



Greystone

Baptist Church

Lent 2023

Come and Seek by Chrissy Tatum Williamson

How are questions, struggles, and doubts about faith handled in our church?

This is one of the questions posed at a recent Wednesday night, Growing Young discussion. The conversation that ensued meandered through all the small group, Bible study, and relational aspects of the church. In the context of those close relationships, we can be honest and real about our questions, our struggles, and our doubts. But as a whole church, we don't always tend to these integral pieces of our faith journey...until now. This Lent we are going to focus on questions.

What voices are we listening to? What if we mess up? Can we start over? What are we longing for? Is there any hope for the living water Jesus talks about? Why is there so much suffering in this world? Where is God? Has God forgotten us... turned away from us... left us to fend for ourselves? Where can we find God now? Who is God calling us to become? What do we need to let go of in order to become that new creation?

These are the kinds of questions that will guide our lenten journey this year. Which ones resonate with you?

Maybe these are the questions that you are wrestling with; or maybe you have others. Questions, doubts, and struggles are all part of a mature and growing faith. This is one of the reasons I am so excited about our lenten theme called, Seeking: Honest Questions for a Deeper Faith.

Included in our lenten email, you will find a wealth of resources for personal and small group study. Yes, the daily prayer cards are back! In addition to the items described and included here, the ministerial team and I are working hard to offer innovative and interactive moments in each worship service. These are designed to invite you more deeply into the questions. Not a single one of us has all the answers, God's mystery is too big for that. But together, in this season of lent, we will explore, wonder, and seek together.

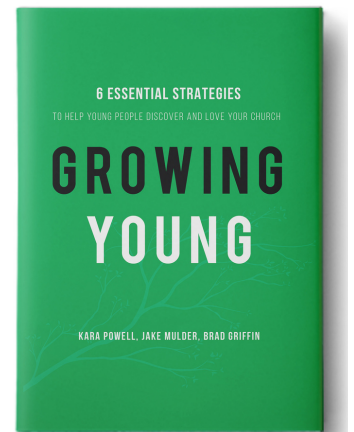


seeking:
honest questions
for deeper faith

Growing Young at Greystone

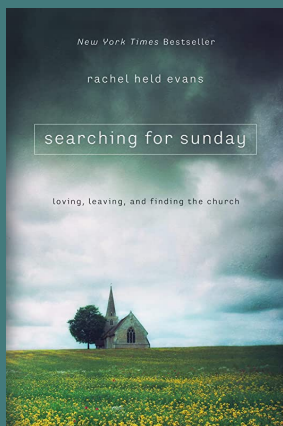
by Anna Beth Cross

For the past month, we have engaged in a study on Growing Young, a book and research project conducted by Fuller Youth Institute (FYI). These conversations have occurred around tables, bringing together the many generations of Greystone. We have learned about the six core commitments FYI claims are needed for congregations to grow young, to better engage young people for the vitality of the whole congregation. We have discovered what that might look like here at Greystone. And we have even asked difficult questions about what obstacles might hinder this forward growth, based on our current structures, traditions, and systems. Through it all, we are learning what shifts need to be made, what education needs to transpire, and what love and care need to continue to be shared in order to be the community of belonging God calls us to be for all people.



Through this study, we invited everyone to continue these conversations outside of our gatherings. Many of our longtime members took young people to lunch, hosted them for dinner in their homes, or met for coffee in order to build relationships that propel our church toward growing young. We have been encouraged by the fruit of this invitation, seeing many intergenerational bonds form and continue to be nurtured, especially with some of our newer church members.

Our hope for all who learned from these conversations is for a broadened understanding of what it means to be Christ's church today, how Greystone can adapt to the evolving lives of our younger generations, and how we may continue seeking to become beloved community here on earth as it is in heaven.



Searching for Sunday

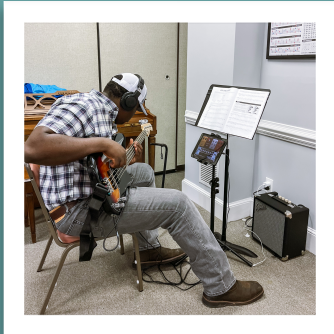
As we look forward to the Lenten season, we will continue this journey through our theme Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith. During this season, you are invited to join us in another book study as we read Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church by the late Rachel Held Evans. Through this study, we hope you will bring all you are and all you seek to these honest conversations. Your doubts, questions, curiosities, and dreams are all welcome here.

The Music Lab is Open!

by Christian McIvor

The Music Lab has been up and running since October, and our youth members have had several opportunities to begin experimenting with different instruments! Five workstations are set up for our budding musicians to use for primarily self-guided learning (with help available when needed, of course). Two workstations are set up with Yamaha P45 keyboards, two with Squier by Fender electric guitars, and one with a Squier by Fender electric bass. Each station is outfitted with a 9th generation iPad (and stand) with apps installed that allow for private practicing/study while using headphones. Through the use of a guitar portable interface called an iRig HD 2, instruments at each station can be plugged directly into the iPads and heard through headphones by using the app AmpliTube.

The apps “Piano Nanny,” “Guitar Lessons,” and “Study Bass” offer users the option to progress through online lessons for each respective instrument, and YouTube is also available so users can explore additional online lesson opportunities and play along with videos on that platform as well. If users prefer a more “old school” approach, music stands are also available at each station with progressive method books for each instrument, including Nancy Faber’s “Accelerated Piano Adventures for the Older Beginner” (piano) and Hal Leonard bass and guitar method books.



Our youth have enjoyed several opportunities to explore these instruments during the Sunday School hour since October and we look forward to developing a schedule for the summer to make the music lab regularly open and available for those who would like to come practice. The hope is that many of our youth members will gain an educational grounding in their instrument of interest and be motivated to continue learning at home. Over time, maybe we can even develop a worship band

in training! If anyone has any questions, would like to speak further about this project, or would like to volunteer in the music lab, please be in touch!



Join Us for Gathering Music on Sundays!

We hope you’ve been enjoying singing together as we gather for worship on Sundays! Gathering music begins before worship at 9:45am each Sunday and offers an opportunity for more congregational singing before worship. This is a great time for folks to come sing some familiar songs while also learning newer music that we will eventually sing together in worship. All are invited to enjoy this opportunity to lift our voices and sing new songs to the Lord!

Each Sunday night, our youth gather in the Youth Building for our weekly time of discipleship. This space is one where youth can bring their whole selves, ask their deepest questions, and even share their doubts. Our goal is to be a community of belonging, one where students feel seen, heard, and loved.

This year, we have taken a step back to the beginning...to the basics of the Bible. While some of our conversations are a recap of earlier days of Sunday school lessons and VBS stories, we've chosen to look at the Bible through another lens, one where we see the Bible with a renewed perspective. One that includes hard questions and maybe even some doubt...

Youth Sunday Night Discipleship

by Anna Beth Cross

What is the Bible anyway? If it's not a textbook of yes or no answers or facts, not a rulebook of right and wrong, what are we to do with it? How was it written? If the stories of Scripture were first passed down orally through centuries, how do we know these stories are true? What even is truth? How should we read the Bible? Why do these stories of ancient people mean anything to us today in 2023?

These questions are challenging, even for theologians and bible scholars, so we come to this space and these discussions knowing we do not have all of the answers, and recognizing that isn't the goal anyway. Our purpose in asking these questions is to try and understand more deeply another set of questions...

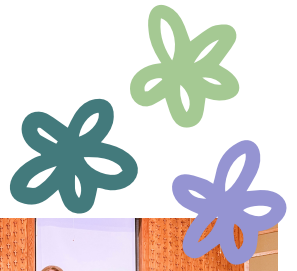
Who is God? — What has God done? — Who are we? — What is the Bible doing?

These are the questions we finish with each week as we look at different stories in Scripture. We wrestle with them, investigate potential answers, and discover new ways forward, seeking the wisdom of God from the book of wisdom itself.

And in our seeking, we discover our God-given identities, our community of belonging, and our purpose and calling as children of God. This faith journey isn't easy, but it is important, especially in the lives of our youth who are navigating adolescence, emerging into adulthood, and discovering whom God has made them to be.

Children of Greystone

by April Alston



Sunday mornings with Greystone children are full of joy, friendship and learning. Each Sunday we see friendships deepen and our children developing strong bonds with their adult leaders. Their excitement when they see their friends and leaders is palpable. On a recent Sunday during worship, I saw a preschooler draw a picture of himself holding hands with two of our youth whom he now looks up to as mentors. Another child drew pictures of their family and used the hand drawn picture to process the joys and fears they had experienced recently. While doing all of this, they were asking questions about what they saw and heard in worship. As we wrapped up our Advent series, I watched and listened to a four year old sing "From Generation to Generation" with heartfelt gusto. In that moment It was easy to see that we are indeed sharing our stories, our love and faith with our young ones.



After worship, we continue learning in our discipleship time called "Journeys". On Epiphany Sunday, we journeyed with the wisemen to find Jesus with snacks in hand. More recently we have continued the themes explored in Matthew during worship as we journey through the book of Matthew. We talked a lot about Jesus' baptism, what it means and what baptism means to each of us. We learned about different names for Jesus and how there is no single name big enough to describe all that Jesus is. We typically end each Sunday morning by singing and playing instruments with Pastor Christian. The children especially enjoyed the rhythm instruments! If you heard us upstairs - know that we are learning how to let our light shine for all to see the love of God.



On Friday night, February 3 parents of children and youth gathered to talk about what they need and desire from us as a church family. It was a deep and meaningful discussion and we all learned a lot from each other. While the children were entertained by the youth and a movie, the parents continued their night by heading off to dinner. Some took the opportunity for an all too rare date night while many others were enjoying each other's company so much that they all piled into a local restaurant to enjoy a meal conversation. The kids and parents alike enjoyed the evening so much they were all asking for a repeat event soon.

As we journey toward Lent there are many things on the horizon for children. We will begin with a special worship workshop on Ash Wednesday. Join us for a fun interactive time of learning together. (There may be some fun surprises involved!) Each week children's bulletins will be available to help children engage in worship and record their thoughts and questions. We would love to put together storytelling kits for our children so that they can bring stories to life. If you are crafty or handy with scissors we would love your help. We are so excited to see this series come to life for our children.





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