

Youth WIN Team Meeting Minutes May 24, 2018

In attendance: Beth Boemler, John Cargile, Mary Beth Harper, Chuck Healy, Kem Mogannam, Genny Schumacher, Jeff Woodhouse.

On the team, but not present: Pastor Jim and Ivy Williams.

Several members presented reports on their research assignments.

John reported on attendance figures for some previous years, and the youth directors during those years.

Youth Directors

John Guiney (Jr. High): 2001-2008

Nancy Cooper (Sr. High): (1996) 2001-2008

Kathy Williamson: 2008-2011

Beth Boemler: 2010-2011

Ryan Langeland: 2011-2015

Nick Nicholas: 2015-2017

Beth Boemler: 2017-Present

Attendance (no data available for previous years)

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|---|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2015: Youth Group: 110 (8.4% of total weekend services) | Cantate: 40 | Total Weekend Church Services: 1313 |
| 2016: Youth Group: 78 (6.3% of total weekend services) | Cantate: 22 | Total Weekend Church Services: 1230 |
| 2017: Youth Group: 61 (4.9% of total weekend services) | Cantate: 14 | Total Weekend Church Services: 1236 |
| 2018: Youth Group: 69 (6.5% of total weekend services) | Cantate: 11 | Total Weekend Church Services: 1055 |

Genny gave a very lengthy report about her meeting with the youth directors (John and Pua) at St. John's in Ellisville. They have a thriving youth program, and do quite a few things differently from how we do them. They would also be willing to speak with us more in depth about their program. Here is her report of the information learned from the meeting.

Met with Pua Coffman and John Shepherd - both are in their mid-20's; have only been with St. John @ 3-4 years. John was previously a consultant, advising youth ministries.

Previously, a youth director had built a large program, but when he moved, the youth directors changed frequently with recent seminary graduates who were not particularly excited about being youth directors. When Pua and John arrived, there were about 3 Sr. High youth in the program.

Pua works very hard to reach out to the parents to "be invited" to meet with them for coffee or a meal; they, along with the small group leaders, regularly attend events of the youth (recitals, games, etc.), introducing themselves to the other youth there and inviting them to attend.

Every Sunday is an opportunity for the HS youth to SERVE in the building, whether it be ushering, lay reading, singing with the band, or serving as youth mentors to the mid-high students. They firmly believe that getting the youth integrated in SERVING on a weekly basis leads to regular attendance as they transition to college students, and it also shows the congregation that the youth are involved.

Sunday morning is mid-high youth group; 9:00 band/tech meetings, 10:45-noon mid-high youth group. Leaders may be HS students or adult leaders. Since St. John has a 3-story building to use for youth group, mid-high and sr high have their own separated worship areas.

Sunday afternoon is senior-high youth group; 4:30-6pm. They have researched this, and have found that this time-frame is the best "down time" for HS youth.

Youth time is ***intentional and consistent*** in the design of "funneling down" the energy level and focus:

- First 15 minutes, check-in and "chill time"; snacks, hanging out with friends, etc.
- Visitors fill out a quick info card with parent contact info. Later that week, they are contacted by Pua/John or a leader. Thanked for attending, encouraged to come back.
- Next time frame is bringing them together into a worship space, but bringing the energy level gradually down by playing an ice-breaker game or something else fun.
- Band plays songs, creating mood of worship
- Pua or John present a message/Scripture
- Small groups are the last 20 minutes, and are divided by age and gender. Time is spent reviewing the message and talking together.

The first Sunday of each month is always off-campus by small groups. They may choose to have dinner, ice cream, see a movie, etc., but it is always the first Sunday, and always by the small group.

Pua and John talk a lot about CONSISTENCY of a schedule, so that kids know what to expect. This is helpful when inviting a friend - "hey, next Sunday our small group is going to meet for snow cones!", "hey, you gotta come hear our youth band play next week, they're awesome!"

They contact parents via email, and kids via Instagram or Twitter.

Both Pua and John thought our Sunday nights were longer than needed, and questioned why we served dinner, from a perspective of:

- Volunteers needed (what will you do when the current volunteers resign?),
- Time spent on dinner, and the overall time commitment for the night for volunteers and youth
- Transition from dinner to programming (don't they go into a food coma?!)

They suggested switching to light grab-n-go snacks during check-in/chill time, but maybe offering dinner once a month, with a fun theme (no utensils, Circus food, etc.), again, providing consistency of scheduling (first Sunday, second Sunday, etc.)

Our team was very interested in discussing this information further to see if we would like to try implementing any of these ideas into our program.

The report on the youth program at efree church was not available, nor was the report on the programs of former youth directors Nancy Cooper and Nancy Wilson. When those are ready, we will revise these minutes.

We again discussed the goal of having 100 middle and senior high youth actively engaged at MUMC during a week.

1. We have now decided that it IS significant and worthy if youth attend more than one activity during a week, so we *are* going to count total *occurrences* toward the goal (not discriminating between whether 100 youth attend one event each, or 50 youth attend two events each), but we are also going to track how many youth do attend multiple events during the week.
2. We decided that the goal of 100 is too low! We reached this conclusion based on two points. First, for the 2017-2018 school year, we averaged 50 youth per week at Sunday night youth group, we had 32 per week in Confirmation class, and we had approximately 5 per week at Herb's Bible Breakfast, so that's already almost 90 occurrences per week. Second, Beth quoted a book on sustainable youth programs, which said a good target is to have your youth attendance be 20% of your overall church attendance. Based on current levels, that would mean our youth attendance should be around 200. We felt that was a little too ambitious at this point.
3. We agreed to increase the goal to 120. We kept the goal this low partly because we know that have smaller 5th and 6th grade classes coming up.

4. We decided that we should not expect the yearly increases to be linear; rather, perhaps expect an increase of 4 the first year, 6 the second, and 10 the third.

We talked about some different aspects of our program, how they work well or not, and some ways they might be changed.

Beth commented on how Confirmation is an oddball statistic, and Mary Beth asked whether it is a feeder for the youth program.

Chuck (who has been a Confirmation leader for several years) said he thought that we do an intentional job of engaging Confirmation students into youth group.

Mary Beth asked John what he thought about Cantate; he pointed out that kids in Cantate don't sing in school, and vice versa. Mary Beth talked about how her church when she was a youth was "a singing church", and asked how we go about weaving in music "from cradle to grave".

Chuck said that music is a draw. John commented that while Cantate had fewer members, they had 90% attendance this year. Genny noted that we never get to hear cantate at the 9:30 service.

We talked about how there are no youth in the balcony at 9:30, like there used to be when Ryan was here. The comment was made that things changed when One Voice left. Jeff said it was a big change—they didn't sing songs anymore that the youth knew; it was a different feeling.

Chuck pointed out that the demographics of the church have changed; it's older, and the youth just aren't here. Mary Beth commented that Chessey is working hard to build up the children's program; maybe that will help to turn the tide.

Chuck talked about the marketing angle of filling the needs of the youth.

Mary Beth said she had heard that Beth has a list of ten things she wants to change. Beth briefly mentioned a few of those, including changing the composition of our Sunday night small groups, creating an intentional hospitality program, creating more small groups throughout the week, and changing the structure and purpose of the Youth Advisory Council.

Genny thought that we need younger leaders in the youth group, and we should look at engagement of younger mentors to lead the program. She also thought that we would benefit from having a training program for our small group leaders (I coerce you to become a small group leader—then what??). Mary Beth voiced a concern some people have, that if they volunteer, they're going to be sucked dry.

We did not get as deeply as we would have liked into how we will track our progress toward achieving the goal, so that will be part of our homework for the June meeting. (We continue to feel that there is more to knowing how well we're doing than just attendance figures.)

We set our June meeting tentatively for Tuesday, the 19th, at 6:00. That meeting will be mainly dedicated to completing the report that will be presented to the Leadership Board on July 08.