



Youth Ministry
at Houghton Lake United Methodist Church
Vision Statement, updated November 2008

*“The Lord...is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish,
but everyone to come to repentance.” I Peter 3:9b (NIV)*

Youth Ministry Purpose Statement: “Get hooked on Jesus!”

Specific Goals:

- To connect all youth with the powerful, life-changing grace of Jesus Christ.
- To creatively teach biblical knowledge that compels youth to live God-glorifying lives.
- To build relationships between HLUMC laity and youth in the Houghton Lake area.
- To create a fun, safe atmosphere for Youth Fellowship that wins the trust of the youth.
- To intentionally integrate youth with the overall ministry of church, locally and globally.

Typical Activities used to accomplish our goals:

- Sunday night Youth Fellowship (YF)
- Sunday School
- FCA and JAM (non-denominational bible clubs that meet once a week in the schools)
- Youth-led worship services (“Sonrise Service” and “Youth Sundays”)
- Youth rallies, events and concerts (such as Fall CCYM Rally)
- One winter retreat and one spring retreat or youth convention, annually
- Summer camps (many of which require scholarships provided by our church)
- One week-long work mission every other year
- Other events for fundraising, outreach, and service, as necessary

Youth Ministry Team:

A team of adults is utilized to cultivate relationships with students and model Christ to them. Under the supervision of Eric Falker (HLUMC’s full-time Youth Leader), the following adults meet monthly for prayer and facilitate our Sunday night YF meetings: Mike and Roxanne Krohn, Heidi LaPrad, and Sue Seaford. Additionally other parents and adults may assist with transportation, snacks, Sunday school, retreats, mission trips, and supervision at special events. All adults volunteering for any HLUMC youth event must first pass a background check.

Youth ministry is but one step in the process of making disciples for Christ. We are humbled and privileged to be used by God for his purposes.

The HLUMC Youth Ministry Team
Eric Falker, Youth Leader

2008 Annual Report on the Youth Ministry at HLUMC

Welcome to the “wood” anniversary of Eric’s annual youth ministry reports. For those unacquainted with tradition, this means, by the grace of God, I have now completed five years of youth ministry at HLUMC. As always, the previous year in ministry held both ups and downs, but our focus has never left the One we serve.

The overall spiritual state of youth in our community could probably best be described as “needy”. With the breakup of many families and the disappointment felt by many of the government and financial systems, most youth have an overall distrust of any system or adult that enters into their world. What all kids need is a true understanding of an incarnational God who knows them intimately and offers them unconditional love, forgiveness, and a fresh start. This message of hope is brought to them through the lives of people, like our youth leader team, who have already felt that love and want to share it.

We give thanks and praise to God for many positive things that have been accomplished since last November: a large group attending Fall CCYM Youth Rally; our trailer displayed in the Tip Up Town parade; successful winter retreats at Camp Barakel and Good News Camp; multiple churches participating in FCA’s Super Bowl Party at Markey Baptist; a recreation day at CMU; much progress and many fun events at Artesia Youth Park involving the whole community; a successful “Sonrise” Service on Easter Sunday; a fantastic trip to “Survive” Youth Conference in Chicago (hosted by Dare-2-Share); Educator Appreciation Lunches for HLCS hosted by FCA and JAM; a great HLHS Baccalaureate Service with participation by several churches; Vacation Bible School; Relay for Life; many youth participating in summer camps; YF bonfires and BBQ’s throughout the summer; a great RUSH week to kickoff the fall YF ministry; a large community-service painting project at Artesia; the largest “See You At Pole Prayer Rally” in five years; and many more evidences of the Holy Spirit working among us.

Renewal has been experienced in the FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) and JAM (Jesus and Me) groups, Bible studies which meet weekly in the high school and middle school. Bonnie Saglimbene and Betty Peterman (Abundant Grace), Nadene Clark (Wesleyan), and I provide the leadership for these meetings. This is very good to see, especially after HLHS FCA nearly disbanded last year. Also, Sunday night YF attendance seems to be picking up. One of our next challenges is to help disciple the new kids who are coming.

Char Fitzgerald and I are planning a church-wide mission trip July 25th to August 2nd, 2009. The destination is Henderson Settlement in White Oak, TN. I also have one seminary class remaining in January, 2009, to finish my Youth Ministry Certification in the United Methodist Church. I also am maintaining the websites for our church and our youth ministry.

We recently completed an excellent theological study at YF called “The Gospel Journey,” a DVD-series hosted by Greg Stier of Dare-2-Share. The basics of the Christian faith, including creation, sin, salvation, and heaven were clearly presented and then discussed in small group settings. We hope to build on this series in the coming year, so that all youth can begin to see themselves as evangelists.

As I conclude my report, I challenge the congregation to be involved in the lives of our youth. While financial support is crucial to youth ministry, youth are really looking for adults who notice them and do not judge them. The way to win them to God is to show them the love of Christ. On behalf of my team, thank you for your continued prayers, support, and cookies.

-Eric Falker, HLUMC Youth Leader