

Department of Lifelong Christian Formation, Youth, College Campus and Young Adult Ministries

2023 was a great year for Christian Formation Ministries in the Diocese of East Carolina. Thankfully through the immediate impacts of the pandemic, equipped with strategies to manage new and different challenges, people across the diocese have been gathering to learn and grow in their faith and in community.

Lifelong Christian Formation

Lifelong Christian Formation typically includes five age group divisions for ministry: children, youth, young adults, adults, and older adults. There has been continued growth in ministry areas, and as always, change.

Diocesan Formation Leader Gatherings

Formation Leaders were surveyed in the early summer of 2023 about when they would like to meet, how often they would like to meet, and what kind of resources and support would be most helpful to them.

Overwhelmingly, Zoom gatherings were still the preference and on a mostly quarterly basis. Two meeting times are still offered in an effort to meet the needs of both paid staff and clergy as well as the faithful volunteers in parishes around the diocese. In addition, the respondents asked for outside speakers and resources on specific topics for some gatherings and time to have fellowship and share for others.

As the program year kicked off in the late summer, the August gathering was for fellowship and resource sharing and in October Sarah Bentley Allred, M.Div who is the Associate for Christian Formation and Discipleship at Lifelong Learning at Virginia Theological Seminary gave an outstanding presentation on Intergenerational Formation research and resources. The video from both gatherings can be found on the diocesan website.

Formation Resource Updates

Emails are usually sent quarterly with resources and content for formation leaders, clergy, and any other who are on the email list. These resources include a wide variety of ideas and sources for parish and faith at home use. Anyone is welcome to sign up for these emails. All of the resources are housed under Lifelong Christian Formation on the Diocesan website.

Amazed & Astonished: Faithfully navigating relationships with your teen.

This three part series was facilitated by Susan Peek, LCSW. It took place in November on Zoom. Rooted in the story of Jesus in the Temple from Luke's Gospel, the series was designed to equip parents and all those who care for young people with knowledge and resources to foster

healthy relationships that inspire positive growth and development. In addition, understanding and hearing about tougher topics that impact the lives of teenagers like suicide and anxiety.

Children's Ministry

Resources continue to be provided for congregations in the area of Children's Ministry. This includes but is not limited to what is posted on the website along with individual congregation curriculum consultations.

Youth Ministry

In 2023 we were slated to host a full cadre of youth events. Though disappointed to not have the Revival in October, it opened the door for an opportunity to serve the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry in a different way. More details about the full event season below.

As a result of COVID, there have definitely been some shifts in the age of young people who are participating in and subsequently leading events. Across the Episcopal Church there are trends that suggest we have an age gap due in large part to the Pandemic. That is definitely seen and felt across youth events in the diocese.

ECYC (East Carolina Youth Council) Term 2023-2024

Members:

Holden Ford - Albemarle Deanery (St. Paul's, Edenton)

Emily Gowdy Canady – Missioner for Lifelong Christian Formation

Ollie Canady - At Large (Christ Church, New Bern)

Tracy Hanson – Adult Member (St. Andrew's on the Sound, Wilmington)

Madi Hengst - Trinity Deanery (St. Mary's, Kinston)

Hannah Hutchens - *Adult Member (St. Paul's, Greenville)*

Thomas Keeter - Pamlico (St. Paul's Greenville)

Xena Markine-Morrison - Adult Member (St. Stephen's, Goldsboro)

Jack Porter-Acee - Pamlico (St. Timothy's, Greenville)

Noah Sanborn - At Large (St. Andrew's, Morehead City)

Lauren Simmons - Trinity (Christ Church, New Bern)

Jayden Wright - At Large, (St. Mary's, Kinston)

The East Carolina Youth Council currently includes 8 young people and 3 adults at this time, representing all 4 of 5 deaneries in the diocese. The ECYC continues to take on more leadership in the Department by designing and facilitating many of the youth events we offer.

In 2023 we welcomed young people from around the diocese and beyond to both new and long-standing events for Middle and High Schoolers.

Diocesan Offerings

Youth@Convention

This event is part of Annual Diocesan Convention in February. For the 140th Convention 12 young people participate. Three young people were elected delegates from their parish, six served as Youth Representatives for their parish, and three served as Convention Pages.

Happening 79

This is a renewal based youth event for high schoolers that is run and supported by other high schoolers. Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ. Happening provides a well-structured environment of talks and activities for high school young people to explore, question and deepen their faith. Happening #79 was March 3-5 at Trinity Center.

Happening Coordinator - Cookie Cantwell

Spiritual Directors - The Rev'd Tom Warren, The Rev'd Caleb Lee

New Beginnings

April 21st - 23rd at Trinity Center

This event is for middle schoolers run by high schoolers and older middle schoolers. New Beginnings seeks to help middle schoolers navigate the emerging world of changing relationships with friends, significant others, family and the world through the lens of their faith.

Coordinators:

John Kells, Holy Trinity, Fayetteville

Xena Markine-Morrison, St. Stephen's Goldsboro

Spiritual Director:

The Rev'd Michelle Bullock, St. Peter's by the Sea, Swansboro

Musician:

Alex Norwood, Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill

EYE 2023 (Episcopal Youth Event)

July 4-8, The University of Maryland College Park

3 young people, 1 adult leaders, the Missioner for Lifelong Christian Formation traveled to the Diocese of Washington for this event. There they gathered with over nearly 1000 participants (youth and adults) from across The Episcopal Church. During the three full days of program EYE explored the theme "A New Age of Faith" and encouraged and provided learning opportunities for young people to become faithful active changemakers in the world. The group heard The Most Rev'd Michael preach during one of the event's Eucharists Participants also heard The Rt. Rev'd Deon Johnson - Bishop of Missouri, Julia Ayala Harris - President of the

House of Deputies, and many others. Esther 4:14 “For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.” was used as the theme and the event design team carried “You were born for such a time such as this.” as a thread throughout the event.

Youth Serving the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry

September 21st

All around the diocese were disappointed that the Presiding Bishop’s health postponed the long planned Diocesan Revival, Open House, Open Hearts: Extending God's Welcome in East Carolina. Part of the Revival there was a youth event planned to serve the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. The youth event was moved to Christ Church, New Bern and a group of young people and adult leaders gathered for the day. The Episcopal Farmworker Ministry supports an annual Christmas gift drive for children supported or served by the ministry. 500 children were on the list for 2023. The group gathered began the process of wrapping and labeling gifts for distribution in December.

In addition, Alisson Herrarte and Patti Navarro from the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry spoke to the group, sharing what life is like for farmworkers and their families.

Fall Conference for Middle Schoolers

November 17th - 19th at Trinity Center

Designed for Middle Schoolers by the ECYC. ECYC members served on team along with other High School Young People. This year’s theme was A Season for Everything • A Time for All Things. The young people engaged in a program built around Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and focused on how there are different seasons in all of our lives, and how God is present throughout all of them. The weekend is full of fellowship, worship, fun and time to be in God’s creation.

Coordinator:

Hannah Hutchens, St. Timothy’s, Greenville

Design Team:

East Carolina Youth Council

Chaplain:

The Rev’d Nan Cekuta, Holy Trinity Fayetteville

Musician:

Alex Norwood, Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill

Province IV Youth Leadership and Network Meeting

November 30th through December 3rd, St. Christopher's Camp & Conference Center

2 youth and 1 adult members of the ECYC along with the Misioner for Lifelong Formation participated in the annual Province IV Youth Leadership and Network Conference in the Diocese of South Carolina.. Forty plus young people and adults from 14 of the 20 dioceses that make up Province IV gathered to learn from each other and hear annual diocesan reports.

Madi Hengst - St. Mary's, Kinston

Hannah Hutchens - St. Paul's, Greenville

Thomas Keeter - St. Paul's, Greenville

Adult Formation

The Good Book Club

2023's study was the books of Ruth and Esther. Begun on Epiphany and continuing through to Shrove Tuesday, this daily Bible reading curriculum has been taken on by Forward Movement. Initially launched by Presiding Bishop Curry a few years ago, this annual study encourages Episcopalians and others to begin the new calendar year by reading a different book of the Bible. The Diocese of East Carolina offered 4 and hosted 3 online/hybrid study offerings led by clergy around the diocese.

Study Facilitators:

The Rev'd Stephen Batten - Trinity Chocowinity

The Rev'd Michelle Bullock - St. Peter's by the Sea, Swansboro

The Rev'd Paul Canady - Christ Church, New Bern

The Rev'd Farrell Graves - St. James the Fisherman, Shallotte

Holy & Faithful: Uncovering saints who sought and served Christ in different ways

Led by Christian Formation Lay Professionals this five week series for adults took place on Tuesdays during Lent. Each week the leaders focused on different Episcopal Saints who had something in common with each other. Questions and prompts were sent out ahead of each class to prepare for the upcoming week. In addition, participants received saints "Trading Cards" which gave some quick facts about each saint.

Saints that were explored:

- Anna Julia Haywood Cooper - teacher, writer, activist. Born in NC. Died 1964.
- The Rt. Rev'd Henry Beard Delany - educator, bishop. Lived in NC. Died 1928.
- The Rev'd Pauli Murray - civil rights activist, advocate, legal scholar and theorist, author and – later in life – an Episcopal priest. Born in Baltimore, raised in NC. Died 1985.
- Jonathan Myrick Daniels - seminarian and martyr. Born in NH. Died 1965.

- Manteo and Virginia Dare - first Anglican baptisms in North America on Roanoke Island, NC. 1587.
- Enmegahbowh - priest and missionary. Born in Canada. Died 1902.
- Jesus Christ

Class leaders:

Meg Jones - Christ Church, New Bern

Xena Markine-Morrison - St. Stephen's, Goldsboro

Amazed & Astonished: Faithfully Navigating Relationships with Your Teen

November 7th, 14th, & 21st on Zoom

Navigating the years young people are teenagers can be both amazing and astonishing. These years are also challenging and maddening. Using the story of Jesus in the Temple from Luke's Gospel (2:41-52, NRSV), Susan Peek, LCSW led parents and caregivers of 6th - 12th graders in a three part series on ways to faithfully adjust course and navigate healthier relationships with them.

AdventWord 2023

This year the Diocese of East Carolina participated in the annual global Advent Calendar, AdventWord, by highlighting the Diocesan Mission Priorities and both diocesan and parish ministries carrying out the work of each priority. Twenty lay and clergy from across the diocese wrote daily reflections and shared images.

University and Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry in the Diocese of East Carolina has continued to meet the continued challenges of ministering to college students with flexibility and pastoral support. Ministries in Greenville and Wilmington are creative and committed to engaging students in faithful communities in the midst of these unprecedented times.

The Well: Episcopal Lutheran Campus Ministry Annual Report -

Submitted by The Rev'd Donna Kraus - Former Campus Minister & Hannah Hutchens - Interim Campus Minister

The group meets Thursday evenings at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville.

The Well experienced a shift in leadership this year. We said a heartfelt goodbye to the Rev'd Donna Kraus at the end of the Spring semester. We welcomed Hannah Hutchens as the Interim Campus Minister in the Fall.

Highlights from the spring include the annual retreat at Trinity Center with ECCO campus ministry. Juniper LaNunziata led the retreat focused on labyrinths and prayer. We also celebrated Ash Wednesday by offering Ashes to Go on ECU's Campus. The Well took on cooking some of their own meals on Thursday evenings including baking bread for a conversation on communion.

In the fall Hannah worked to cultivate a new chapter of the Well as many students were seniors that graduated in the spring. We shared community over food and various activities. The Well was present on campus during semester exams, offering snacks and coffee to go for students. The Well is looking forward to many more Thursday night gatherings and welcoming new students.

Officers:

President: Reagan Leandro

Vice President: Nora McCunney

Secretary/Treasurer: Kaeleigh Kruger

Advisory Council:

Dennis McCunney, the Rev'd John Porter-Acee, Barb Kern

ECCO (Episcopal Campus Christian Organization)

Submitted by Mrs. Alfreda Gee, Campus Minister

ECCO attended the Love One Another Symposium at ECU to learn about faith with the LGBTQIA community.

Spring Retreat with Jay LaNunziata as leader to explore what new things God called us to do.

Summer ECCO was well attended and created space for relaxed conversations about faith.

This fall, ECCO began to hold late evening Labyrinth Walks at Church of the Servant for students and led by students. Each event has a meditation written by a student as an option for participants.

ECCO is graced by the leadership of Rev. Fanny Belanger, who is leading a series called "One Step Closer" to help us focus on moving toward God's Love through Christ.

ECCO received the gift of a number of books about faith and practice from Province IV that students can read and share. This included Bibles for those who needed them.

ECCO is grateful for the MANY volunteers who prepare meals, set up the space, wash the dishes and co host each and every week so that ECCO meetings can run smoothly and provide the rich experience of Community for students of UNCW and CFCC.

A new initiative from UNCW is the Interfaith Advisors Community. This gathering of campus ministers and advisors gives an opportunity to join with other ministries to recognize the work of the programs and stay connected to the staff at UNCW.

Volunteers for ECCO have offered extensive hours and labors of love to provide and host meals, serve on the Advisory Council, provide worship and music opportunities and support the campus minister in the business end of the ministry. As a result, ECCO reaches out to students with Episcopal roots, various other denominations and unchurched students. There are transfer students making new social networks, continuing students for whom ECCO is a constant in their college and graduate school careers, and those who come for a season and find connection. It is an open and welcoming community that loves each other, their neighbors and God.

Officers:

President: Sarah Creel

Vice President: Leah Bevins

Secretary: Mikaela Chambers

Treasurer: Paul Hall

Advisory Council:

Tracy Hanson, St. Andrew's on the Sound

Justin Smith, St. Andrew's on the Sound

Ashlyn Kuykendall, St. Paul's Wilmington

The Rev'd Gray Hodsdon, St. James Wilmington

Young Adult Ministry

This ministry continues to be one of support and connection of young adults to broader opportunities offered through The Episcopal Church, including the Episcopal Service Corps and the Young Adult Service Corps.

We continue to support parishes actively engaged in ministries with young adults.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Gowdy Canady, M.Ed.

Missioner for Lifelong Christian Formation