (September – Present), Henry Kennison, and Chris Stadler. We meet on a nearly monthly basis, although we have had to be flexible and adaptable with our committee meeting times to accommodate other events. Our meetings consistently began and ended with worship, and were characterized by cheerfulness and optimism that the religious education program is making a positive difference in the lives of the children and in support of their families.

The RE Committee membership grew from four to five people in 2019 with Joanna Fitzick joining Susie, Megan, Kendall, and John. Still the program takes a lot of work and sometimes members have felt the burden of that commitment. But we are grateful for the contributions of Chris Stadler, the child care specialist, Rory Kennison, who served as our First Day School Instructor from September 2018 to June 2019, Maddie Doll, our First Day School teacher from September 2019 and Henry Kennison, who is completing his second year as a child care assistant.

### **Challenges Faced by Committee:**

- While we have had a small uptick of children in the program who are regular attenders, we would love to have more children and more regulars.
- First Day School is really a “one room schoolhouse” which is both a challenge for the teachers and a point of strength for the group. Older kids usually help and serve as models for the younger kids.
- It would be helpful to have more adults serving as Summer Program Leaders.

### **Strengths of the Committee:**

- Adaptability and versatility. Committee members play multiple roles as second adults, teachers, and planners/coordinators.
- Commitment to the children and to the Meeting.
- Experience and common sense from being parents ourselves.
- Support from the Homewood community – encouragement, announcements, volunteers, and financial.

### **Our Hopes for the Future:**

- More children in the programs, in particular, the Nursery
- Another committee member, especially as committee members begin to cycle off in 2021
- A successful family camping trip to Catoctin in May.
- To have Maddie Doll continue as our First Day School Teacher for another year. She has done a great job this year.

Committee Members as of 12/31/19: Joanna Fitzick, Susie Higgins, Kendall Kennison, John McKusick, and Megan Shook.