



Eldridge United Methodist Church

604 S. Second Street
Office: (563) 285-4314

Eldridge, Iowa 52748
www.eldridgeumc.org

Brenda Sorensen, Youth Director
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Dear parents at Eldridge UMC,

With the start of the school year, we're excited to kick off classes and activities at church as well. I wanted to send out a letter this year to explain the vision we have for the youth program and how we plan to make that vision a reality.

Our vision is to see our youth excited, creative and expressive, learning and growing in their faith. In addition, we'd like to encourage their relationships with other adults in our congregation, strengthening our family in Christ. We already see this by our youth singing in the adult choir, and by adults and youth playing in our hand chimes choir. The youth can learn from a lifetime of experiences of our adults, and the adults can be enriched by the energy and enthusiasm of our youth.

For the younger kids in preschool through 4th grade, we are providing age-appropriate curriculum that will teach them the history of our faith beginning with creation and progressing through the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; teaching them of Moses, the ten commandments, Saul, David and Solomon. In the spring the kids will get to know Jesus from His birth, baptism, through His miracles and teachings, and then His death and resurrection. The kids will learn classic children's Christian songs that we hope they will share with the congregation.

For the older kids in 5th-12th grades, we have restructured our classes and are using curriculum that will challenge the kids to think about what it means to live and express their faith in everything they do at home, school, in extra-curricular activities, or work. We've changed our Wednesday night activity to provide avenues for the kids to express their faith in creative and engaging ministries that will be shared with the congregation and community. Please see the list of some of these ministries below. We envision this list will grow as the youth feel comfortable expressing their own desires for ministry.

- Puppet ministry
- Drama ministry
- Web page design/Sunday worship video
- Bulletin Boards/Room Design ministry
- Sewing baby quilts/lap blankets
- Card/Prayer ministry
- Activities Planning (e.g., Trunk or Treat, lock-in for elementary)

Our plan is to have four ministries active at a time for an approximate 6-week block, then rotating to a new set of ministries to give the kids a chance to participate in multiple ministries. It is our goal to have at least one adult mentor for each ministry, to encourage the youth and build relationships with adults in our church that they might not otherwise get a chance to meet. We'd like the kids to take the initiative and responsibility for the ministry, with coaching and encouragement from the adult volunteer. In addition, we'd love to hear from adults who are able to teach a middle school (5th-7th grade) Sunday school class. I envision a team of teachers that would either take one Sunday a month, or rotate monthly. We currently have



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one teacher for the preschool-4th grade class and one for the 8th-12th grade class. We'd love to be able to team-teach those classes as well!

To ensure our youth feel safe when in our care we adhere to a Safe Sanctuaries policy that among other things requires two adults be present in each classroom. If this is not always possible, the classroom door will remain open at all times. Parents will be made aware of this situation and are asked to sign a document that states they are comfortable leaving their child(ren) with us despite the lack of two adult supervision. We will further ensure the safety of our youth by running background checks on each adult volunteer who works with the youth, the results of which will be housed in a secure location at the church.

We look forward to a new year with your children at Eldridge UMC. Enclosed is a registration form, a parent consent and medical authorization form, and a permission form to video tape or take pictures of your child that we ask you to complete and turn into the church office or mail to the church at the address above. If you have any questions, or would be interested in volunteering with the youth, please do not hesitate to call or email me at the number and address above.

Sincerely,

Brenda Sorensen