

Council Report for Youth Ministry
Peter Fox
November 2020

Greetings in the name of the Lord. Peter here with all the news regarding our youth as we move through fall 2020. YG and Faith Formation have been going strong for a few months now. Things are smaller as parents and youth try to navigate through this busy world of Covid; but things have been going great. Everything seems different, but kids have been adapting over these past months, and we have too. That said, we trying to keep things as 'normal' and 'regular' as possible, to make everyone feel comfortable and welcome. The calendar is filled like usual, we are just being more open to any needed changes as they surface. Here is a taste of what we did in October.

We started off the month of October with YG on October 4. Around 25 YG and Advisors met outside for this night of faith, fun, and fellowship. Everyone was mask on and social distanced, but that did not spoil the atmosphere. The fall weather once again cooperated. As usual, the kids who came out were glad to be back, and it's always nice to see one another. The theme for the year is HOPE, and the title of this night was HOPE 101, and it served as a great introduction to "Hope" and what the word means. Having hope in your life is an awesome thing. It's more than just a "feeling" or a "wish". Hope is a confidence that God is with you, no matter what. It is knowing that God has our back. That is true hope. We need to take solace in this hope, that all things happen through Christ. Only this HOPE promises all things. The night was a blast from start to finish. On Sunday, October 18 we had a YG HIKE around Wildwood Park. Around 15 YG joined me and a college helper for a 3.1 mile walk around the Wildwood Nature trail. Along the way we engaged in prayer, meditation, and conversation time alone and together in the woods. This was an awesome fall day, and the walk and conversation was great too. This was meaning experience and solid afternoon.

On Sunday, October 25, things were quite busy. First in the afternoon we were final able to host the service for last season's Confirmation class. 17 of our 21 Confirmands joined the pastors and I for a service in Nave to affirm their baptisms. One of our students even got baptized at this service! Over 100 friends and family were in attendance to celebrate this Confirmation milestone. The service went well, but of course steps were taken to create the safest environment possible for everyone to be comfortable. In short, it was a success; and we look forward to having the remaining 4 students get confirmed, when they are ready, at a later date. Later that very night we had our first inside YG. We had a very small group just under 20 YG and advisors. I was not surprised, with the uptick due to Covid. I think that this a sign of these times, as parents have to make difficult choices for their families regarding the virus. That said, this night was still a good one. The focus for the night was on PERCEPTIONS; what they are, and what they mean. Jesus wants more for us. Even if perceptions stifle us from time to time, people grow and change over the years. Jesus makes us new and one-of-a-kind for a reason. Only he knows an individual's limits - or potential. Now, maybe more than ever, its easy to get stuck in ruts or old thoughts and ways of doing things, but let's not forget who we are in Christ. He made us "new", he made us for more, and he gives us hope; so let's remember that. The night was a success, and good intro to being back inside. I hope as move forward that more kids (and families) get comfortable to join us back inside. I am reminded of our bible verse for the year is JEREMIAH 29: 11 which says, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope".

Faith formation has been going strong. All classes/sessions for these fall and winter months will be on Zoom, on Sunday mornings at 9:00am. We'll see after that, only time will tell. Middle School Connect is for grades 6 - 8, and Sr. High F.O.J. is for grades 9 - 12. I have great teachers

spearheading each group, so I am expecting good things to happen. The sessions for both classes are going very well, and were a good start. We are seeing a good core, with a new face or two every week. Hopefully these classes will continue to grow as we move forward. The curriculum that we are using is from the Orange group, and it's very relational. I like it a lot. It will hopefully elicit lots of quality faith based conversation. The teachers like it, and the students do as well.

Well, as you can see, there is a lot happening. We will keep keeping on strive to keep people connected whether remotely or in person. That said, I have to go, more planning needs to take place, and I feel more stretched than ever. Please continue to keep our youth and parents in your prayers as they adjust to school, church and life.

Yours in Christ,
Peter Fox
Director of Youth & Student Ministry