



The United Parish in Brookline

American Baptist • United Church of Christ • United Methodist
210 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02446
617-277-6860 unitedparishbrookline.org

Come celebrate the start of a new Church School year with us on Welcome Back Sunday. Please join us on the front lawn of UPB at 9:45 for families with young children (babies-elementary schoolers) and at 10:15 for families with older children (Middle-High Schoolers) on

Welcome Back Sunday, September 10, 2023 for a special Church School *Get-to-Know-You*

event for children, families, and Church School teachers. We will have muffins and coffee with special music on the lawn before dismissing children and their parents/guardians to **meet their teachers** in the classrooms on the 2nd floor.

Dear Church School Families,

8/30/2023

On Sunday, September 17, we are looking forward to kicking off the FIRST CLASS of the Church School year with your children. We hope your summer afforded you all the promises of that season: sunshine, water play, flowers, a slower pace, time to explore new places together, and moments of sheer wonder. As we take the plunge into the back-to-school season, we want to reflect on the joys of summer with you and carry some of that with us into the Sunday School year. We hope that Sunday School, differing from our academic counterpart, will be a place of light and love, a launching point for each new week, and a fun place that your children look forward to visiting. We have recruited a wonderful and devoted group of teachers and it is our job, along with these generous souls, to plant seeds of faith that will grow and sustain your children throughout their lifetimes.

As parents ourselves, we have seen over and over again how life-giving these basic lessons in faith prove to be. As parents we also know the importance of consistency and we hope that you and your children will make a resolution this year to truly engage in our children and youth programs, just as we are resolved to make them fun, edifying, and inspiring. That said, we would like to emphasize that families are *always* welcome here: no matter how many times your child has made it to church school (or not), regardless of your level of comfort or familiarity with religion or the Bible, no matter who you are or where you are on your faith journey. Know that United Parish as a whole will always be here to serve as that tireless, loving, spirit-filled “co-parent,” and that it is an honor to be part of the village that helps raise your children.

Continued on next page...

In this letter, we are sharing some snippets from our Sunday morning curricula as well as some links to save-the-date information for special events.

- Our **Pre-K/Kindergarten lessons** continue to be based off of the “Beginners Bible” material that has been a long-time favorite of our students and teachers.
- Our **Elementary, Middle, and High School curricula** launches the next installment of the *Current* series: *Seeking God Together*. This curriculum guides our fall worship services, so children and parents will be examining the same biblical texts, making it easy to continue throughout the week the conversation that was sparked on Sunday. The curricula begin with an exploration of the Lord’s Prayer, in all its simplicity and depth. We will be focusing on themes of Peace this fall.
- **Confirmation** (for 9th graders and older) is being re-imagined under the expertise of the Children and Youth Deepening team as well as Rev. Kate Baker-Carr, Christine VanDeWege, and Adam Sutton. More details will follow, including an invitation to parents and would-be confirmands to contribute their thoughts and hopes to this re-imagining. Meanwhile, we are welcoming this age cohort to the high school Sunday School class on Sunday mornings.

It is vital that you complete our **registration and field trip permission form** and for your convenience, we have included a QR code to link you directly to these documents. For the safety of your children as well as for ease of communication, please individually register each child. We are using Realm for church school registration again this year, so if you are a returning family, you will need to simply update your family’s Realm profile. New families and first-timers are also able to register their children through this link, and will be invited to create a Realm profile after registration.

Once you have registered your child using the QR code, you will have access to download the following materials, which we hope will help you and your child(ren) plan for the year ahead:

- A Church School Calendar, including monthly Special Events, which you might want to print and hang on your refrigerator or keep in a handy spot. *We have included one in this mailing for your convenience.*
- An Optional Photography Opt-Out form for anyone wishing to make sure pictures of anyone in their family do not get used in United Parish publications or publicity materials.
- Information about our health policy and when to keep your child home from church school.
- An Acolyte flier for all children entering 5th grade and higher.



Children of all ages are welcome in Worship every Sunday. Accordingly, we are creating a new **“Pray” Ground** within the Sanctuary for the comfort of our youngest worshippers, while continuing to staff our Nursery with professionals who have expertise with early childhood development. Additionally, the Children and Youth Deepening team along with the Exalting in Worship team is inviting the whole family to **Intergenerational Worship** services on **October 29, November 26, and December 24**. These first

three “pilot” services are designed to be welcoming and engaging for both children and adults! You can expect these worship services to be a little shorter with special music, led by Merle Perkins as well as some of our teens, and opportunities for active participation.

There will be a variety of opportunities for children and youth to make **Music** together! Susan DeSelms will be leading our children’s choir for grades 1-6 (starting Sunday, September 24 at 9:00am), which will include singing, drumming, and regular appearances in our Intergenerational Worship. Youth in grades 7-12 are welcome to join the United Parish Handbell Ringers (Monday evenings starting September 25 at 7:30pm), the Chancel Choir (Thursday evenings starting September 7 at 7pm), or participate in a small folk ensemble. For more information about any of these opportunities, please reach out to Susan via email at susan@upbrookline.org.

Finally and foundationally, we the members of the Children and Youth Deepening team are with you in prayer. As the Sabbatical pastor, I am available with a listening ear and a praying heart to talk about your hopes and worries, or your roses and thorns on Sundays-Thursdays. You may reach me via my office phone 617-277-6860 x2 or email christine@upbrookline.org. For the next three and a half months while Pastor Amy is away on sabbatical, I look forward to the opportunity to serve you and your children.

Peace,

Christine VanDeWege
Sabbatical Pastor

Susan DeSelms
Minister of Music

Deanna Baker, Alicia Hsu, Merle Perkins
Children and Youth Deepening Team