

## Westminster Budget Narrative - Teaching our Children

We support nurturing and teaching our children through our financial gifts, by sharing our time and talents, and by serving as role models. We do this because we love them, because God loves them (Matthew 19:14 – Jesus said, “Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.”) and because as a church family we make a commitment to do so. Each time a child is baptized at Westminster, we “promise to tell the child the good news of the Gospel, to help them know all that Christ commands, and, by our fellowship, to strengthen their family ties with the household of God.” We do this because we know how important it is to give our children a firm foundation – Proverbs 22:6 “Teach a child how they should live, and they will remember it all their life.”

Our Children’s Ministry program is led by our Christian Education Coordinator, and is supported by our Pastor, our music team, and a number of dedicated volunteers. Sunday School classes for ages three through fifth grade are offered every Sunday from September through May. Children age three to five have Sunday School that is combined with the nursery during the summer (June-August). There are a number of activities planned for the children throughout the year including Vacation Bible School, Children’s Sabbath, Advent Craft Fair and the Children’s Christmas Pageant. Music is an important part of all these activities and there are two children’s choirs (age 4 to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade). One of our long time Sunday School teachers commented, “I have been involved with Sunday School and Vacation Bible School for a great many years. It is those activities that bring children to our doors. These are the times that we start sharing the stories of our faith. It is then that we can show and share the love of God by providing a fun environment that is designed just for them. Kids need a place where they can come and be excited to learn about God. They also need a place where they feel they belong, where friends are made and people care for them and their family.” Based on what the children say, we are providing that place - “You get to do crafts and learn about God”, “I get to draw”, “I love doing crafts”, “I love the cookies”.

Attending worship services is an important part of helping our children grow in their faith, and special emphasis is placed on this during the summer months when our elementary age children are encouraged to attend services with their families. We should never doubt the ability of our children to observe and absorb what is happening around them, including time spent in worship services. “During worship services, our son started by drawing pictures and then began writing notes on prayer cards that he gave to the pastor after the service. We didn’t realize how much he was absorbing until years later when the pastor gave us all the cards”. Our children look, listen and learn.

Challenge to Do More budget includes \$1,253 in salary increases and yearend bonuses for staff, \$350 for a TV to work with new technology, \$125 for library books and \$150 for Family Ministry programs.

Dare to Dream budget includes the items in the Challenge budget.