

## FMC Youth Ministries Report - November 9, 2019

### Upcoming Events -

Youth Retreat – January 31 - February 2, 2020 – Theme W.E.L.P (Welcome Every Living Person) – Combined Leadership between myself and the North Florida and Alabama Mission Centers.

Junior Camp - June 14-18, 2020

Senior High Camp - June 21-27, 2020

Junior High Camp - June 28-July 4, 2020

SPEC at Graceland University July 17-25, 2020

Labor Day Reunion – September 4-7, 2020 – Luau Theme

When I began this journey last September, I had no idea how enriching my life would become from this whirlwind year of being at camp and SPEC and visiting congregations and getting to know our youth and youth/camp leaders better. We have some very talented young people who give me a great deal of hope. This first year has been a year of getting to know one another and laying foundations to build on. This coming year will be a year of exploring real opportunities and beginning to act on some of those ideas and see what works for each congregation. I would offer, if you have little to no youth and are interested in suggestions please see me sometime today or get my contact information off the mission center website and reach out to me. Let me know how I can help you develop or build up your youth program.

In January I attended Winter Reunion and met with different people from some of the congregations in attendance while there concerning the youth in their programs. I obtained some feedback on some of the youth happenings, gained some knowledge of who some of those youth are and a little about some of their situations. Sadly, some of the congregations have few to no youth in attendance. Additionally, I have either met with or communicated with some of the pastorate where there are little to no youth regarding activities and outreach programs that can be developed to reach out to the youth in the area. I believe we have to be prepared for them, but we have to get to know them first. Several ideas have been exchanged and I am hopeful to help get some outreach programs off the ground in the coming year. Obviously, this will require buy-in and commitment from each congregation of how much you're willing to work toward reaching out to the community and find opportunities that work in your group.

The first weekend in February we had our annual Youth Retreat with 16 youth in attendance. Our theme was one the youth came up with and it was: The Rainbow of Righteousness. We took it further to enhance a deeper meaning that Righteousness on Youth Grows Bright in Virtue. If you look at the colors of the rainbow the Red represents the Righteousness of God and we emphasized that simply meant being in right standing with God. We talked about the fact that we are already in right standing because of Jesus. The Orange represented the Fire of God Inside Us. Each one of us has that fire because of Jesus. Yellow represented the Youth themselves with the acknowledgment that the Light of God Shines Bright from Us. Green represents our responsibility for the Earth. Blue represents the Ocean – Walking on Water – Faith in the Power of God. Purple represented that God’s love is Wrapped Around us. And finally, the pink represents the Beauty of God that lies within each of us with an emphasis of accepting ourselves. We closed the weekend with a service where we took a purple shawl and wrapped around the shoulders of each person in attendance and said a prayer over them. We wanted each person to know that as they left that place the love of God went with them and wrapped them in tender, loving care as that shawl that covered them represented. This was so well received that one of the directors Laura Moose, incorporated it into our Jr. High Camp and Charlie Brown’s wife, Jeanie made some shawls for this very purpose. Each stitch sewed with prayer. This was a very powerful experience for our young people as we had positive feedback from the youth.

There was a Camp Staff Training Workshop in Orlando on May 11<sup>th</sup> which I participated in alongside Debbie Bartlett and Mike Barnett. It was a time of sharing, discussing potential concerns and learning for new and returning camp leaders.

### **JUNIOR CAMP - June 16<sup>th</sup> and June 20<sup>th</sup>**

This year we had 16 campers. Our theme was On the Trail with Jesus. Throughout the week the classes and activities helped us learn what it is like to follow Jesus’ footsteps, knowing when in the dark, you are never alone as the Lord will always light the way. The camp was co-directed by Don Bailey and Betsy Stormer. Other staff included Jeanie Brown and Janice Lotz as co-pastors, me as business manager this year as well as camp grandma. Jami Reed was in charge of crafts and Katie James was in charge of recreational activities and campfire. Counselors were Linda Hurst, Nichole Harney and Ethan Shreve. CIT’s were

Sheridan Conway (also lifeguard), Riley Hinkle, Hayden Parham, Lizzy Sisley (also lifeguard) as well as campfire. Morgan Harney, 1<sup>st</sup> time CIT as well as McKenzie Jenny who led the canoeing experience. Additionally, Stacie Thompson was there to produce the log.

Overall it was a positive camp experience as the kids do dearly love Don who was out doing everything with the kids that they were involved in. The majority of the CIT's were everywhere the campers were.

### **SENIOR HIGH CAMP – June 23-29**

This year we had 22 campers. 8 of these were graduating seniors who will not be returning next year. Our theme was CLOUT = Christ Loves Our Unique Traits and we explored our unique gifts, talents and abilities as well as how God uses us individually to show his love to others. Darlene Huntley and Julie Butterstein were co-directors. Other staff included the following: Girls counselors - Lorna Owens, Dana Russell and Serena Tankersley. Boys counselors – Ethan Shreve and Oscar Coto. Other staff consisted of Mike Barnett with Nature classes, Charlie Brown as Pastor and Linda Braithwaite Hesterhagen leading the production of our camp log.

Overall this was a good camp and Julie is training under Darlene to take over directing the camp in the future. The kids all love Charlie! They all love and will miss Mike Barnett who said this would be his last camp as he plans to retire this year and move out of state. We gave him a farewell dinner! Lorna has been sitting in Chats with him and plans to take that over next year.

As always, we had a representative from Graceland University at both our Winter Retreat and our Sr. High Camp. I know of several of our youth who met with guidance/admissions counselors while at SPEC and at least one from our mission center who is a Freshman at Graceland University this fall.

### **JR. HIGH CAMP – July 7-13**

AT this camp we learned to Celebrate EVERYTHING! As our directors, Laura Moose and Todd Houke led us on a spiritual journey to see God all around us, we sang songs and had classes that reinforced that we can see God in everything, even in the hard times of our lives. This was our largest camp with 31 campers in attendance! Our Pastor was JaAna Parham-Schwartz who brought scripture to life for the campers with a variety of activities and a specific theme each day. We had a fabulous talent night and we have some amazing gifts and talents in this particular group of young people! And we can't leave out the "Charlie Brown"

skits performed by various members of the staff. As always, our own Charlie Brown's Aerospace Program building bottle rockets was a big hit. Our winner was Seth who designed a rocket that soared a total of 282 feet! Craft class with Ashley was a big hit not to mention creative carpentry with Rick Schwartz kept everyone thinking of how to build better designs. Melanie Cooksey was the camp mom and one of our counselors who also took on developing our Log. I was the cool aunt for the camp and how could we have camp without Nurse Peppermint Patty. New Counselors were Kenny Powell, Ethan and Yrwil, Alec and Kevin. We had great CIT's in McKenzie Jenny and Annalea Parham, Megan Schwartz. Chloe and Megan, Riley and Sheridan. Our Valentine Dance was a big hit, and everyone got in on the festivities.

I have brought the camp logs if anyone would like to look at all the fun!

### **SPECTACULAR – July 19-27**

Spectacular (SPEC) is a place where everyone belongs and there is something for everyone. It is always the third week of July and held at Graceland University. Graceland University is a Community of Christ University located in Lamoni, Iowa. SPEC provides a forum for high school youth to spend a week on a college campus, get a taste of dorm life and offers a little freedom to explore their surroundings.

This year I flew with 5 youth from the central Florida region and we joined up with the rest of the SEA delegation in Kansas City as 85 youth represented our region. It was an awesome experience watching the transformations and deepening of relationships.

SPEC is a week of classes, special events, sports and worship. It is a place to try something new, make new friends from other parts of the country and explore your unique and personal relationship with God. This year at SPEC 10 individuals were baptized.

The schedule at SPEC is daunting as it is action packed from early morning rising at 6:00, breakfast at 7:00 and meetings and classes held throughout the morning and games, activities and events from 1-9 each day and then things like Silent Disco, Campfire, Dance Party on the Quad at 10 PM and then evening devotions at 11:00 in the dorms. There was a talent show full of music, dance, comedy, magical tricks and lots of laughter. Two of our own were in that. Toward the end of the week a play was presented that was delightful and made up of youth from

across the country. How they were able to learn all their lines and singing and dance routines with the busy schedules was fascinating.

The overall theme for the week was “BELONG”. Each day had its own theme where all classes are focused on that daily theme. Sunday’s theme “REDEFINE” challenged us to redefine our paradigms about who we are in Christ. Monday’s theme, “EQUAL” reminded us that the gospel is open equally to all who choose to embrace God’s message of love and acceptance. Tuesday’s theme that we are “ONE” in the Spirit of God led us into Wednesday’s theme of “COURAGE” to demonstrate our willingness to accept one another despite our differences. Thursday’s theme of “CONNECT” opened doors for us to connect with others and find our commonality. Friday we saw how we all “BELONG” to God and therefore to one another as all of God’s creation. Our relationships with God are unique to each individual but common in uniting us to one creator God.

The youth led praise and worship and spoke. There was an impressive amount of talent possessed by our young people. Musical instruments and beautiful voices led the entire population in morning celebration and evening worship. One young lady spoke about how she has heard the older generation speak of our church losing our young people. She emphatically declared there are many young people ready to respond to the call of serving Christ in our congregations. She challenged us older folks to see there are plenty of youth ready to rise and accept the mantle of leadership. She gave me hope! She made me aware to be careful about dismissing the abilities of our young people. And she challenged me to encourage all congregations to offer more opportunities for our young people to serve in leadership roles.

## **YOUTH MINISTRIES COUNCIL**

Our Youth Ministries Council is meeting on a regular basis and we now have a chairperson, Laura Moose, who is guiding us in helping to develop our camps, train our staff and pull out the talents, abilities and strengths from our leadership teams who work with our youth. We are discussing how we can go to each congregation prior to camp time next year to get our young people excited about going to camp.

As the Youth Ministries Leader for the FMC this has prompted me to increase my endeavors of reaching out to all the congregations in the FMC to find ways to use and retain the gifts and talents that are abundant among us. I have begun here and now with my own home congregation at Clearwater. We all belong, and we need

to redefine, in many areas, how we develop disciples to serve. We need to recognize the skills, talents and abilities that exist among us and encourage those individuals to accept responsibilities to grow. It is our responsibility to mentor the younger generations to be ready to respond and encourage them to do so. That also means we must be willing to accept different ideas and let go of some of our traditions. For some of us that is more challenging than others. However, in seeing the depth of understanding from our young people I am encouraged by their commitment and enthusiasm and encouraged to step aside and let them begin their journey of service as well. Stepping aside doesn't mean stepping down. Rather, it means joining forces with new concepts and helping to implement new opportunities to reach our communities for Christ. I challenge you to consider standing with me and let's see where the journey takes us.

I have begun to get calls to travel to some of the congregations to teach the Certified Youth Worker Core Training. I am available to do so in any congregation. World Church would like it if all Youth Workers had refresher courses and of course, all Priesthood must be certified and anyone who is involved in any way with our youth needs to be certified. The class is one part and the background check is the second part. Once all that is accomplished the record is noted in Shelby. All this should be completed prior to anyone attending any camps or activities involving youth. Each Pastoral Team should be aware of who is certified in their congregations.

If any congregation is interested in my coming to your congregation to either get to know the youth, offer support to your youth leadership team or make sure everyone has had the proper training I would welcome such an opportunity.

We have an amazing number of adults who willingly volunteer their time in support of youth camps. I hope each of those leaders will continue to be willing serve as counselors, pastors, directors, nurses, recorders, etc. I also want to invite others who maybe have not worked with the youth in a while but are still interested in doing so to let me know where you'd like to volunteer your time. Or, if you have never done so and are interested, please get in touch with me. My contact information is on the Mission Center Website or see me today and I'll be happy to give you my phone number and email information. Many of you have already contacted me in that manner as well as on Facebook. As I continue to get to know the youth better as well as developing relationships with the youth leaders in each congregation, remember I am here to support your endeavors in your individual

congregations to help build up our youth programs and hopefully increase our numbers. Most important my heart's desire is to help our youth grow in their relationship with Christ and have enriching and rewarding church experiences as well. My hope would be helping to form a foundation that will help them be strong and faithful members and leaders in the years to come.

Serena Tankersley