

## Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education

We are offering OWL classes this fall at 9:00 am on Sundays for Grades K-1 – beginning on Sept. 25 with teachers, Dr. Louis Krupnick and Dr. Haven Howell. Please see [OWL Schedule](#).

The class concludes on Nov. 20. Once they begin, these groups are closed to allow for a safe and supportive environment. Children or youth not participating in OWL will be included in the Godly Play.

The mandatory parents' meeting was Sunday, August 28 at 10:30 am and included an overview of the course, expectations for participation, and parent decisions about some content pieces. Registration took place at the meeting. Children are not included in this meeting. Child care is arranged as needed.

For more information on the OWL program values, visit our website: [www.ucclongmont.org/education/children](http://www.ucclongmont.org/education/children).

## What You Can Do To Help

- Partner on a teaching team
- Serve as a Shepherd
- Run errands to purchase supplies
- Donate supplies
- Prepare art materials or an art project
- Plan an art project
- Lead singing
- Lead worship moments
- Be a substitute teacher or shepherd
- Find/buy/borrow unusual objects



# First Congregational United Church of Christ Longmont, Colorado

## Parent Handbook Fall – 2011



# Welcome !



to the Children's Program at  
First Congregational United Church of Christ!

As parents, you play a vital role in our ministry with your child. This handbook is designed to help you understand our program, its mission, and the guidelines under which we operate. Our church values children and believes in families. We also value cooperation among staff and parents, good communication, and collaboration in planning and problem solving. We encourage you to read this handbook, ask any questions you have, and make any suggestions you think would be helpful. With our children "We gather as God's people to discern Christ's way, seek social justice, and discover the Holy.

## Statement of Purpose

The Faith Formation program of First Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) exists to promote and enhance the spiritual development and education of our members of all ages and stages, and to *Extend the Reach of Christ* by actively welcoming members and others to participate in Faith Formation programs.

For children, we focus on the following interwoven features:

- Sense of belonging and being valued as a person.
- Experience of the presence of the Holy.
- Familiarity with Biblical stories with an emphasis on God's loving ways.
- Safety to explore ideas and ask questions at an appropriate age level.

## All-Church Events

2010 - 2011

Integral to our lives as Christians is remembering and reliving the central stories of our faith. Also essential is the fellowship of the Body of Christ – all of us together, in worship, service and learning. We think of ourselves as an extended family, a "village" of Christ's people. With this in mind we offer the following All-Church events especially designed to include children and youth:

- Sept. 11 Fall Schedule begins with 9 am gathering for all ages followed by special worship service at 10:15.
- Sept. 18 Kick-Off Sunday, all classes begin at 9:00  
Third Graders receive Bibles.  
Ice Cream Social after worship.
- Sept. 24-25 All-Church Retreat at La Foret
- Oct. 2 World Communion Sunday
- Oct. 30 UNICEF offering. Potluck lunch.
- Dec. 18 Lunch followed by Christmas Caroling.
- Dec. 24 Family Worship at 5:00 pm;  
Candlelight Service at 10:30 pm.
- Jan. 8 Baptism of Christ Sunday– worship designed to include children.
- TBD Empty Bowls painting following soup lunch.
- Feb. 21 Shrove Tuesday – pancake supper, Service of Ashes.
- April 1 Palm Sunday
- April 5 Maundy Thursday
- April 8 Easter – worship includes children.  
Easter Egg Hunt follows the 10:15 service.
- May 20 All-church picnic in the courtyard.

## Safe Church Policies

First Congregational UCC has a “Policy to Protect Against Sexual Abuse and Harassment” which includes a Youth Protection Policy. Our teachers, shepherds and other adult leaders are provided with boundaries training, and leaders with frequent and unsupervised access to minors are carefully screened. A Response Team is in place to handle concerns or accusations. A copy of this policy is available in the church office or from either of the ministers. Anyone is welcome to attend the Boundaries Training, which is offered several times throughout the year.

## Curriculum

**Godly Play** (Preschool & Kindergarten-Grade 1) is a Montessori style program designed to engage children’s imaginations and invite them into sacred space and sacred story. Wondering is encouraged, and children respond with their own artistic expression or retelling of the story.

**Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education** (Kindergarten – Grade 1) begins on Sept. 25. The mandatory parent meeting was August 28 at 10:30 am. Please see Rev. Luke Grobe for more information. The children will rejoin Godly Play on Nov. 27, the first Sunday of Advent.

**Faith Practices** (grades 2-4 and 5-6) will begin the year with the “Giving and Receiving Hospitality” unit from Faith Practices.

**Confirmation** (grades 7-9) with Rev. Luke Grobe. A variety of curriculum has been selected. Youth will have the opportunity to be confirmed as members of First Congregational UCC Longmont in the spring of 2012. The group participates in mission projects, youth retreats, helps lead some all-church events, and youth group activities as well.

**High School** (grades 10-12) engage in conversation about life and faith, beginning with a Bible passage or a newspaper headline or a personal question or experience.

## Sunday Morning Schedule

- 9:00 Classes for all ages  
Child care for children under 3
- 10:00 Parents are responsible for their children
- 10:15 Worship with Congregation in the Sanctuary
- 10:35 Music in Room 9
- 10:50 Storytelling, conversation, activities
- 11:10 Return to the Sanctuary for the close of worship

Parents are welcome in the classroom. However, several parents at a time can be disruptive, and many children do better if parents are not present. Please use your best judgment for the welfare of all the children. We make an effort to recruit teachers and shepherds who do not have children in the classroom. We believe children benefit from being taught and loved by adults other than parents. It takes a village to raise a child.

Each Fall we ask all families to complete a Sunday School Registration Form. This form helps us keep our data base up to date and provides information about allergies and other special needs. Forms are available in the classrooms for families joining us during the school year.

Children who have a contagious illness or exhibit symptoms of potential illness should not attend. If your child becomes ill during a session, he/she will be separated from the group and you will be called. If an accident occurs and your child is injured, the teacher will fill out an accident report detailing what happened. You will be asked to sign this report so that the Ministers can verify that you have been notified of the circumstances.

## **Behavior in the Classroom**

At the beginning of each season, teachers and students work to create a classroom agreement or covenant. We talk about how our behavior can help (or hinder) our relationships with each other, and what it takes to build a healthy community together.

We focus on the idea of respect:

- Respect for God
- Respect for other children
- Respect for teachers and leaders
- Respect for self – stating your own needs.
- Respect for property

Our goal is to help the children develop self-discipline. We value inclusiveness and try to model and practice it. We also value an environment that is physically safe and verbally appropriate for teachers and students.

Two features are in place to further these goals: Shepherds and Counting.

### **Shepherds:**

An adult shepherd is always present in the classroom to assist the teacher with behavior and logistics. The shepherd may sit between children, corral a child who leaves the room, whatever is needed. The shepherd also supervises bathroom runs and guides children between classrooms.

### **Counting:**

A simple counting procedure is used to help the children stop negative behavior before it escalates. Based on “123 Magic” by Thomas Phelan, a count (warning) is given when disruptive behavior starts. After 3 counts the child is placed in time-out. The purpose of time out is to give the child time to calm down, take a deep breath and regain control. Shepherds monitor children during time out, which lasts 5 minutes. Our experience is that children usually respond to a warning count of “1” or “2.”

During counting & time out, no scolding, judging or angry voices are used. Our goal is to stop negative behavior quickly, then focus on positive behavior.

If the behavior involved hitting, biting or throwing an object at someone, time out is immediately employed with no counts. If the child cannot regain control, we will notify his or her parent.

Further information on this method is available in our church library. Periodic parents’ meetings are held, and personal conversations with the Associate Minister and/or CE Board Chair are always welcome. Several area schools also use this method; many of our children are already familiar with it.

If a parent or other adult would like to share suggestions, concerns or praises they should contact the Board of Christian Education either through the church office at 303-776-4940 or by emailing the Board at [ceboard@ucclongmont.org](mailto:ceboard@ucclongmont.org). It is our priority to provide the best possible atmosphere for our children’s faith development.

Our staff and volunteers are only able to provide supervision of children during designated times of programming. Between 10:00 and 10:15am and after worship parents must supervise their children. The safety of our precious children of God is of the utmost importance and we must be concerned when there are hot beverages and persons of various disabilities mingling after worship. Children must be reminded to walk, look and listen and we ask that they remain close to you

