

- *To encourage character building: love, generosity, honest and commitment*
- *To develop a sense of mission and giving as a loving response to God's love*
- *To partner with families in the Christian nurture of their child at home*



### ***Church School Handbook***

*Registration forms are required for all children Nursery-8<sup>th</sup> grade. If you miss Rally Sunday, registration day, forms are available at any time from the C.E. Director.*

### ***Attendance***

*We have a responsibility as Christian parents to nurture our children's faith. Our Sunday school is designed to assist parents in the spiritual development of our children. Attending on a regular basis is important so your child experiences continuity and builds the sense of fellowship and community with the other children in our church.*

### ***Picking up children from Sunday school***

*Keeping our children safe is a priority for the Christian Education Committee. In order to do this we ask that parents come get their children 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and below, before Fellowship from Sunday school. Please see the back of the children's bulletin for the schedule of classes.*

### ***Learning about Stewardship***

*Part of our responsibility as a people of faith is returning to God a portion of what God has shared with us. Sunday school students will learn the meaning of stewardship and the importance of giving time, talents and treasure on a regular basis. An offering is collected every Sunday at the gathering time during Sunday school.*

### ***Nursery Care***

#### ***Provided year round***

*Child care is provided for infants and toddlers in the church's nursery which offers a safe clean environment for the smallest members of our congregation. You are welcome to bring your child before the start of service or anytime you wish during service. You are welcome to stay in the nursery until you and your child are both comfortable.*

### ***Sunday school***

*At each age level the children will be invited to a faith experience. It is during this time that they can come to a better understanding of God and what God calls them to do and be. They come to know Jesus as the Son of God and take his messages to heart. We hope that they will see how and where the Bible speaks to us today.*

### ***Acolyte***

*Acolyte brings the light of Christ to our worship service by lighting the alter candles during worship service. This is coordinated by our Deacons for children and youth 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and above.*

### **Preschool 3yrs-5yrs**

*Preschool lessons are centered around Bible Stories with hands on activities, crafts and learning the Lord's Prayer. This is the first structured time for some so we create a sense of routine but still allow some time for free play.*

### **Kindergarten-8<sup>th</sup> grade**

*We use Cornerstone curriculum for our Sunday School Rotation. Each year a theme is chosen and lessons are taught with the workshop rotation model. This is a multi-sensory approach. We teach the Old Testament, New Testament, Sacrament, missions and church history teachings. Each Rotation lasts about four weeks at a time.*

### **Confirmation Class**

#### **8<sup>th</sup> grade and higher**

*Confirmation class uses a mentoring as well as class time to further explore one's faith, their understanding of God and the church. Confirmation class begins in the fall and Confirmation is on Pentecost Sunday (mid- May).*

### **Rites of Passage**

*Bibles are presented to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders during worship on Epiphany Sunday.*

*High School seniors are recognized on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in June and presented with a Bible and quilt.*

### **Mission Statement**

*The Christian Education Committee is committed to teaching Christian values and providing a strong spiritual foundation in order for children to begin a lifelong relationship with God. The committee endeavors to provide a comprehensive program of Christian nurture and education by teaching the content of the Bible and how to apply the scriptures to daily living. We endeavor for all teachers and children to be Growing Christians: knowing and serving God, following Jesus and showing love.*

### **Christian Education Goals**

- *To help each child develop a sense of awe and wonder of God.*
- *To help each child know and accept how much they are loved by God*
- *To guide and encourage each child towards a personal relationship with Jesus Christ*
- *To make each child feel welcome, accepted and loved and to encourage them to do the same with others.*
- *To foster a sense of belonging to the community of faith*
- *To encourage a love of reading God's word in the Bible*
- *To teach familiar bible stories and help children apply what the bible says to their daily life.*

Christian education director

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Sherrí Mills- 978-632-8040

Cherub Choir

Carol Bailey 978-632-2055

Karen Lenthall 978-632-6995

**Communion**

The table is open to all that believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior~ no one will be turned away. Parents can decide whether they want their child to partake or abstain from Communion.

**Communion Class**

**3<sup>rd</sup> grade**

Communion class begins around Lent and continues through 1<sup>st</sup> Communion Sunday the first week of May, during worship. We will be exploring faith, sin and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ including the "Last Supper". These lessons will help explain the reason that we celebrate the Sacrament of communion and will help add to the foundation of faith your child has already established.



All children are invited to participate in the Cherub Choir. The Choir provides special music in worship several times a year. The rehearsal schedule varies. Please see the bulletin for rehearsal times.

## **Special Sunday Services**

### **Christmas Pageant**

*The Christmas Pageant is the second Sunday in December. Children in all grades will have the opportunity to participate. Available speaking parts will be announced in early November. Attendance and leadership values contribute to these decisions.*

### **Children's Day**



*On Children's Day the worship service is led by all the Sunday School Children. All children are given the opportunity to participate in this service. It closes our school year, usually mid-May-early June.*

### **Family Worship**

*The Sunday school Family worship services are planned throughout the year~ approximately every 5 weeks. These services are intergenerational. There is no Sunday school during these services, only nursery care.*

### **Taking Faith Home**



*Faith is a way of life; bring it into your home seven days a week, not just on Sundays. Please remember to take the "Taking Faith Home" flyer that is inserted into your bulletin every Sunday. This is filled with ideas on how to nurture your family's faith all week long.*

*them, as well as partnering with you. Together we will endeavor to pass the good news of Jesus Christ on to the next generation,*

*Blessings to you,*

*Sue Rader*

*Christian Education Director*

### **Worship Services**

*10:30-September Sunday following Labor Day  
through mid-June*

*9:30-Summer Worship*



## *Welcome to Sunday school*

### *At The First Congregational Church of Gardner*

Dear Parents,

Whether you have been worshipping here for a short time or for many years, we welcome you and your children to the Sunday school program at The First Congregational of Gardner. I applaud you for choosing to make Christian Education a priority for your children. We know that you and your family face pressures and demands on your time. When you intentionally set aside time on Sunday mornings for church, you are giving your children the gift of discovering God's word and you are guiding them towards being compassionate followers of Jesus Christ for the benefit of building God's Kingdom.

Much of what your children come to know about God and the Christian faith they will learn first and best at home, from you. You are teaching all the time, by your faith, prayers, and example of what is important. The Bible says,

Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts, Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on your doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Remember you are not alone; you are part of the body of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Thank you for entrusting your children to us on Sunday mornings, I sincerely look forward to getting to know

### **Vacation Bible School**

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a week long summer morning program is held on the 1st full week of August. This program includes themed Bible stories, arts & crafts, games, theatre, snack, music, and a mission project. Registration begins in the late spring, early summer.

### **Easter Egg Hunt**

The Easter Egg hunt is held the Saturday before Easter. This is a community event that includes face painting, snack, crafts and an Easter Story.

### **Family Events**

There is numerous church family events planned throughout the year. Fall family Fun, Advent workshop, Shrove Tuesday (pancake dinner), Ice Skating at Cushing (Monday of February vacation) and Camping. We encourage families to attend these events and meet other families.



## Psalm 23

The Divine Shepherd

A Psalm of David

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff- they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of

the LORD

my whole life long.

# Welcome

# To

# Sunday School



"We are growing Christians-serving God,  
following Jesus, showing love."

First Congregational Church of Gardner

United Church of Christ

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