

Commendation for the Gertrude Willis Lifespan Religious Education Award 2023

We honor Bronwen Blass, the Chair of the Children's Ministry Team and Heather O'Connor the Chair of the Youth Ministry Team for their significant leadership in Religious Education during the pandemic and in the transition back to in-person church.

The Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry Teams became closer and stronger during the pandemic because Bronwen and Heather's warm and encouraging leadership. Our team meetings were lively and hopeful. Under their leadership, we came up with creative solutions for how to manage Zoom programs and keep families engaged.

Once we began to gather in person again, Heather and Bronwen encouraged the teams to have family events which engaged large numbers of families. Particularly notable were the Children's Family Dinner and Games night and the Youth Family Bowling Nights. Each event had over 70 people, which would have been impressive even pre-pandemic. Both Bronwen and Heather are wonderfully outgoing and that positive welcoming energy was such a gift as we relearned how to gather and have fun together.

These leaders not only served as Religious Education leaders during this time, but they also served the wider congregation in significant roles. Heather served as Past President of the Board of Trustees, and Bronwen served on the Nominating Committee.

We are grateful for their commitment and honor their service.