



The United Parish in Brookline

American Baptist • United Church of Christ • United Methodist
210 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02446
617-277-6860 unitedparishbrookline.org

For Dear Church School Families,

August 2024

I hope your summer afforded you all the promises of that season: sunshine, water play, flowers, a slower pace, time to explore new places together, and moments of sheer wonder. As we prepare to take the plunge into the back-to-school season, we want to reflect on the joys of summer with you and carry some of that with us into the Church School year. **We are looking forward to kicking off the Sunday School year with your children on Sunday, September 8th!** We will gather at 9:45am on the front lawn of United Parish (or in the Sanctuary if it rains) to greet one another, meet our teachers, sing, pray, and collect any missing registrations. Children and teachers will then head up to their classrooms, and parents are invited to join their children in Pre-K through 5th Grade for this special first class.

It is vital that you complete our registration form, and for your convenience, we have included this QR code to link you directly to the form. For the safety of your children as well as for ease of communication, please register each child individually.



We hope that Church School this year will be a place of light and love, a launching point for each new week, a fun place that your children look forward to visiting. We have recruited a wonderful and devoted group of teachers, and while we know that as parents and guardians you are the primary nurturers of your children's faith, we see it as our job as clergy and educators to support your children's faith formation through our church school programming.

No matter what your rhythm of participation is, families are *a/ways* welcome here. We also know the power of consistency, and we hope that you and your family will make a covenant this year to truly engage in our children and youth programs, just as we are resolved to make them fun, edifying and inspiring. Regardless of your level of comfort or familiarity with religion or the Bible, no matter who you are or where you are on your faith journey, know that United Parish as a whole will always be here to serve as that tireless, loving, spirit-filled "co-parent," and that it is an honor to be part of the village that helps raise your children.

In this letter, we are sharing some snippets from our Sunday morning curricula as well as save-the-date information for special events.

- Our curricula for the **Pre-K/Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle, and High School classes** begin our journey with the **Narrative Lectionary**, a 4-year cycle that explores the Hebrew Bible in the fall, focuses on Jesus' life and ministry in the winter and spring, and finishes off the program year with lessons from the early church. The curriculum, from Truth and Light Publishing, also guides our regular worship services, making it easy for the whole family to continue throughout the week the conversation that was sparked on Sunday.
- Our **Middle School class** will be taught by a robust team of teaching pairs, who will each lead a multi-week unit of the curriculum. We hope that this will help create a deep bench of safe, loving adults in your teens' lives, and provide a consistent presence during each unit.
- In **Advent**, we will spend time again with a worship and church school series from **Sanctified Art**, weaving opportunities for intergenerational art into the magic and wonder of the season. The theme for this curriculum is: Words for the Beginning: Advent Reminders for New Seasons.

We have also included a flier for you to share with your friends and neighbors to help us widen our welcome!

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Once you have registered your child, you will be sent the following materials, which we hope will help you and your child(ren) plan for the year ahead:

- A Church School Calendar, including monthly Special Events, which you might want to print and hang on your refrigerator or keep in a handy spot.
- An Optional Photography Opt-Out form for anyone wishing to make sure pictures of anyone in their family do not get used in United Parish publications or publicity materials.
- Information about our health policy and when to keep your child home from church school.
- An introduction letter to our Narrative Lectionary Curriculum.

The Children and Youth Deepening team along with the Exalting Worship team welcomes the whole family to **Intergenerational Worship** services on October 27th, January 19th, April 13th, and June 8th. We are designing these services to be *especially* family-friendly with opportunities for active participation, movement, and special music.

Accordingly, we will once again be offering opportunities for children and youth to make **Music** together! Susan DeSelms will be leading our children's choir for grades 1-7 starting Sunday, September 8! Grades 3-7 will begin at 9am. Grades 1-2 will join at 9:15. All children will end rehearsal at 9:45am and go to church school together. Youth in grades 8-12 are welcome to join the UP Handbell Ringers (Monday evenings starting with an "open ring" on Monday October 7 at 7pm), the Chancel Choir (Thursday evenings starting September 5), or participate in a small acoustic instrumental ensemble. For more information about joining choir, please reach out to Susan via email at susan@upbrookline.org.

Finally and foundationally, we the members of the Children and Youth Deepening team are with you in prayer. As the Associate pastor, I am available with a listening ear and a praying heart to talk about your hopes and worries, or your roses and thorns on Sundays-Thursdays. You may reach me via my work cell (617) 297-8111 or email amy@upbrookline.org. I look forward to the opportunity to serve you and your children this year.

Peace,

Amy Norton
Associate Pastor

Susan DeSelms
Minister of Music

Deanna Baker, Alicia Hsu, Merle Perkins
Children and Youth Deepening team