

Diocesan Youth Annual Report – FYE 2015

On a cold, snowy night in January, after spending a weekend with twelve amazing youth ages 15 -17 and hearing them talk about how the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania had changed their lives and then planning with them a happening retreat weekend for February, we were told by the Diocesan Youth Minister that the youth program for CPA was going to take a “sabbatical” for a year because of uninterested youth. Theda Tallman and I sat up all night because we were so upset about this decision and knew we could not let it take a “sabbatical.” After spending the night brainstorming we asked to meet with Provisional Bishop Robert Gepert. In February 2015 we met with Bishop Gepert and told him our thoughts. At this time he gave us his blessing to run the youth program of CPA. So we went running!

During this time there were many hours spent on the phone between the Tallman and Kilp families in planning a calendar for the next year. We held meetings half-way between Lancaster and Williamsport for planning purposes and visited other camps to see where we could take our youth for diocesan events.

We volunteered as “staff” with the Happening Retreat that was held February 12 – 15, 2015. Another amazing event that was ran by our Sr. High youth. After this weekend we knew we had made the right decision to keep the programs running because we have such amazing youth in CPA. We had really low numbers so we knew we needed to contact the churches about the programs we were planning. After that weekend Karen DiPace from St. John’s Lancaster volunteered to start making phone calls to every church in the diocese and to get contact information for families so we could contact them when an event was going to happen.

February 26 – 28, 2015, we took a group of youth to the Provident Retreat that was held at North Bay in Maryland. We had fourteen youth in attendance and four adults. A great time was had by all and lots of new friends made.

March 27 – 29, 2015 we held our Jr. High Retreat at Camp Mount Luther; our theme was Upside Down, created by Ms. Sarah Rathbun and Mrs. Kelley Paulson. We had a total of 16 Jr. High youth, 8 Sr. high youth helpers, and 6 adult staff. It was a spiritually filled weekend of meeting new friends.

April 2, 2015 we had a Maundy Thursday lock- in hosted by St. John’s Lancaster. A total of thirty- five youth and 10 adults attended the lock- in. We worshipped together at the Maundy Thursday foot washing service, followed by an Agape meal. We attended stations for the remainder of the evening, walking the labyrinth, Stations of the Cross and just having quiet time in the chapel. We then planned the Good Friday 7:30 service with the youth having the living Stations of the Cross. On Friday we shared the service and acted out the living Station of the Cross. We helped to load the truck for the Soles for Souls with over 1000 shoes. We finished the lock in with the parents and youth going to market to get some goodies and fresh produce for the weekend.

June 26 – 28 2015 we spent a weekend with thirty three youth and ten adults learning about God in Nature at Camp Hebron in Halifax. Well what a weekend it was. On Friday night we had a beautiful campfire with amazing music, s’mores, hot dogs and finished the evening with Compline. The next day we had to change plans all together because it was forecasted that it was going to rain all day so we went to plan b. Well we ended up using plan c, d, e, f and finally just enjoyed the time together. The youth got to paddle boat in the lake, swim in the rain, have a soccer game in the rain and were soaked by dinner. Between 5 inches of rain and losing all power for 13 hours we learned not to rely on cell phones for flashlights, power points for music and service. But needless to say we all had a great weekend. It was exciting because we had youth from 4 parishes that have not previously attended diocesan events. A total of 13 parishes from across the diocese were represented.

August 1, 2015 we had a CPA youth reunion inviting anybody that came to youth events. We ended up with a picnic of seventy three people from across the diocese. Many new connections were made, with a lot of excitement for a new young adult formation group. We had an amazing day together.

During the summer we spend many hours on Oovoo with our Youth Rector for the Happening planning retreat weekend.

August 13, 2015 The Tallmans and Kilps got to meet our Bishop Elect Audrey and shared our ministries ideas with her.

August 14-16 2015, our Happening Staff met at St. John's in Lancaster for a planning retreat weekend. There were fourteen youth and seven adults present. We started the weekend by going to the church garden and working for two hours getting produce for the community breakfast that we were serving at on Saturday morning. After working in the garden we went swimming, returned back to the church for planning. On Saturday we serviced over 200 people from Lancaster City and gave many of them the fruit and vegetables we picked on Friday. We returned to St. Johns and spent the day planning for the retreat in February. Saturday evening we went to St. James Lancaster and shared in the service followed by Fr. Rob Schoeck anointing our Happening teen staff. On Sunday we went to St. Thomas, Lancaster for the service. We all got to meet with Bishop Elect Audrey at the picnic.

Oct. 16, 2015 we traveled to Altoona PA with 4 youth for the 2015 Annual Diocesan Convention. The youth really enjoyed the convention. These youth are now excited for next year's convention because they feel they will understand it much better.

Oct. 17, 2015 nine other youth joined us at St. Luke's in Altoona for the Happening Planning meeting. Fr. Josh Shipman and the rest of the congregation were very welcoming. It was a wonderful planning meeting and an awesome time staying at St. Luke's and being a part of their church family. We had 12 youth and 8 adults in attendance.

Nov. 13 – 15, 2015 four youth and three adults traveled to North Bay in Elton MD. for the Jr. High PYE retreat. This was the first time we took youth to this event. The theme was "Direction". It was a great experience for our Jr. High youth. For 2 of the youth it was the first time they went to a retreat and they cannot wait for another one.

December 4-6, 2015 we had a Winter Retreat held at Camp Mount Luther. The event was attended by twenty three youth and ten adults. A Light in the Darkness was the theme and it was put together by Sarah Rathbun and Kelley Paulsen. The youth enjoyed all the crafts that went with the theme and really enjoyed making Gingerbread houses in their small groups. The youth had a fantastic time. The Rev. Daphne Messersmith held the service on Sunday morning for us.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Kilp

Diocesan Youth Volunteer