

The Other Evangelical:



A Guide to our Programs

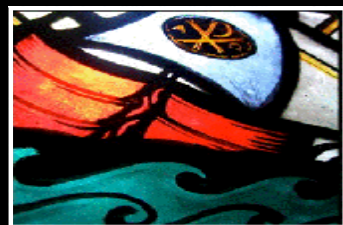
words about words #3

an educational series for:

the other evangelical

www.evangelicalucc.org

204 E. Lockwood Ave
Webster Groves MO 63119



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“You have to understand, my dears, that the shortest distance between truth and a human being is a story.”

—Anthony de Mello, from *One Minute Wisdom*

Dear friends,

Nothing is more precious to behold than the eyes of a child enraptured by a good story. We dedicate this year of storytelling to the child in all of us whose eyes sparkle brightly. May the stories that we tell find root in our souls, growing into the values which will silently inform our life choices.

Enclosed you'll find a description of some of our programs at EUCC, hopefully in a manner that makes them most accessible. At the front are descriptions, times, and locations of education and music programming. In the back are some pages that explore the 'why' of what we do.

We begin with our educational opportunities for children, which are rooted in a cycle of ancient stories. Our stories are found in the books we call sacred, though many of them have parallels from other cultures. Throughout the year we will delight in the wonder of story even as we peek into their historical and cultural significance. It is our prayerful hope that in the wonder of the story, we will discover new depth of question and meaning.

As we explore the stories of our faith together, in liturgy and song, we have the opportunity to create new story. Although we are blessed with a fabulous staff team, our programs are lead by a generous team of volunteers and part time staffers. We are always looking for volunteers both to participate and to lead. If you've not yet had the opportunity to dive in, please do!

Our prayer is that as these stories delight us they may also lead us into greater faithfulness as people of God.

Enjoy!

Katherine Hawker
August 2010

Program:

Church School

Who: All children (ages 3-6th grade)

Youth programming and Adult classes are described separately and offered concurrently.

We recognize that all of our children have unique learning styles, talents, and challenges. Please help us to help your child have the best experience possible:

- The more often your child attends, the more familiarity they will have with the setting and the more friends they will make.
- We try to begin promptly at 9:45am and begin with the story for the day. Being on time for drop off and pick up is very helpful.
- We are committed to making our Church School as accessible as possible. Please communicate any special needs directly with the teachers or pastor.
- Feel free to stay with children who are not yet comfortable. An extra pair of adult hands is always welcome in any of our classrooms!

When: 9:45am each Sunday

We begin with a celebration on the first Sunday after Labor Day, with classes beginning the following week. Our last class of the program year is the first Sunday of June.

Classes begin at 9:45am each week:

- Beginners will share a story, craft, and snack followed by free play time in their classroom.
- PreK-K will explore “A Joyful Path” with story and activity in their classroom.
- Elementary classes will share rotating learning centers designed to meet a variety of learning styles. Assignments for each group are posted on a whiteboard in the lower level hallway.

Closing circle is held in the Green Room with classes gathering to sing, share prayer concerns, and collect an offering. ***Parents are encouraged to pick children up at 10:45am each week in the Green Room.***

Where: Lower Level of Ed Building

Classrooms and Teachers for 2010-2011:

Two self-contained classrooms for our youngest explorers:

- Beginners (ages 3-4) in the Shepherds Room (northeast corner) with Laura Evans, Sandy Bowe and Linda Kolley. This is room #5 and commonly called the Red Room.
- PreK-Kindergarten (ages 4-5) with Barb Touchette, Harriet Frazier, Ray Mulligan in the Worship Room (southwest corner).

Three elementary groups (1-2 graders, 3-4 graders, and 5th-6th graders) rotate between:

- Art: Kathy Adair in Room #4 also known as the Blue Room.
- Activity: Darcy Swanson in Room #3 also known as the Orange Room.
- Drama: Debbie Gregg in Rooms #2 also known as the Green Room.

Why: A description of our gathering

What we teach in our classrooms is an appreciation of inquiry. We use the bible stories as a tool in this endeavor and seek to address a range of learning styles. A team of volunteers write our lessons each week based on the assumptions outlined in the Not Quite Round Table (NQRT) Assumptions (page 9). We make use of a variety of resources including “Come Join the Circle” (Logos Productions), www.rotation.org, and “A Joyful Path” (The Center for Progressive Christianity).

What: The stories we share

We’ve identified a three-year cycle of stories that we share with our elementary age children. It is our hope that as they return to these stories, their depth of understanding and their questions will deepen. Our goal is to empower our children to use the best available academic and spiritual tools as they seek to understand both the implicit and explicit messages in these ancient stories.

Year	Pentecost September-October-November			Thanksgiving Event	Advent December
2009 - 2010	Abraham: Journey	Abraham: Complicated Families	Abraham: Intro to his Stories	Story of Thanksgiving	Luke’s Christmas Story
2010 - 2011	Joseph: Amazing Leader	Joseph: Sibling Drama	Tower of Babel	Hunger Banquet	Night in Bethlehem
2011 - 2012	Exodus Moses’ many Adventures		Life in the Garden	Great Thanksgiving	Advent Symbols Mark has no birth story.

Year	Epiphany January-February	Lent March	Palm Sunday Easter	Easter April-May
2009 - 2010	Jesus’ Healing	Call Stories Balaam, Samuel, Disciples	Palm Sunday Skit and Easter Celebration	Feeding Miracles Elijah, Elisha, and Jesus Jesus in the Water
2010 - 2011	Jesus as Teacher and the Beatitudes	Woman Wisdom (Esther and Ruth)		“Untold” Stories Daniel in the Lion’s Den Jericho Walls
2011 - 2012	Jesus’ Parables and Prayer	Prophets Then and Now		The Kings-David

Confirmation (7th-8th Grade Program)

What is Confirmation?

The rite of initiation into the Christian church is **baptism**. We join the church at the baptismal font. Hence when members transfer from one church to another, we return to the font symbolically as we repeat the baptismal questions.

When churches practice infant baptism, in addition to baptizing youth and adults those churches also offer a rite called Confirmation. Confirmation is the opportunity afforded by a local church to an adolescent to offer public assent to the baptismal promises made previously by their parents. Having publicly assented to the baptismal promises, the adolescent accepts the rights and responsibilities of membership in the local church and the church universal.

Confirmation is by definition a return to the baptismal font and for youth who've not previously been baptized, the sacrament of Baptism is shared as a part of the Confirmation rite.

Confirmation Program: 7th-8th Graders

Our focus will include developing:

1. Biblical literacy,
2. Critical awareness of worship,
3. Identification with the United Church of Christ roots and polity,
4. Ethical foundations,
5. An articulation of personal faith.

To achieve these goals, we offer:

- *An opening Fall Retreat.*
- A church school program that will cover some of the 'traditional' confirmation topics in a 'not quite traditional' format each Sunday morning at 9:45am. This class is led by Jeanne Smith, Marie Keath and Jeff Davis.
- Offering service with the community is critical to understanding church membership, developing an ethical foundation and learning to articulate faith. Opportunities for service include (but are certainly NOT limited to) such things as assisting in the nursery, adopting a flower bed, participating in Sandwich Ministry, visiting homebound members, and volunteering at Webster Rock Hill Ministries. We ask each youth to complete 20 identifiable hours of service, preferably connected with mission in this congregation. A form is included to account for and reflect upon service experiences.
- During the 8th grade year, youth are invited to complete interviews with three (non-family) members of the congregation.
- 8th grade Stole Project – 8th graders will meet with Katy Hawker in the spring to discuss a variety of theological topics (covered in the "Confirmation Stole Book") and begin to prepare their stoles for Confirmation.
- Fellowship (Jr. & Sr. High) meets weekly on Sunday evenings. Jeanne Smith coordinates a circle of volunteers which provide leadership.
- Youth Band-Choir (Jr. & Sr. High) meets on Sunday's at noon.
- *The Rite of Confirmation is celebrated with 8th grade youth each spring on Pentecost Sunday.*

High School Youth

Our High School Youth are respected as members of our community and participate in a variety of ways:

- An education opportunity (discussion based) is offered each Sunday morning with Jim Herz, Lucy Allen and others at 9:45am in the Still Speaking Center.
- Youth Choir-Band (see music)
- Fellowship (see Youth Fellowship)

High School youth also serve as Liturgists, members of Governing Body, leaders at Peace Trail and more.

Youth Fellowship

Something New for "Tweens!"

Our 5th and 6th grade youth have a special opportunity this year (with the help of parents!). Invited to join the Youth Fellowship "Table" Circle (see below), parents of this group will have the opportunity to sign up to host additional Sunday evening fellowship events for this group.

Fellowship Schedule – 7th-12th graders

Youth are invited to dip a toe in any one or jump right into the swim of things and get involved in everything. Each circle will have designated adult mentors and youth reps. Jeanne Smith is serving as your Youth Circle Team Leader.

Youth at Table – 1st Sundays

On the first Sunday of the month (Oct, Nov, Feb and March) we'll gather in the kitchen and cook dinner together. We are inviting our families to join us and also our "Tweens!"

Youth in Action – 2nd Sundays (4-6pm)

Fun and games abound. Gary Boehnke's coaching but he needs a full team of assistants to keep the ball rolling. This team takes requests, so it's anybody's game. Come have a ball...or a deck of cards:)

Youth in Community – 3rd Sundays (4-6pm)

Remember last year when Jane Miles taught us to make cards and Roger Bridgewater taught cookie decorating? Well, this circle has more surprises in store and Jane had so much fun that she will be joining the Schnell's to mentor this circle. We've lined up more fantastic mystery guests to share their creativity with this circle.

Youth in Service – 4th Sundays

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "The giving of love is an education in itself". Once again, the service circle will open our hearts and minds as we offer service to our community and beyond. Jud and Emily Kelly are joining this circle as we offer our gifts to the wider world.

Also in the Youth hopper:

Fall retreat to Camp MoVal. This will include a low and high ropes challenge course.

Memphis Tour – Civil Rights Immersion – MLK Weekend for youth and families.

Spring Work Day – A one day local effort with 1000 youth in action!

Shannondale Camping (early June) – A weekend open to the whole family.

Adults Learning Opportunities

We recognize that the most important teachers our children have is their parents and that our children learn much more by our actions than our words. We are persuaded too by the witness of the flight attendants who teach us that we are no help to our children until we first put on our own oxygen mask. Learning at the Other Evangelical is not just for children.

For our adults we offer two options each week at 9:45am in the main building:

Parent Group (no entry requirements!):

A weekly gathering that features a series of monthly opportunities for our parents (open to all!). With an eye towards developing group camaraderie, we'll share:

- Soul Space with Sue Ulmer will be offered on the first Sunday of each month, a time for spiritual renewal.
- Down Under with Katy Hawker will be offered with each new story unit in our Church School, an introduction to the stories.
- Group Time convened by Chris Reinhard and Jane Miles, time to explore topics at the group's discretion.

Topic Studies:

- New Member Classes – three week sessions of exploration and community building offering information about both our local community and our denomination. Led by Al Schon, the first series begins on Sept 26.
- Bible Study – The first six-week sessions beginning October 10 will use Amy Jill Levine's "Old Testament" video series.
- Around Town – Members of our community offer 'teach ins' on a number of topics including "Conversation with the President (Janet Rundquist)", "What's Stewardship?", and more. Topics are announced in the News and Notes and the weekly bulletin.

Also: Small Groups

Although Sunday mornings are a primary programming time, we encourage members to participate in learning with a variety of opportunities. Examples include the Contemporary Christian Writings group (meeting monthly as announced), a weekly (Lectionary based) Bible Study at Bethesda Orchard (Tuesdays at 10am), the Mom's Group, the Men's Breakfast and more. Groups welcome new members and are announced in the News and Notes and weekly worship bulletin.

Music Program

Why music? It enlivens our souls. It lifts our spirits. It challenges us to hear more deeply and in new ways. It inspires us to find our own voices. It broadens our vision. It relaxes our judgments! It nudges us to higher aspirations. It soothes our anxiety. It is the Muses at play! And the Muses invite you to share these gifts for life. Some ways you can be involved:

Chancel Choir

The chancel choir rehearses in the choir room on the lower level at Evangelical. If you love to sing, but feel you don't know how, we encourage you to come and give it a try. In rehearsals, we work on the basics of singing including how to read music, as well as preparing music for services. We meet most Thursdays from 7:30-9m and sing most Sundays from September through May. If you have an interest and/or questions, please call Directors, Jill Thompson or Donita Bauer at 314/367-8224.

Folk Ensemble

This is an informal choir for folks who enjoy folk music. Rehearsals are on the first Sunday of each month at 9:45 a.m. in the sanctuary and we sing monthly in worship.

Youth Choir-Band

A musical group for Junior and Senior High youth. We practice on Sundays at noon and sing/play monthly in worship. If you like to sing and/or have an instrument to play, we'll teach the rest! Directed by Jill Thompson.

Children's Choir

A choir for children (preschool – 6th grade). We rehearse from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. each Wednesday and sing for worship once a month. Basic note reading, rhythm, and singing skills are taught as we prepare our anthems for worship. Questions? Please call Director, Darcy Swanson at 314/729-0251.

Instrumental Ensemble

For instrumentalists who've had a few years playing experience, generally 8th grade through adult. The music we play is usually not difficult. We play for festivals and one service per month. This group meets one Sunday per month between services. Interested? Please contact Director, Donita Bauer 314/367-8224.

Solos etc.

In addition to these groups, we also like to provide special musical offerings by soloists and/or small groups. Children and youth are especially encouraged to participate. If you have a musical talent you would like to share in worship, please talk with Donita Bauer, Darcy Swanson or Jill Thompson.

Drumming Circle

This is an informal group practicing the spiritual and therapeutic art of drumming. If you're interested, please talk to Lil Lau, Sue Schindel or Donita Bauer.

Perhaps! Intermediate Instrumental Ensemble; Sunday Singers (Men's chorus? Women's chorus? Gospel chorus? Jazz/Blues combo?) These are ideas and perhaps you have others. Please let Donita Bauer know what you're dreaming!

Background

What we teach and why

The “Not Quite Round Table”

In the fall of 2002, a new study group formed at EUCC, the “Not Quite Round Table”. The goal of this group was to create a community while sharing common knowledge and vision that would offer educational and worship strategies for a local congregation. The group gathered bi-weekly on Sunday evenings for 18 months and included a dozen leaders from our community with expertise in theology, science, and education.

Questions to explore included (but were not limited to):

Can a set of readings be identified that reflect and teach what a congregation understands as the core values of faith?

How can the tools of scholarship be embodied in the worship and education life of a congregation?

In what contexts are Bible stories helpful for children?

How does a weekly “education hour” function for faith formation?

Although the discussions were always lively and inspiring, we quickly became aware that we could identify assumptions but not core (shared) theology. The finished project included a set of theological assumptions and a selection of stories for consideration in our Church School.

Theological Assumptions (offered by NQRT)

We experience God as absolute love, justice, and compassion.

We experience God

in the world; in science, nature, and literature;
in Jesus and in other people as God is embodied;
in meditation; and
by being sensitive and open to life.

We believe that Jesus, whom we call the Christ,

was a historical figure, a teacher, and a rebel, deeply committed to his community;
and

that through his words, deeds, and faith,
and in his life, death, and resurrection,
we have come to know who God is.

From Jesus we have learned

that no one is shunned by God;
that each person has infinite worth; and
that we are called to live together in a community that embodies love, works for justice, and practices compassion.

We believe that God’s Spirit

is that which drives us forward and catches us in the Sacred,
is beyond our knowing, and
helps us to recognize the holiness of life,
assuring us that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

We believe that the Bible is a body of writings accepted by the community of faith as sacred.
 Within this canon, there are many different claims about God and what it means to be the people of God.

Respecting the canon as a source of both inspiration and repression,
 we take seriously the tasks of interpretation.
 We believe that the church is an assembly of people
 who are welcoming, worshipping, learning, sharing, and caring.
 We welcome questions and value critical thinking as we strive for knowledge of God.

What we would teach:

Theology:

We recognize God
 in all aspects of life;
 in Jesus' life and teaching;
 through study of the Bible and our history; and
 through critical reflection.
 Our tradition of naming the sacred develops in gradations
 as we age and grow in faith, through the Bible, our history, and our theology.
 We value and nurture the ability to think critically
 about faith claims and claims about God.

Worship:

Worship is our gathering as a people of God.
 Worship fosters an awareness of God and provides an opportunity to focus on God;
 it thereby allows and encourages us to experience the sacred and nurtures our
 developing relationship with God.
 Worship calls us to give thanks and praise.
 Worship calls us to support one another and the 'other.'
 Worship encompasses different expressions of all these elements; in the expression,
 our relationship with God is strengthened through familiarity as well as innovation.

Mission:

The life, teaching, and mission of Jesus
 compel us to love God, each other, and the world.
 In response, we:
 preserve and tell our faith stories;
 create and nurture welcoming communities of compassion and caring
 within our church body;
 seek to act in the world to serve need and change the structures of oppression; and
 extend an invitation to join in God's service.

Resources for Children (and Parents)

Children's Bibles

What is the bible? Before we decide which one to share with our children, a question to ponder together is what it is that we want to share?

Fellow “other evangelicals” share a wide range of answers to the “what is the bible?” question (Nov. 24, 2002, NQRT):

- Collection (canon) of family stories through human “tellers”
- Myth
- Common heritage – shared
- Selection of faith stories, etc.
- Source of inspiration, pain, confusion, repression
- Human attempt to capture the oral tradition of God
- Memory – includes issue of control (positive and negative)
- Agenda-oriented, especially the New Testament
- Presuppositions color our view
- Dynamic authorization/authentication

Children’s bibles bring even more important questions because each author and publisher display their biases in the stories chosen to portray as well as in the ways that they are presented. Most commercially available children’s bibles portray an approach to the stories that is quite different from what we experience together.

There are some notable exceptions.

- “The Family Story Bible” (Westminster John Knox) is written by fellow progressive Ralph Milton and is a good one to have in your home.
- “The Lion Illustrated Bible for Children” (Lion UK) is adapted by Lois Rock and we have used many of her stories with our preschool classes.
- Also Tomie dePaola’s “Book of Bible Stories” is charming and theologically sensitive.

Children Worship with the Other Evangelical

We love children, babies, and teens and we welcome all ages to share worship with us.

- **Activity pages** (available in the Narthex) allow children of all ages to respond creatively to worship.
- **A story time** (Chancel Steps) is offered at both worship services.
- **A playtime** for preschool age children is offered after the Chancel Steps at the 11:00 a.m. service.

We respect that each child is unique and no single program fits all children. We strive to welcome all ages within our worship experience but also understand that some children are most comfortable in other settings. **Professional childcare** is available throughout the morning for those who prefer.

Why we need children to worship with us!

Article reprinted from "Seasons of the Spirit" (Wood Lake Books)

Children bring unique gifts of wonder, excitement, and creativity that can make worship more meaningful for all.

Children have important things to teach us about God. Children worship with each new discovery in their lives. Reverence, adoration, respect, love, awe, and praise come naturally to children.

Children give us the gift of trust and a fresh point of view; adults can share the gift of acceptance, experience, and the wisdom of the Church through the ages.

When a child is baptized, the parents and the adults in the congregation promise to be active in nurturing that child's faith. We are called to nurture our children in their faith, and we will be nurtured by them in return.

Worship is a celebration of belonging. By participating in worship, children learn they belong to Christ and are welcome in Christ's church. What better way for children to learn about their faith than to be a part of a community that laughs together, cries together, struggles together, and worships together.

Children and Communion

Communion is shared each week at the 8:30am service and on the first Sunday of each month at 11:00am. The words we share vary but most often our pastor begins by sharing, words of invitation, a remembrance of Jesus last supper and a blessing prayer.

We share communion by "intinction", meaning that we walk forward, take a piece of bread from the loaf ("the body of Christ"), dip it in the juice ("the cup of Blessing"), and then eat. Before returning to our seats we are invited to light a candle at the altar in prayer and leave an offering in the offering plates.

Many children share at the table from the time they can reach the bread and do so with remarkable sensitivity. At the same time, we respect each family's need to discern what timing is best for your children.

A Reflection on Communion:

As I hold the bread each Sunday, I name each person coming forward (to the extent that my post-40 memory will allow). This exchange is holy, the presence of the living God is palpable as our eyes meet over the breaking bread. Sometimes the mood shifts even to joviality as a child frowns and offers an innocent "no, thank you!" or if the bread of the day seems unbreakable. But even in these moments, I cherish this sacred space. "George, the body of Christ shared with you." The treasure of the moment certainly lends insight into the timeless debates around who is welcome at the table. In our tradition the debate centers around the appropriate age, the words to be used, and the type of bread shared. In some traditions there is an element of recipient 'worthiness'. But the rules seem to miss the holiness of the experience. As I speak the name of each congregant coming forward and experience that moment of connection, I am awed by the intangible truth that there is a spirit at play which is not in my control. To be sure, in twenty years of serving the bread I have encountered situations where I wanted to duck into another line. I can vividly recall times that I wished to avoid serving a person with whom I had conflict or concern. But it is in precisely this moment of mutual vulnerability that the spirit is most vibrant. The irony of this moment is that it is exactly the cumulative effect of these moments that will shape us into the persons of faith that the spirit would have us be.

- Katherine Hawker

Safe Church – A Summary of our Policy

“Evangelical United Church of Christ is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God’s love. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministers who **regularly work** with children and youth ministry as well as those working with vulnerable persons of the church. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers, chaperones for overnight stays, employees, youth leaders, nursery assistants, shepherds assistants, and members of the care partners circle.”

- as quoted in our Safe Church Policy

We ask that volunteers (parent and others):

- Have a history in our community.
- Register with the Family Care Safety Registry.
- Complete a disclosure form (Exhibit D).
- Provide evidence of good driving record and insurances when transporting youth.

In our program we expect:

- Every program for children and youth have established ratios for adults and children, including activities that occur off church premises.
- Procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
- Written consent for all activities off the church property, transportation, and any overnight activities.
- Transportation provided only from church to off-site activities and back, and all cars must have no fewer than three individuals.
- Youth, parents, and leaders must sign covenants every year.

Forms for youth:

Youth Covenant (annually) - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/YouthCovenant.pdf>

Event Participation (per event) - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/EventParticipation.pdf>

Medical Information (annually) - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/MedicalInformation.pdf>

Forms for adult volunteers:

Volunteer Disclosure - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/Exhibit D.doc>

Covenants Forms - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/Exhibit E - Covenants.doc>

Registration with Family Care Safety Registry - <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/fcsr/>