

**DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRIES REPORT to the
CONSISTORY of RICHVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

September 12th, 2022

My report begins an active month with me attending our CE meeting at the church on August 4th. The meeting was very productive and had an excellent execution of ideas presented. It entailed much Fall program planning and Back-To discussion. One such anticipated event discussed was my 4-month planning of our RISE/youth joining Zion UCC with “Summer Blast” on August 6th. I shared both in our Staff & CE meetings of where we had to “postpone” this event because 1/3 of Zion’s students had Covid, plus their director had a severe cat bite which sent her to the emergency room and on antibiotics. As I told my colleagues in these meetings, this is something that I cannot make up. So, Zion’s Ashely and I plan to kickoff this event for the Fall, obviously under a different name.

This month I did Sunday School teacher searches, even though Liz & Jennifer basically first fill in the open Sundays on CE Google calendar. I continually “attempt” to distribute the load if I can help our frontline ladies on CE. And I landed two readers and if any extra kiddos for acolytes for our August 21st service Sunday. And since this date was our BIG “BACK-TO” celebration, I invited RISE to join us during that time frame rather than during our 6pm normal meeting schedule. During our CE meeting this month, we struggled on what to provide for our kiddos at the “Back-To” celebration event? I made a few contacts as alternatives based on our CE discussions. We brainstormed, to say the least, and thought that a bounce house would be more of an “outreach” expenditure rather than for a “church activity”; even though ALL our kids are precious treasures from the Lord! The consensus still held to order the bounce house in which I did. Because of the weather forecast of the inclement conditions coming (which looked bad but didn’t) and plus the bounce house vendor seemed to be concerned more with safety over uncertainty, I alerted CE of the cancellation. And, as always, CE stepped-up and provide games for the kids downstairs while their parents enjoyed fellowship with the adults. I continue to reach out to fringe & somewhat forgotten families that once shadowed our sanctuary. I encourage and love them where they are at in their stage of life. I tell them we are always here for them. I also realize the limitations this does encounter, and I now try to concentrate on re-evangelizing. RISE is still hanging on despite college departures, etc. I continue to encourage & reinforce to them our core values and mission statement as a group! Plus, it’s my understanding that we haven’t had a group like this in 25-30 years? That’s a blessing to behold! 😊

Respected submitted,

Gary Bickel

Director of Youth & Family Ministries