Welcome To First Presbyterian Youth Programs!

We’re so excited that you’ll be joining us!

Who is in the youth group?
We have many youth that participate in our youth activities (Sunday School, Youth Group, Bible Study, Mission Projects, Youth Conferences and more) throughout the year. Some grew up in the church and some are friends of kids in the youth group. Anyone from 6th-12th grade is welcome at our youth group activities, whether they are a member of our church or not.

When are regular Youth Group activities?
We have Sunday School from 9:45-10:45 in between the church services during the school year, and Youth Group Sunday evenings from 5:00-7:00 every week during the school year (except when we’re on a weekend trip so keep an eye on the schedule). Friends are always welcome at FPC!

When does Youth Group start up again after the summer?
Our Youth Group Kick-Off will be a lock-in at FPC starting on Saturday, Sept 7th to Sunday, Sept. 8th. Parents and middle school youth should plan to meet in the Chapel at 6:00pm for a specific middle school meeting followed by a 7:00pm meeting for all youth and parents. From there we will get into our lock-in activities by getting to know one another through games, songs, devotions, as well as a mission opportunity to help support PIN Ministry, and a fellowship opportunity where we will go late night bowling at Pinboy’s at the Beach. We will have a great time together. I encourage you to join us and please, bring your friends!

What does School Sunday School like?
Middler’s Sunday School is open to all 6th-8th graders. We meet in the 303 Youth Center across the street from the church in the classroom to the left. We have a little time at the beginning to hang out and catch up with folks and then we move into our lesson time. We have several different teachers, and each one has their own style, so the lessons can be different every week. This year you will mainly have Mr. Matt Whalen and Mrs. Kristen Whalen along with myself. The Whalens are the best! Sometimes we play fun games, act out the scripture, talk and have a lot of great discussions. All of the lessons come from the Bible, and we learn about the Old and New Testaments and how Scriptures helps us live our lives. Sunday School is a key component to the FPC Youth Program.

What is Youth Group like?
Below are the following 5 important components to our Youth Group program:

Fellowship is something we do together as Christians to help us build our relationships with other Christians. You may have heard about some of our fellowship activities that have included things like; going to Busch Gardens, Adventure Park, river rafting, trampoline parks, paintball, bowling, iceskating, laser tag, or doing simple fun things together like carving pumpkins and playing fun games in our Youth Building.

Devotion/Bible Study is our time for talk, listen, and pray. We will look at scripture and discuss different topics that pertain to our lives as Christians, how to handle difficult situations, or what is going on in our world and how we can respond as Christians. Some topics we discussed include things like; friendships, romantic relationships, stress & anxiety, depression, stereotypes, what is mission, what is evangelism, how to care for God’s good creation, what it means to be a Christian today... and many others.

Mission is our way of responding to God’s love for us as we extend that love by helping others. It’s important to know that when we do mission work that we are not just helping others but we’re being
open to how God is also transforming, humbling, and helping us to be more faithful. Mission is big part of our youth ministry program. We’ve been on mission trips to Marion, Baltimore, Charlotte, Raleigh, Philadelphia, Washington DC and St. Louis.

Addressing homelessness is a priority in our youth program. Our youth program has adopted PIN Ministry (People In Need) as one of their signature missions. Six times a year we will prepare a meal at the church and serve it to those who are experiencing homelessness. We’ve also served in other ways like the meal packing program called “Rise Against Hunger,” collecting for Souper Bowl of Caring, working in Nimmo Garden, and packing lunches for school kids who are in need. When we go on trips we tend to do a lot of work with the homeless population. When we travel to other areas to do mission work the trips are intended for our eyes to be opened to the mission work that also needs to be done in our own community. Our youth shared that the biggest challenge they see in our VB community is homelessness. We focus on homelessness outside of Virginia Beach because it’s a major issue in Virginia Beach. When we travel, our trips are intended for us to learn what others are doing to get rid of the problem and hopefully, re-energizes ourselves for the work in our own community that needs to be done. We are certainly not limited to homelessness. We have worked with the elderly through the Memory Care Center as well as giving flowers to our homebound members. We’ve served at the SPCA and Untamed Spirit working with animals and people with special needs. Our group is also known for sending our own college students cards and care packages. We do a lot of great things in order that our service may give thanks to God!

Retreats/Conferences/Pilgrimages are another thing that our youth group loves to do together. We love to travel! However, we don’t just go anywhere. When we travel we go to places for a purpose. Over the summer, our middle school youth have really enjoyed attending Massanetta Middle School Conference that is held in Harrisonburg, VA and our high schoolers particularly love the Montreat Youth Conference held near Asheville, NC for Presbyterian USA youth. During the year we may even attend our local camp, Camp Hanover, or a Presbytery of Easter Virginia event (our Presbytery) like we did last year when we went to the Great Wolf Lodge.

At each of these events you will have the opportunity to meet other Presbyterian youth just like yourselves. We sing, dance, play games, worship, and have small group discussions on a faith-based theme. As your Youth Director, I HIGHLY encourage you to join us for one of these events. Why? Because I believe in the saying that “a week at camp has the potential to have a bigger impact on a child’s faith than a whole year of attending Sunday school.” Why? There’s something about spending extended time together that helps to build strong relationships that leads to trust, that will leads to deeper and more meaningful conversations, that leads to growing in your faith, that leads to the awareness of God’s presence in your life and life long friendships with other Christians.

Fundraising is a necessary part of our ministry. We are grateful that the church that provides our youth program with a generous budget. We’re also very grateful that we have several special people in our congregation who have a big heart for our young people and give us extra donations because they want you to know the love of Jesus Christ. Even so, we still need to fundraise in order to do amazing things!

Each year, we have several fundraisers that we encourage all young people to be part of in order to help our entire youth program. Sometimes we will have special fundraising events where the money will go directly to an individual’s particular trip but generally, we fundraise as a group. For those who benefit from these donation through scholarship, we strongly encourage their participation in fundraisers. Even if you don’t need the money to go to something because you can pay for it yourself that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t attend these events. Helping fundraise for others is another way to support our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to fully be part of the group. We want all people to be
able to participate fully in all that we do. In order to do so we must all work together to make that possible.

**How will I know what is coming up in the near future with the Youth Group or if there are any changes to things?**

**Realm App:** Our church has a new app! Realm helps us keep connected. Rev. Lyndsey will send information and post regularly to the different groups about information about things that are coming up.

**Email:** Rev. Lyndsey sends out a weekly FYI Email every week with all the info you need for youth things coming up in the next month, so make sure you give her your AND your parent(s) current email address and you add lyndsey@firstpresvb.org to your contacts so the emails make it to your inbox!

**Instagram:** Follow our fpcvbyouth account for more information on upcoming events or to see some of the great pictures from our latest event.

**Facebook:** Parents, we encourage you to join our Facebook group called FPCVBYOUTH!. We use this group to share similar information that you will find on Instagram. However, Facebook makes it possible for Lyndsey to share articles and other things that may pertain to our youth.

**Have other questions? Email or call Rev. Lyndsey McCall at lyndsey@firstpresvb.org or at 919-656-2718**

**Extra Questions about Youth Group**

1. **Do you have to go to youth group every time?**
   Nope, but it would be great if you did!! We understand that sometimes you have a family event, or maybe you’re out of town so you won’t be able to come. We don’t take attendance, and you won’t be “behind” if you miss a week. We’re grateful for whenever you can join us. Never feel bad about missing too much. You’re always welcome when you’re able to join us.

2. **Do you get picked on by other people?**
   We do not allow bullying at youth group or any other church activity. People sometimes joke around during a game, or laugh a little when someone does something silly, it’s not meant to hurt people’s feelings. We do know that people aren’t perfect, and sometimes we make mistakes or do something that hurts someone’s feelings without meaning too. At youth group, no person should physically hurt you (intentionally), make fun of you, use bad language, or be disrespectful. So if you **EVER** feel uncomfortable about something that is happening at church, tell me, your Youth Director, or one of the other adults and we will help address the situation. Just know that it’s important to speak up. If we don’t see it happening it’s hard for us to fix the issue.

3. **What if I disagree with something that is said?**
   As a Christian community at FPC it’s my hope that we will share deeply with one another. Overtime, we will get to know each other well and hopefully, we will regularly have meaningful conversations. Sometimes when we have meaningful conversations we may disagree with something that has been said by another youth or even an adult. As we grow together, we will recognize that each person has different opinions on any given issue or topic. Although we may find ourselves disagreeing with what is being said it is
my hope that youth will find our space to be a safe space to share their opinions. Yet, we must also recognize there may be moments when we must “agree to disagree.” Just because we have different views on a subject matter that doesn’t mean we would treat anyone less kind. We must remember, “we need to treat people the way we want others to treat us.” If you find yourself struggling to do so, please feel free to come talk to me.

4. What is exciting about youth group?
   We have lots of fun together, playing games or even just hanging out. We have really cool discussions where anyone can share their thoughts. We go on trips, and to camp, and on mission trips. Through youth group we hope you will learn about God’s love, experience God’s love, and share God’s love.

5. How will I get to know the other youth?
   During the first part of the year, a lot of our games focus on helping us learn about each other. Even the kids who have known each other for years or who grew up in the church participate and have a lot of fun learning new things about each other. We have plenty of time to talk, hang out, and learn together, and lots of times outside Sunday youth group to spend together as well!

6. Can I bring a friend to Youth Group or Sunday School?
   Absolutely! We always love to meet new people, and even if your friend has never been to church before, they are welcome at any and all youth events. We will regularly gather in a circle to pray and when we do, we leave an extra space. I’ll ask “Why do we leave a space?” The group responds, “there’s always room for one more.” It’s my hope that you will make deep and meaningful relationships with the youth in our program. While you may find a core group of people attending regularly, it’s important that people feel welcome into our group at all times. So at youth group, we attempt to make it a welcoming safe space without cliques. It’s in editable that people will make friends and grow closer to certain people. We love that! However, it’s our goal not to be exclusive so that all people may have the opportunity to feel part of the program and have the opportunity to learn, experience, and show God’s love.

7. What is PEVA?
   It’s possible you have heard us use the acronym “P.E.V.A.” PEVA stands for “The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.” Our denomination is called “Presbyterian USA.” We are First “Presbyterian Church” of Virginia Beach. All the Presbyterian churches in the Unites States are divided into regions. We’re in the region, or Presbytery, of Eastern Virginia. So, for for short we call it “PEVA.”

   You will hear that I offer events that are often hosted by “PEVA.” This is our opportunity to connect with other Presbyterian churches in our area. We do so regularly, particularly, because I, your Youth Director, value the work of the Presbytery. I’m currently serving as PEVA’s Youth & Young Adult Committee’s Co-Moderator. I believe we are better when we work together. I feel that I am able to offer FPC even bigger opportunities and interactions with more Presbyterian youth when our churches work together. Likewise, there are many small churches that are grateful when we allow there to be “room for one more” and invite their youth to be part of our activities. Many churches aren’t as lucky as FPC to have a full-time Youth Director as well as a large youth program. Presbyterians are known for being connectional and I see being connectional as benefit to all our churches.
8. **Will Lyndsey come to one of my school events?** Yes, as long as you want me there! I’m eager to spend time with youth and their families. If you have games, performances, activities or you would like to just talk over coffee, ice cream, or meet at the office I will always do my best to meet with you.

9. **What if I have more questions?**
   Feel free to contact me. I’m here for you and your family! I usually work Monday-Thursday, in the office from 9:30am- 4:30pm, however, my office hours are often flexible with regularly attending overnight events and/or evening meetings. The best way to be in contact is through my cell phone: (919)656-2718 or Email, lyndsey@firstpresvb.org. Please do not hesitate to contact me. I’m here to walk this faith journey with you!