



# **Religious Education Programming 2011-2012**

**Tewksbury Congregational Church**

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# Welcome!

Welcome (back) to Tewksbury Congregational Church! Whether this booklet is your first introduction to our church or you already knew most of the information contained here, we hope that you will feel the love, creativity, and passion that go into our programs. As the year progresses, we hope that the information contained here will help aid in your family's journey: from birth and baptism, through childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

In order to share the wealth and love we experience weekly here at TCC, we ask the following: There are extra copies of this handbook available in the church office. If you know of a family without a church, please give them this copy and get another for yourself. We have much to offer to others and unless we invite them, they will miss out!

Peace and Prayers to you and your family in this new Sunday School year,

Sue Panilaitis, Director of Religious Education

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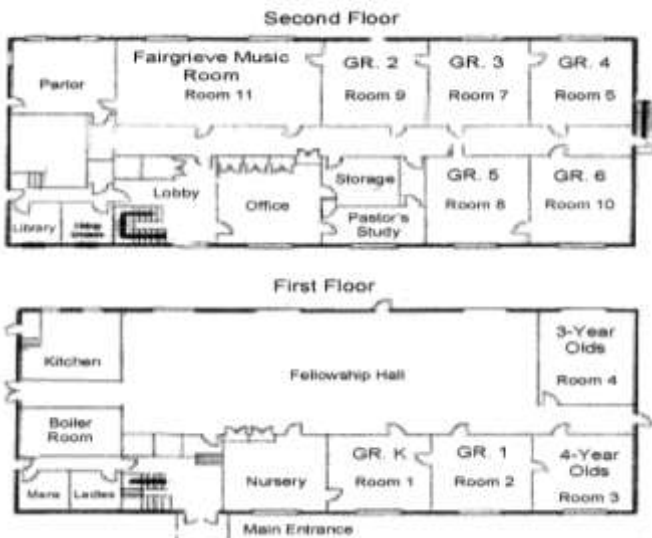
## General Information

Tewksbury Congregational Church (TCC), United Church of Christ, is a mainstream, Protestant church, established in 1734 and is the founding church of Tewksbury. We have a long tradition of worship, mission, and fellowship with the community and beyond.

## Our Facilities

The Tewksbury Congregational Church is fully handicap accessible. The two storied educational wing is bright and roomy, allowing each individual grade level to have its own classroom. For classroom locations, please refer to the map below.

*Educational Wing: Floor Plan*



## **Worship is for Everyone!**



TCC is a multi-generational church. We believe that all of us belong in worship together, old and young, singles, couples, and the families of all types and sizes.

Especially for children and their families:

- ❖ Sunday School is held at the same time as adult worship
- ❖ Children's activity sheets and books designed for ages 3-11 are available in the entryway. Please take the time at the end of worship to return crayons to either the entryway or the basket on the window ledge outside the church office for continued use.
- ❖ Children of all ages come forward for Children's Time, an interactive mini-sermon. Parents often accompany toddlers and young children to the front.

### **Inclement Weather Cancellations**



When snow has fallen or is falling on Sunday, please be sure to check the church's answering machine (978-851-9411), WHDH or WBZ, or check the church's website to see if the church service has been delayed or cancelled. If you are part of the RE distribution List, an e-mail will be sent as well.

## Sunday Morning



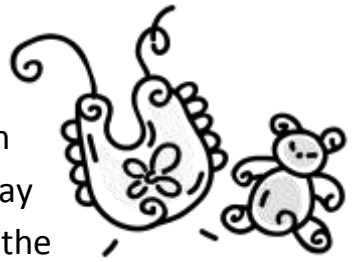
Children in nursery and the Three Year Old classroom can begin the morning of worship in their classrooms.

Students in the 4 Year Old class through grade 6 begin their morning with their family in the sanctuary each Sunday at 9:30am as part of the regular worship service. They are dismissed to their classes following Children's Time.

During class, youth read a featured story and participate in a craft, activity or project that relates to the weekly lesson. The curriculum used is *Rock Solid*, published by Cokesbury. Sunday School classes end with the conclusion of adult worship, usually between 10:30 and 10:40am. Student booklets with follow-up activities are sent home for family use.

## Nursery

Nursery care is available for children under age three each Sunday beginning at 9:25 and ending with the conclusion of adult worship.



The nursery is staffed by several rotating adult volunteers (who have had a criminal background check or CORI) as well as youth aides.

To aid in the care of each child, we ask that each parent sign their child into the nursery weekly (name; parent's name; clothing child is wearing for easy identification). A space is provided for any additional information that might be important in order to provide the best care possible for the child.

A snack is offered to children while in the nursery. After disinfecting the table and using wipes to clean hands, children are offered food suitable to the age group, which many times, consists of apple juice and goldfish crackers.

For emergency purposes, the nursery is equipped with an evacuation crib. On heavy duty steel casters, children can be placed in the crib and rolled directly outside to safety if necessary.

Diapers will be changed on a need only basis.

## Typical Sunday Morning Schedule

(September to mid-June)

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 8:30-9:00     | Contemporary Youth Ensemble rehearsal  |
| 9:00-9:30     | Junior Choir rehearsal   |
| 9:20-10:40ish | Nursery Care available   |
| 9:25          | Three Year Old Classroom opens   |
| 9:30          | Contemporary Youth Worship begins for Junior and Senior High Students                |
| 9:30          | Adult worship begins   |
| 9:45          | Approximate time children aged four through grade 6 leave the sanctuary for classes. |
| 10:40ish      | Approximate time Sunday School Classes are concluded                                 |
| 10:40ish      | Coffee and fellowship time for adults  |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | Cherub Choir rehearsal   |



# Sunday School 2011-2012 Calendar

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
September 11	Rally Day
September 25	Fire Drill
October 2	Movie Matinee
October 30	Presentation of 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Bible and 3 YO Bible story books
November 6	Communion 2,3,4 Movie Matinee
November 20	Confirmation Sunday (No class for grades 9-12)
November 27	No Sunday School – Thanksgiving Break
December 4	Communion for grades 1,5,6 Movie Matinee
December 10	Advent Workshop
December 18	Pageant – No Sunday School
December 25	No Sunday School
January 1	No Sunday School
January 8	Movie Matinee
January 29	Missionaries in Training Store Open
February 5	Communion for grades K,7,8
February 12	Movie Matinee
February 19	No Sunday School – February Vacation
March 4	Communion for grades 2,3,4 Movie Matinee
March 18 & 25	Sunday School Parent Observation Day
March 25	Lenten Workshop
April 1	Palm Sunday

	Communion for grades 1,5,6 Movie Matinee
April 8	Easter – No Sunday School
April 15	No Sunday School – April vacation
May 6	Communion for grades K,7,8 Walk for Hunger – No class for grades 9-12
May 13	Movie Matinee
May 27	No Sunday School – Memorial Day Weekend
June 3	Teacher Appreciation Breakfast Missionaries in Training Store Open
June 10	Youth Sunday



## The Sunday School Program

### **Sunday School Volunteers, Locations and Class Specific Information**

The Tewksbury Congregational Church Sunday School Program is staffed by dedicated and caring individuals. All staff members have had criminal record checks (CORIs).

#### ***Three Year Old Class***

Teachers: Julie Previte, Stefanie DeLuca, Susan Slys

Location: First floor, Room 4

This classroom opens at 9:25, which coincides with the start of adult worship. During the time before the

official start of Sunday School, children are allowed some exploratory time with playdough as a way to become comfortable and reacquainted with peers and leaders before lessons commence. A snack is also served at the completion of the lesson.

In order to be released from the classroom, a designated individual must meet the three year old at the classroom door at the end of adult worship.

### ***Four Year Old Class***

Teachers: Marilyn San Clemente, Joanne Kenney, Patty Cipriano

Aide: Emma Hyberts

Location: First floor, Room 3

All four year olds must be picked up at the conclusion of class.

### ***Kindergarten***

Teacher: Sherry Fulton, Carolyn Fialkowski

Location: First floor, Room 2

Kindergarten students must leave the classroom accompanied by a responsible adult.

### ***First Grade***

Teachers: Gail Memmolo, Nansi Sorano, Sarah SanClemente

Location: First floor, Room 1

### ***Second Grade***

Teachers: Debbie Adams, Kim Dolan, Tina Ramsdell,

Location: Second Floor, Room 9

### ***Third Grade***

Teacher: Cricket Foss

Aide: Taylor Eloi

Location: Second Floor, Room 7

### ***Fourth Grade***

Teacher: Steve Trudeau

Location: Second floor, Room 5

### ***Fifth Grade & Sixth Grade***

Teacher: Bob Masters

Location: Second Floor, Room 8

### ***Seventh Grade & Eighth Grade***

Teacher: Steve Richtsmeier

Aide: Casey Roux

Location: Second Floor, Room 10

### ***Junior & Senior High***

Teachers: Betsy Goodell, Serena Santoro, Audrey  
Spencer

Location: Tower

### **Junior & Senior High School Youth Options for Sundays**

For youth in Junior or Senior High school, there are a variety of options for participation during the church school year. For youth grade seven and above, there is a contemporary youth service. For approximately 15 minutes, teens worship together with upbeat music and in a style that relates to their interests. After this, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade will go to a separate class to begin their

studies while high-schoolers remain in the tower as an alternative to a standard Sunday School classroom setting. This group pulls curriculum from a number of different sources in order to have current, relevant, and active lessons each week.

Other options for teens include remaining in adult worship with their parents or serving as a classroom aide weekly (or bi-weekly) in one of the younger grade's traditional classroom settings. Arrangements to become an aide are made through Sue Panilaitis, the Director of Religious Education.



## **Sunday School Related Programs**

### **Communion Sundays**

Under the United Church of Christ, communion is open to all youth and adults. On the first Sunday of the month, we provide children in grades K through eighth grade the opportunity to partake in the sacrament every couple of months as part of their Sunday School experience. Children will arrive in the sanctuary shortly before the communion and sit as a class. They will then



remain in adult worship for the remainder of worship.

At 11 o'clock on Communion Sundays, communion is again served on the second floor in Room 9 to families who would like to take Communion together, as well as volunteers who were unable to be in the sanctuary during the sacrament.

### **Sunday School Attendance**

To increase awareness of the importance of consistent Sunday School attendance, youth will be recognized three times a year in concurrence with the Sunday School curriculum. Such recognition will be made during adult worship with each curriculum session acting as a separate entity. To receive recognition, youth need to attend 80% of available classes. If your child is not able to attend weekly due to bi-weekly parent visits, or another circumstances, please let Sue Panilaitis know.

### **Birthday Card Program**

As a way to encourage a relationship with Christ and the church, TCC sends a special birthday card signed by the Sunday School staff and Pastor Jonathan. Coordinated by Pat Stoddard, children in the three year old class through sixth grade can look forward to being remembered on their special day.

## **Sunday School Offering**

Families are welcome to pick up offertory envelopes for their child(ren) from the church office. We hope that parents will explain why we give money to the church and encourage youth to earn a portion of what they give. We hope that youth will learn that the money received will be used to do God's work through this church.

## **TCC Grandparents**

In order to create a multi-generational connection to older church members, grades will be paired with a TCC shut-in, also known as a TCC grandparent. Classes are encouraged to create artwork, write class letters, send a card, and provide a class photo for their grandparent. TCC grandparents will provide the class a photograph and communicate as much as they are able with the class. Outside of church, families are encouraged to visit their TCC grandparent to create a stronger bond with this individual.

## **Missionaries In Training (MIT)**

In our commercialized society, youth have limited opportunity to learn the joy of giving. In an effort to emphasize this foundation of our Christian faith, Missionaries in Training (MIT) will give Sunday School youth a chance to earn "money" which can be used to

purchase items locally or globally through our missions program.

Each week, Sunday School students have the ability to earn bible bucks. Teachers and the Director of Religious Education will have the ability to award this money for the following reasons:



**\$1** will be given for attending Sunday School

**\$1** can be earned for random acts of kindness. To collect for a midweek act, parents need to submit a quick description of the act in writing to his/her teacher.

**\$1** can be netted randomly as deemed appropriate by the teacher during Sunday School. This can include, but is not limited to, such things as good behavior, answering a tough question, or helping before or after class.

**\$5** will be handed out if the child who brings a new friend to church (this includes fellowship, movie matinee, or another church sponsored program). This will be handed out by the DRE.

**\$5** for serving the church in a larger way, such as volunteering to help change a bulletin board, helping with the church's fall/spring clean-up, etc. This will be handed out by the DRE.

**\$10** can be earned for the completion of a grade level accomplishment

## **MIT Grade Level Accomplishments**

Youth can earn ten Bible Bucks once for mastering the below grade specific task. (Please visit [Tewksburycc.org/cribsheets](http://Tewksburycc.org/cribsheets) to print out a copy of the specific wording.)

3 Year Old Class: “Jesus Loves Me” song

4 Year Old Class: simple prayer

Kindergarten: John 3:16

1<sup>st</sup> Grade: The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: TCC’s Faith Affirmation

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: The Lord’s Prayer (found in Matthew & Luke)

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: The Beatitudes (Matthew 5)

Contemporary Youth Worship: 100<sup>th</sup> Psalm

### **How Bible Bucks are Spent IN MIT Program**

Twice during the Sunday School year, lists will be available with different items that can be purchased from predetermined organizations. Children can look at the list to determine what they would like to purchase for a charity and work towards saving their money.

- As with real money, Bible bucks will not be replaced if lost. Children will be encouraged to put their name on the bill on the “Earned by” line. If found, the money can be returned.

- Any real money earned by a child can also be combined with Bible Bucks for more purchasing power.
- Youth can work together, as a family, class or with friends to buy items. As in real life, it is up to the youth to determine how they would like to spend/save their money.
- In order to spread the giving to various organizations, only so many items in a particular category can be purchased. Once those items have been bought, it will be removed from the list.
- Once a gift is purchased, youth will be recognized for their contributions through publication in Faith Notes, Crib Sheets, and bulletin boards.
- Bible bucks can be saved and used over the year. They do not expire and can roll over from year to year.



## Seasonal Events

### Bibles and Story Books

On Reformation Sunday, children in third grade will be presented with their own Bibles during adult worship. Also on this day, three year olds will be given a children's Bible as a way to encourage further learning at home.



## **Third Grade Stoles**

On Palm Sunday, third graders are responsible for handing out palms while wearing hand-made stoles, created as part of their classroom learning experiences. These stoles will also be blessed during worship.

## **Confirmation**

Youth are given the opportunity to participate in a series of classes in preparation for being confirmed. “Confirmation” means that the young people make for themselves the same promises that their parents made for them at their baptism. Each student is assigned an adult mentor who works with them over the course of their ninth year. Attendance at full group classes and mission work is also a must. Confirmation often occurs during their sophomore year in November.



## **Advent Workshops**

Following regular Sunday services in mid-December, families are invited to partake in a simple meal followed by activities and crafts that relate to the Christmas season. Families will be encouraged to rotate through various stations, each detailing an important aspect of the season and a project relating to the theme at hand. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the season with the church community in a fun and festive way.

## **Christmas Pageant**

Each year in mid-December, our youth present a pageant to the congregation. Good attendance on the Sundays preceding the pageant is especially important as some rehearsals will be conducted during class time. The pageant will most likely be held during worship the Sunday before Christmas.

## **Parent Observation Days**

Come check out the Sunday School program! Just like in the public schools, you are invited to observe your child's Sunday School classroom(s). If you are interested in seeing your child in action or getting a better understanding of what/how your child is learning, please join your child in class during the month of March. You are welcome to split your visit between more than one class on one date or visit different classes on two different dates. We ask that if you are interested in observing to please let Sue Panilaitis as there are some classes with unique requests.

## **Lenten Workshops**



Similar to the Advent workshops held earlier in the year, this event is held during the season of Lent. Again, a simple lunch is served followed by crafts and projects focusing on Easter activities.

## Youth Sunday

At the end of each Sunday School year, our youth lead the congregation in worship. Good attendance on the Sundays preceding Youth Sunday is especially important as all rehearsals are conducted during class time. Worship is followed by an all church “picnic”.

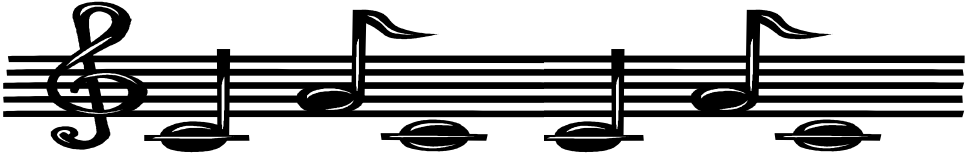
### Summer Sunday School (mid-June – August)



Beginning mid June and extending until the end of August, summer Sunday school will take place. In keeping with the routine, youth aged 4 and up begin their morning in adult worship. Following children's time, youth aged 4 through 3rd grade are dismissed to the 2nd grade classroom for a lesson. Run as a one room school house, kids of all ages will listen to a Biblical story which will be followed by a craft, activity, or game. Cokesbury's *Rock Solid* curriculum is used year round.

Youth older than 4th grade can remain in adult worship or at the discretion of the teacher be paired with a younger child to assist him/her.

Children 3 and under are encouraged to attend the nursery.



## **Musical Programs for Youth**

Music is an important component of the worship experience at TCC. This is no more evident than in the wealth of music programs available to our youth from 3 years old to seniors in high school.

### **Cherub Choir**

This singing group is for children ages three through third grade. They rehearse weekly at the conclusion of Sunday School, at approximately 10:45 am, in Room 9. Cathie Seaman directs with assistance from Sherry Fulton and is accompanied by Craig Seaman. Fun, age appropriate songs are sung, often interspersed with various types of musical accompaniment from the cherubs. Performances by the group are usually once a month and occur during the first part of adult worship.

### **Junior Choir**

Junior Choir, directed by Bruce Panilaitis, is offered to children grades four and up. They rehearse a variety of musical genres at 9 am Sunday mornings in the Fairgrieve Room and will participate in adult worship services 8 - 12 times throughout the year. In addition,

the Junior Choir supports the Confirmand Service in November, participates in the Christmas pageant, and has the opportunity to attend a Youth Choir Festival in March. Children are encouraged to participate even if they have no previous musical experience.

### **Jubellation Ringers**

Jubellation Ringers is open to youth in grades four through twelve, and meets in Fairgrieve Room. No musical skills are needed as reading sheet music and playing the instrument are part of the rehearsal. Commitment to weekly rehearsals is mandatory. Jubellation Ringers play in worship various times throughout the year.



### **Contemporary Youth Ensemble**

Serena Santoro has an amazing ability to take youth with a variety musical skill levels and instruments and create a fabulous ensemble. Adolescents in Junior or Senior High who play an instrument are encouraged to bring it with them to rehearsals at 8:30 Sunday mornings. These individuals will work with her to learn contemporary pieces that are played both in the Contemporary Youth Worship as well as various times throughout the year in adult worship.



## **Youth Social Activities**

### **Class Parents**

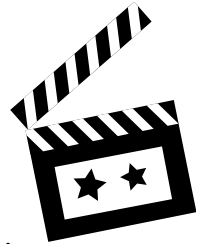
In order to create stronger class bonds, each class will have a class parent. This parent suggests events, outings, and get-togethers with families who have children in the same grades.

### **Parenting Series**

In January, a workshop is presented that is related to child rearing. While parents attend these various workshops, childcare is provided for all ages free of charge. Dates and topics will be publicized in the electronic communication, *Crib Sheets*, or found under “calendar” on the website, [www.tewksburycc.org](http://www.tewksburycc.org).

### **Movie Matinee**

On the first Sunday afternoon of the month (due to holidays, February and May’s programs are held on the second Sunday), youth in grades one through five are invited to return to church to attend the movie matinee program. The program begins with a game or activity



related to the presented movie theme. Popcorn and water are served during the movie. At the conclusion of the movie, a scripture reading and discussion will again reinforce the movie theme. Parents are welcome to watch the movie with their child, or to leave them in our care. Friends are always welcome and encouraged to come.

### **Junior Youth Group**

The Junior Youth Group (JYG) is social group geared to grades six through eight with the focus being on fun, food, games, service projects, worship and specialized programming centered around building a relationship with God. A retreat is currently being planned for the spring. This group is lead by JoJo Scharmer and Jean Carr and meets Sunday nights from 6-7:30 in Fellowship Hall. As always, members of JYG are encouraged to bring a friend with them.

### **Senior Youth Fellowship**

Developed to aid in high school students' quest for fellowship in a fun and nurturing environment, Steve Trudeau and Ann-Marie Baldwin have prepared an enjoyable, yet spiritually based program. Such activities include Hike for Humanity, Easter Lock-in, ski and tubing trip, Laser Tag, and a camping trip to SoulFest. This social group meets twice a month with many meetings

being at 6 pm on Sunday nights. Information for the group can be obtained by looking on the church website, Faith Notes, or checking out the bulletin board in the Vestry. As always friends are encouraged to attend SYG.



## **Other Information**

### **Scholarships**

Our church has a long history of helping others. This tradition includes helping students within our church family with scholarships to assist with college and other post high school educational expenses. Grants will be awarded based upon total contributions and according to how many students apply. In the spring, application forms are available in the church office. Applicants are encouraged to assist in the yearly scholarship breakfast, the only scheduled event to raise money for this fund.



### **School Loans**

Loans are also available from Tewksbury Congregational church. More information about this program can be obtained by contacting the church office.

## **Safe Church Policy**

Tewksbury Congregational Church has a “Safe Church” policy with the purpose being to protect our youth. The policy requires two adults be present (or easy viewing of all adults and youth at all times) and mandates criminal background checks of all volunteers who work with them. For a full policy, please contact Jim Kenney, TCC’s safe church advocate.

## **Adult Religious Education**

In addition to the Bible studies offered within TCC, we are always striving to provide classes and workshops for adults in an attempt to strengthen their faith. We are open to ideas for presentations and guest speakers, so please feel free to contact a member of the Religious Education Committee with any thoughts you might have.

Look for information regarding workshops in our electronic communication, *Crib Sheets*, or under “calendar” at [www.tewksburycc.org](http://www.tewksburycc.org).

## **Adults Volunteers Welcome**

In order to offer the variety of programming available at TCC, we are always looking adult volunteers to help. If you are interested in working with youth in any capacity, please contact Sue Panilaitis.

## RE E-mail Distribution List

Throughout the course of the year, church members are kept up to date on the latest religious educational news through *Crib Sheets* found on our website [tewksburycc.org/cribsheets](http://tewksburycc.org/cribsheets). On Thursdays, a link with updated information is sent to your e-mail. If you would like to be added to the list, please send an e-mail to [education.tewksburycc@verizon.net](mailto:education.tewksburycc@verizon.net).

## Important Websites

[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) – *a reference site for the United Church of Christ*

[www.tewksburycc.org](http://www.tewksburycc.org) – *Tewksbury Congregational Church's website*

[www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) – United Methodist online bookstore which provides us with the Sunday School curriculum

## E-mail Addresses of Interest

[revjcareygoodell@gmail.com](mailto:revjcareygoodell@gmail.com) – Jonathan Goodell,  
Pastor of Tewksbury Congregational church

[secretary.tcc@verizon.net](mailto:secretary.tcc@verizon.net) – Jill Eckelkamp and JoJo Scharmer, Administrative Assistants of Tewksbury Congregational Church

[education.tcc@verizon.net](mailto:education.tcc@verizon.net) – Sue Panilaitis, Director of Religious Education

# **Religious Education Committee**

Peggy Mello, Co-Chair

Carol Sturtevant, Co-Chair

Sheila Nelson

Tricia Ronningen

