

## Children and Youth Ministry 2024 Annual Report

The Spirit Kids program is growing at Cordova Bay United Church. We have a strong team of experienced and qualified leaders: Moira Dennis, Grace Cave, and Pastor Beth Parsons as an advisor. We have created a safe, caring, and welcoming space and are welcoming on average 6-10 children and youth each Sunday for Sunday School. We are learning memory verses and have recently gifted children with Bibles of their own. We have been singing songs, creating interesting crafts and most recently completed a big unit on the Creation story complete with an exciting bulletin board full of the different elements of creation.

Our objective is to have the children and youth become a part of the activities of the church as a whole. They are participating in worship services and 'A Time to Wonder.'" The children take turns lighting the Christ Candle and helping in special services. The Spirit kids led the service for Earth Day and Children's Sunday.

One way we are involved in outreach to the community is inviting the community to join us for 'Messy Church' programs quarterly. Our first Messy Church this year was called "Fishing for Men." We welcomed about 30 people into the church hall. The children and their families made water bottle crafts, played fishing games, enjoyed a meal, and listened to a story in the Sanctuary with Pastor Beth. The next event was called "Jesus in my Lifesaver" and focused on Summer Safety. More than 35 people from the church and community turned out to the Friday evening event to enjoy a BBQ. They were greeted by a crew of Firefighters and a huge Fire Engine in the Church parking lot. Kids (both young and old) were given a tour of the truck and its firefighting equipment. There was also a bike safety checkup station, bike washing station, an obstacle course, and an arts and crafts table where the kids could make their own summer visors.

In September, we had a Messy Church Carnival. It was a hit with the kids! More than 50 people (including roughly 20 children) turned out for an old-fashioned carnival. The old-time carnival games and activities were set up outside in the church parking lot. They included a tug-of-war, sack races, chalk drawing, face painting, pumpkin painting, and a ring toss. Erich and Ruth Schultz created a harvest bounty display that included corn stalks and a huge hay bale from Dan's Farm. Mitchell's farm donated 20 mini pumpkins for the kids to paint. The Men's Breakfast Group handled the BBQ for the event.

Laughter, singing, and joy rang throughout the church during our Messy Church Old Fashioned Christmas. Again, around 20 children and their families took part in the fun. When they arrived, they went to work at an assortment of craft tables. They decorated gingerbread cookies, used glue and coloured paper to make a Christmas wreath. They also made Christmas ornaments to take home and helped decorate the Christmas tree in the foyer of the church. Then the children and their families sat down to a delicious meal cooked by the Ethel Wilson Woman's Group. We finished with a Christmas carol sing-along led by Lynn Dennis and Grace Cave in the Sanctuary.

On Christmas Eve, the children acted in a beautiful Nativity play/tableau telling the story of the Birth of Christ through story and song. The children dressed up in costumes to become Angels, Shepherds, and Wise Ones (with an extra tiny wise one in training) Joseph pulled Mary to Bethlehem in a wagon as the choir sang a song about a donkey. The play was followed by candlelight singing of 'Silent Night.' A beautiful time with the church family all together.

It was a good year. We would like to thank all of the Volunteers that helped make our events possible. You are making a big difference in the Children and Youth Ministry at CBUC. We are looking forward to more exciting events in 2025.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Moira Dennis and Grace Cave*

*The Children and Youth Coordinators of Cordova Bay United Church*