

Dear Families,

We hope you are doing well and have had a rest and some rejuvenation over the warm summer days we have experienced so far! We continue to miss seeing you and your children!

The Faith Formation Team met recently and have struggled over the resumption of church school. We want things to be back to normal, to have the children all reunited with their friends and leaders on Sunday mornings, but we remain anxious. We understand parents must be experiencing some fear as regular school days approach - especially for your under 12 non-vaccinated children, in the face of disappearing COVID protocols.

We debated sending a survey to parents this month, but we wonder how answers might change once school starts and parents have a better perspective on how a return to school affects their families in the face of lingering Covid. So we have decided to wait and survey parents wishes for church school once the return to school provides everyone with more information on which to base decisions on social gatherings indoors.

We are happy that some children will have an outdoors opportunity to connect in late August on the camping weekend. Please know if you are unable to attend for the whole weekend but would like to join the group for the day on Saturday (Aug. 28) or for the worship service on Sunday, Aug. 29th, please connect with Inge Murray for details. In order to maintain that momentum of reconnection, we will also organize an outdoor event in the latter part of Sept., including outdoor races and games for the children, perhaps with a Butterfield Acres petting zoo for additional fun.

On the spiritual side, we are thinking we will try a Zoom church school on alternate weeks in the fall until we are more comfortable in returning to regular church school. The Zoom church school has the advantage in having the children seeing their friends and leaders for an actual exchange and conversation, rather than simply watching a lesson online.

We would keep it short – at most a half hour – and would start each class with all children coming together online for greeting and opening prayer and then would probably (loosely) divide the children into two age groups – younger children up to Grade 2 in one group and Grade 3-7 in another - for the story/discussion time. We would then come together again at the end for a quick reflection and goodbye.

We will hopefully find sufficient leaders to make the Zoom church school possible. If you as a parent are willing to help, please let us know.

We ask for your patience and understanding if you are a family ready to return to the classroom immediately; we know there are families most uncomfortable with such a plan and we want to take the most sensitive approach. We hope that this time of transition will continue to be a blessing for families in our congregation.

If you have any thoughts or questions, please contact Rhonda Wishart or Inge Murray of the Faith Formation Team at Rhonda.wishart@icloud.com and cicsmurray@shaw.ca

Warm regards,

The St. Andrew's Faith Formation Team

(Rhonda Wishart, Inge Murray, Debby Dorcas and Lorna Andronikou)