

**Congregational Response on March 12, 2023 to “*What We Teach Our Children*”
and the invitation to share thoughts regarding children and youth:
a worry, a hope, and something that we do well at North Parish.**

A Worry

I worry about the rise in hate.

That people still need to fight for their rights.

Working as teenagers 20 -30 hours a week and can't be children.

Social isolation; mentally ill parents; poverty; domestic violence; incarcerated parents; substance abuse; medical trauma.

Worry about violence.

Access to mental health services and care for LGBT+ youth.

Child feels alone.

That grownups are so over-extended by the demands of today's world- economic, political, familial- that we don't offer enough nurturing, joy, mindful presence to our future generations.

That families will wander away from church on Sunday; I worry about kids who don't feel like they belong (at school etc.)

Stress and pressure of personal and world issues.

They may not know there is more to life than what we can see.

That our children feel connected with our adults and vice versa.

They won't enjoy the same gifts of the earth as their ancestors.

I worry about our kids' lack of connection to nature.

That our kids will inherit a dying planet.

The effects of climate change.

How the climate will change and affect them.

The future of our planet.

That they don't know enough about the natural world, they just learn stories about nature, not reality.

The loss of democracy and human rights.

Politicalization of truth.

That they see too many people with different beliefs can not have a civil conversation.

Environment; social media; preoccupation.

That they will not make the hard choices now so future generations live in a healthy and intact environment. We are all too short sighted.

Too much social media.

The long term effects of social media on children.

Disconnection.

That an RE Director won't be found soon.

That we won't have enough adult leadership to work with the children.

We need to prevent burnout of the youth director and the same people who keep signing up for the teaching.

We will not have enough paid and unpaid staff to support a robust RE program.

If we don't provide this community for them, who will?

Teens seem to disappear from service after they graduate.

That kids see lack of support for RE as lack of concern about them; high levels of anxiety in our youth; societal importance on individualism, secularism and material success.

A Hope

That our children share our saving theology.

That this church will be the safest of safe places for our children for many generations; important that they know *you are loved in college and beyond*.

I hope that my grandchild grows up in this community.

I hope our congregation will sustain and grow.

My hope is that children learn to accept and love themselves and others.

That our youth have a safe place to make mistakes and land softly.

CYCLEBREAKERS!

I want kiddos to know all the things you mentioned but more importantly to *feel* welcome.

That many children are accepting of diversity and want to love others.

I hope to see our children accept each other's differences but as a community.

Social connection in community; ability to trust one's inner wisdom; openness to experience; ability to share; vulnerability and expressing difficult feelings.

I love that we give kids a space to express themselves and feel supported and loved.

Encourage our kids to speak up about what they believe, even if they are still learning and figuring it out. (We all are.)

Our new family gives me hope.

My hope is their creativity and sense of justice will change the world in ways we can't imagine yet.

Adaptability.

That people won't need to fight for their rights much longer.

All people are equal.

Be safe and happy.

They grow and practice their empathy.

So many people working for social justice.

That the joyful wonder of our youth keeps us present and grounded in what's really important in life.

That NP can provide a community where all kids feel they belong; hope that the four verbs in our mission (*awaken, nurture, encourage, inspire*) are what our children and youth experience; that we can support youth as they grapple with their identities (or learn about how their dominant identities shape their lives and how they can be upstanders/allies); learn about UU role models (eg, social justice role models).

That the younger generation is more open to how one identifies their sexuality.

That we can meet them where they are, not where we think they should be.

Explore our sources of faith, one at a time.

That youth/teens are given the choice of attending service, not discouraged or scurried off elsewhere. (The service is not just for adults.)

It's easier to find community (via the internet)

The strength of non-denominational faith.

Enlightenment for the kids before they take over.

We're raising social justice climate champions.

They all become environmental scientists.

They will inherit the burden/challenge of preserving the earth's resources where prior generations failed.

Seeing how energetic the kids are.

Kerry Anne did an amazing job reaching out and connecting through COVID and after! She will be missed. Going forward I think we need to focus on the essentials and do those well. Keep it simple.

Patience, fortitude, perseverance as we work toward more volunteers.

Something we do well

We teach LOVE.

Love and acceptance.

Leading with love and community.

Kindness and gratitude is all-reaching in the community.

We give our children good experiences and memories of church.

Love, acceptance, hope for a better world; each person is important.

That this church is welcoming and accepting of all.

It is important that our children have community outside school, someplace nicer.

The church as an alternative place to make friends who accept you for who you are is vital in the lives of children who may not have that support in their other social or family circle.

The most valuable part of the program is how the kids come together.

Adults are learning as well because that experience of working with the kids is insightful. The kids are often more thoughtful and have a fresh perspective on the world.

Outstanding: Enduring sense of community.

Community that cherishes diversity and justice.

There are many paths of enlightenment.

Appreciation for our continued commitment to our youth even in the face of an ever-changing landscape.

I love the programs for the older students- OWL, COA, Bridging- so key at a critical time of life. (OWL= Our Whole Lives; COA = Coming of Age).

Programming like NF (Neighboring Fatih), OWL, COA; nurture free-thinkers shaped by UU principals; rituals.

I'm grateful that NP teaches children to be stewards of their world.

Teach kids to question, and social justice.

We can and must continue to teach our UU values to these sweet youth.

Inviting them to volunteer and contribute.

Opportunities to participate is something we do well; we teach inclusion.

Give them a community; form intergenerational relationships.

Service projects.

Lots of options. Music.

Be a good person; help those in need.

See hymn #1053! (How Could Anyone Ever Tell You)

Don't know- not well shared with the congregation.

It's important to teach kids to focus on the world(s) beyond theirs.