

# Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry Area Charter

updated May 2020

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the SVPC Youth Ministry Area is to provide an environment and rigorously inclusive programming where students (defined as 6th-12th graders or “youth”) and their families are able to experience what it means to have a relationship with Jesus, to equip them to be able to articulate that faith, and to empower them to live out that faith in service to themselves and others within the context of a church community and the world. In short, our purpose is to create communit(ies) for youth and their families to connect with God and each other. We strive to foster a ministry that reduces harm to others, seeks the liberation of God’s people, and mirrors radical grace and radical hospitality to all young people we encounter.

## WHO DOES THIS INCLUDE?

All students in the SVPC regional area, regardless of their family membership or affiliation with SVPC, are invited to join us for programming throughout the year.

FLASH is our middle school (grades 6–8) youth program. We help students grow in their faith and find fellowship with their peers and our adult volunteers.

CLUE is our high school (grades 9–12) youth program. At CLUE, the goal is to build strong lasting relationships with God, with each other and with other adults in our church community. We emphasize building a faith that gives students purpose and is based on action.

We are charged with the responsibility to develop a program which is sensitive to the needs of young people and their families, embraces people wherever they are on their journey of faith and encourages them to take their next step of faith in their relationship with God. This responsibility requires that there be a variety of programs available within the SVPC Youth Ministry Area that can respond to the various needs of students and families. With this in mind, we must also intentionally nurture the relationship between the youth ministry and the broader church family.

To accomplish this, it is our responsibility to include the church in the ministry to youth, and connect youth into the life of the church. Youth ministry is something the whole church must do together.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Youth Ministry Advisory Team (YMAT), usually composed of parents and elders, and led by our Lead Elder, supports Youth Ministry Staff and meets monthly to: review, plan, and advise in programming, budgeting and ministry projects.
- Ministry Area leaders should pray for individuals within the ministry.
- Ministry Area leaders should build relationships that further our ministry: with students, parents, advisors, adults, and other ministry areas.

- Ministry Area leaders will recruit adult volunteers to serve as youth programming volunteers in the form of Youth Ministry Advisory Team (YMAT) members, Meal Ministry Team members, and/or as Volunteer Adult Advisors:
  - All of the above adult volunteers are vital to the mission and vision of youth ministry at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church.
  - They lead relationally, with grace, and help to connect students to the divine in their lives with honesty and authenticity.
  - Adult Advisors need not be experts or have it all figured out, but rather "consent to learn in public"—they consent to journeying along with young people in the community in their faith, life, and relationship to the church.
  - Adult Advisors are accountable to the Director of Youth Ministry, the Youth Ministry Advisory Team, and the youth group itself.
  - Adult Advisors will be offered regular training, relational support, and spiritual nourishment in this role.
- Ministry Area leaders should make institutional efforts to ensure our ministry area is well resourced: Do we have the staff, budget, and training we need?
- Ministry Area leaders will maintain Safe Church compliance for all adults involved in youth programming
- Our church is faithful to the mission of discipling students in part by keeping them safe. SVPC has a robust program, including an application process, background checks, training, and guidelines for interactions with students. We call this program Safe Church. Advisors commit to both following the Safe Church, and helping to interpret and apply its principles in unforeseen circumstances.
- Ministry Area leaders should seek a balance between adapting to the world in front of us and honoring the experiences that were meaningful in ministry to those who served before us.
- Ministry Area leaders work, in collaboration with Children's Ministry (as well as worship and community life ministries), to create a holistic approach to serving families in our community.

## THEOLOGICAL EXPECTATIONS and YOUTH MINISTRY AREA COMMUNITY NORMS

1. We seek to always make God bigger, our theology deeper, and our love for the world wider.
2. We agree to use expansive language about God.
3. We agree to see each child in the programming as a child of God.
4. We agree to model adulthood authentically. We consent to learn in public and be honest about our doubts. We don't have all of the answers and we know faith is often messy and ambiguous.
5. Use a restorative (not punitive) justice model when it comes to discipline: we repair where harm has been done and heal together as a community.
6. We agree to honor difference and mystery in our theology.
7. We reject all forms of language about people that is ageist, racist, sexist, and othering.