

Children and Youth Program Committee Report  
submitted by Bethany Spicher Schonberg

The Children and Youth Program Committee grew out of a task force created by the elders in response to frequently-voiced concern that UMC youth are no longer participating in church or MYF activities. During a Fall 2017 visioning session led by Allegheny Conference Minister Dave Mishler, he suggested that temporary task forces might be created to address issues in the church. The elders nominated six people to form a task force: Joyce and Marvin Hall, Molly Kunkel, Sue Miller, Bethany Spicher Schonberg and Meredith Wideman. We met for the first time on April 7 and discussed not only the UMC youth program, but - more broadly - how we as a church might more intentionally nurture children and youth. Ideas included reviving a mentoring program, planning periodic activities for families with children, renovating the nursery and cooperating with other churches in a peace-focused Bible school, among others.

The task force's first step was to re-name and re-focus the current Sunday School Committee into the Children and Youth Program Committee. The new committee - like the old one - will be in charge of coordinating children's Sunday school (ordering materials, recruiting teachers, etc.), and it will also oversee the mentoring program, all activities for children and youth, and UMC's safe-sanctuary policies for children. The task force will continue to meet throughout the summer, and it will hand off its work to the members of the Children and Youth Program Committee in the fall. Anyone is welcome to volunteer for the new committee - we're hoping for at least four members and plan to meet monthly throughout the 2018/2019 church year.