

October Bi-Centennial Moment Mentor United Methodist Church

Educating the youth has always been a critical ministry of the Mentor United Methodist Church. In fact, in the early 1960s the church had a kindergarten program before the Mentor Public Schools had established one.

The most visible education to the congregation are the Sunday school classes offered during the nine and eleven o'clock services. MUMC Sunday School is offered to children from birth through the sixth grade under the direction of Tammy Palermo, Director of Children and Family Ministries. During each service teachers, called life changers, teach our children. In addition there are also children who worship with their parents. The classes take their lead from Deuteronomy 6 which commands us to teach the children the commandments of God. The first Sunday of every month is Family Worship where children from kindergarten through sixth grade worship with their parents.

While traditional Sunday School classes are an important part of Christian education, they are by no means the only aspect of bringing the Christian message to the youth. Vacation Bible School, held in June each year, offers an informative and fun way of learning to children ages four through sixth grade. Fifth and sixth graders have GOD Camp which stands for GetOut Doors and is held at various parks in the area. Other summer activities include Theatre Arts Camp held in either June or July which offers two weeks of training and leads to a Broadway junior production of shows such as Aladdin and Beauty and the Beast. Also, an intergenerational Christmas show is put on during the Holiday season. You might remember "It's A Wonderful Life" presented last year.

Another ministerial outreach to the community is the preschool program. This ministry began in the late 1960s when the Commission on Education, under the urging of Mae Booth, established a nursery school. Mary Freiling (wife of Rev. John Freiling) and Nancy Dickinson were the first instructors. Bonnie Newman headed up the preschool for many years. The school serves children ages three and four and also age five in a prekindergarten program. Currently, 83 children are taking part in the preschool. The children meet either three or four days a week.

I have touched on some of the ministries this church offers to the youth, not only of our church but of our community. Part of the motto of our bicentennial is to Build for the Future. I cannot think of a better way to build for that future than investing the time, talents, and resources in the youth. They will be the ones to lead Mentor United Methodist Church well into its third century.