

Christian Study & Fellowship Opportunities for Youth & Adults at St. Matthew's

Fall 2011

Long-term "Adventure" Studies

Heading Out with Honeycutt Contact: Denise Honeycutt

Offered throughout the year. Led by Denise Honeycutt. Join Pastor Denise and others for a series of local adventures and discussion of what it means to be a Christian in the Washington, DC, area. We will be heading out to such places as the Library of Congress for an insiders tour, a restaurant committed to serving local organic foods, the United Methodist Church & Society Building, and the National Mall for a picnic. Invite a neighbor or join us for one or all of these adventures as we Head Out with Honeycutt and explore our Christian faith in our local context. More details to follow.

Broadway with Brian Contact: Brian Johnson

Offered throughout the year. Led by Brian Johnson. This series explores the connections between art and faith through attendance at and discussion of a series of Broadway musicals which will be coming to the Kennedy center throughout the year. Shows include Les Misérables, Billy Elliot, La Cage aux Folles, Come Fly Away, and Memphis. You must attend at least three of these shows in order to participate in the class. The class includes a discussion session a week after each performance which will explore issues for Christian living raised by the show. Cost for class is the price of tickets for each of these shows.

Adult Sunday School, 9:45

Sanctuary of the Soul: A Journey into Meditative Prayer (10 Sessions) Offered Sunday Mornings at 9:45 AM. Led by Monica Swofford. Have you ever wished that you were better at prayer? Have you ever had difficulty finding quiet time alone with God in the midst of our fast-paced world? This study, based on Richard Foster's book of the same name, explores the practice of meditative prayer and invites participants to discover a richer and more transformative prayer life. For those interested in purchasing the book, cost is \$12.

Re-Discovery Class Contact: Judy Hall

This class is an exciting and stimulating class for adults of all ages who are seeking to expand their faith at the edges. This is a questioning and questing group of individuals and couples who enjoy in-depth discussions of a variety of topics. Join them in September and October as they discuss Adam Hamilton's book, *Enough: Discovering Joy through Simplicity and Generosity*.

Heroes and Heroines Contact: Larry Dean

This class is a group of senior adults who enjoy fellowship and are inspired and challenged by study. Studies often focus on Cokesbury Press books which are focused on pulling relevant lessons for today from the experiences of major Biblical personalities.

Apostles and Other Folks Contact: Sandy Plate

This class is made up of adults age 40 and up who have rich fellowship and lively discussion around a variety of books. Various class members take turns leading the class. Join them this Fall as they study *The House on Gratitude Street* by J. Ellsworth Kalas.

Contemporary Issues Contact: Bob Hull.

This class uses "The Wired Word," a weekly email which shapes each week's discussion around topics which are in the news during that week. The class seeks to answer the question, "What is our Christian response."

Hands Helping Humanity Contact: Ruth Ann Harrold

Each Sunday this group gathers at 9:45 for fellowship and to knit hats, scarves, and sweaters for those in need in Appalachia and for children in Russian orphanages. All levels of knitters are welcome. Moreover, if you don't know

how to knit, they'd be happy to teach you.

Parents of Teens Contact: Brian Markwalter and Dennis Nutt

This class offers participants the opportunity to share the joys and challenges of raising teenagers with others who are on the same journey. Join them this fall as they begin to have discussions around *Getting to Calm: Cool-Headed Strategies for Parenting Tweens & Teens* by Laura Kastner and Jennifer Wyatt.

Coffee and Conversation Contact: Annette Landers

This group gathers each week for conversation around issues related to the Christian faith journey and to offer support to each other in the midst of life's journey.

Parents of Children Contact: TBA

This small group of parents gathers weekly to share in the joys and challenges of raising young children. Each week they discuss a chapter from the book *Parenting with Love and Logic*.

Youth Sunday School Classes, 9:45

7th grade: Bible, *The Life of Jesus: Junior High Group Study*

Discover the radical message and life of Jesus Christ! Through Jesus' miracles, parables, and teachings, students will be exposed to the (cont. from page 6) powerful message that Jesus wants to develop a relationship with them. This is part of the *Uncommon Junior High Group Study* by Kara Powell.

8th Grade: Confirmation, *Credo Confirmation*

Know your story... Confirm your faith... Live your commitment. This confirmation series is for our youth ready to respond to the love letter God sent to them at their baptism. As our youth continue their faith journey, confirmands will fully engage in the life of the church through worship, service, study, and involvement in other ministries.

9th grade: Character, *COURAGE: Developing Character to Stay Strong*

It's not always easy to stand up for what you believe, especially if it means going against the grain. In this video series, Pastor Francis Chan opens up the scriptures and challenges our youth to live lives defined by faith and courage. Students share real life stories about struggles and successes living as a teenager in our world today.

10-12th grade: Ethics and Christian Living, *Life Isn't Easy*

What does it mean to live as a Christian today? How do we live as Christians at school, in our families, in politics, and in our communities in a meaningful and truthful way? This topical series will focus on real life topics that youth are facing in their daily lives.

Short-term Studies

Living the Questions (12 sessions) DVD and discussion format, offered Monday evenings at 7:30 PM, beginning on Sept 19th. Led Denise Honeycutt and others. "Living the Questions" is a study that explores beyond the traditions and rote theologies to look at the significance of Christianity in the 21st century and what meaningful faith can look like in today's world. Topics include Creativity and the Stories of Creation, Evil and a God of Love: The Place of Suffering, Social Justice and the Prophets, Lives of Jesus, Out in the World: Challenges Facing Progressive Christianity, The Contribution of Wesleyan Theology, and others. "Living the Questions" seeks not to provide easy answers, but to be a resource for people who are in the midst of a life-long conversation about the mysteries of faith and life." The purpose of the study will be to raise questions and 'stir the pot' not necessarily provide THE answer. Many people of deep spiritual integrity are looking for a place to ask the hard questions of our faith.

Where Do I Come in: Joining God's Mission (6 sessions) Offered Monday Nights at 7:30 PM, beginning on September 19th. Led by Brian Johnson and others. Do you think of yourself as a missionary? In reality, every part of your daily life is "mission work"—whether you're driving children to soccer practice, preparing for a meeting, or getting to know your next-door neighbor. This study includes daily readings and explores what it means for Christians to be

in mission. God is on the move in the world, and through this study we will explore how we can answer God's call to join in the work that God is doing to redeem the whole creation. Find out how to develop a missional mindset in your life with this small group study. Student book costs \$10.

Sanctuary of the Soul: A Journey into Meditative Prayer (10 Sessions) Offered Sunday Mornings at 9:45 AM, beginning with an introductory session on September 18. See description above in Adult Sunday School Offerings.

Invitation to Genesis (10 Sessions) Offered Wednesday Mornings at 9:30 AM, beginning on September 21. Led by Nancy Blythe. This short-term Disciple Bible Study explores the book of Genesis. Through the study, participants will be invited to listen afresh to the witness of this opening book of the Hebrew Bible and to understand more clearly God's purpose in beginning to form a people with the likes of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, and Jacob and Esau.

Enough (4 Sessions) Offered Tuesday nights at 7:30 PM, beginning on October 4. Led by Gary Thatcher. This study, coordinated with our October Sermon series, explores the role of money and possessions in the life of faith. In recent years, many of us ignored the wisdom of the past when it came to managing and spending our money. We felt an insatiable desire for more things. Some of us found ourselves spending tomorrow's money today in order to have what we hoped would satisfy. The result of all of this was not greater happiness and satisfaction, but greater stress and anxiety. *Enough* is an invitation to rediscover the Bible's wisdom when it comes to prudent financial practices and to learn what it means to have "enough."

Advent Through the Eyes of those who Waited (4 Sessions) Offered on Tuesday nights at 7:30 beginning on November 29. Led by Brian Johnson. This study explores the Advent themes of waiting and expectation from the perspectives of four biblical characters. First, the prophets in the book of Isaiah present us with the idea of waiting and preparing for the Messiah—our work for Advent. Next we meet John the Baptist who announces the coming of the Messiah. Mary, the mother of Jesus teaches us about patience and courage. Finally, we learn from Elizabeth about how to accept a blessing so long in coming that it is no longer expected.

Long-term Bible Studies

Disciple 1: Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

Offered Monday Nights, 7:30 PM. Led by Todd Creekman and Walt Pumo. Covering approximately 70% of the Bible, this study takes (cont. from page 7) participants from Genesis through Revelation prompting them to consider God's action in their lives and ways they find meaning and purpose through discipleship. This class lasts 34 weeks, not including breaks for holidays, and begins with orientation on September 19. Cost for participant's guide is \$36.75.

Disciple 3: Remember Who You Are

Offered Monday Nights, 7:30 PM. Led by Randy Jones. Focusing on the major and minor Old Testament Prophets and the 13 letters traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul, this study seeks to help participants to remember their identity as members of the people of God. Participation in this study requires prior completion of Disciple 1. The class lasts 32 weeks, not including breaks for holidays, and begins with orientation on September 19. Cost for participant's guide is \$36.75.

Fellowship Opportunities

Dinner of the Seasons – Contact: Diane Jones

This adult fellowship meets in homes for dinner and fellowship in groups of eight. The groups rotate quarterly. Contact Diane Jones for more information or to become a part of this opportunity.