Rev. Katharine Martin Accepts Interim Ministerial Position

The Personnel Committee is excited to announce that the Rev. Katharine Martin has agreed to serve as our Interim Minister of Faith Formation and Education. This is a part-time position of 20 hours per week. The focus of the position is planning and coordinating adult Wednesday night programming, supporting adult Sunday School teachers and small group leaders, and communicating effectively about this vital area of our church’s ministry.

In discharging these duties, Katharine will work closely with the Faith Formation and Education Committee.

Katharine, along with her husband Brent and their daughters Annabel (9) and Rosalie (7), have been part of the Knollwood faith community since 2011. Katharine has served on the Women’s Retreat committee and the Racial Equity Task Force, and is a member of the Seasons Bible study. She teaches the Faith Matters Sunday School class and leads the Children’s Worship program (Godly Play). Katharine is passionate about spiritual formation and building inclusive community.

While serving as Knollwood’s Interim Part-Time Minister of Faith Formation and Education, Katharine will continue to lead and oversee Godly Play on the first, third, and fifth Sundays of the month, as well as continue teaching the Faith Matters Sunday School class.

See page 6 for Katharine’s column on “Beginnings.”

Commitment Sunday
Sunday, November 3

Please bring your pledge card to worship on Sunday, Nov. 3, mail it, or email your 2020 pledge information to finance@knollwood.org. This is a confidential communication. Pledge cards are in the pew racks, the Narthex, and Foyer B. You can also download a pledge card here: https://tinyurl.com/y6j6mww

Hunger Emphasis and Ingathering for Crisis Control
Sunday, November 24

Knollwood will host its annual Ingathering of food on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Please bring your filled grocery bags to the chancel area of the church. There will be individuals at the glass narthex doors to assist you.

See page 8 for more details and a list of food items requested.

Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
Sunday, November 24
5:30 PM at Knollwood

Join us as we host this community service of gratitude with its 50+ year history. We will gather with our neighbors for a reception after the service. Please bring canned corn for Crisis Control Ministry. Monetary donations benefit Samaritan Ministries.
An Embarrassing And Delightful Surprise

By BOB SETZER JR.

Recently, I attended a clergy breakfast at a local non-profit. What happened next proved a bit embarrassing.

The able, enthusiastic executive director proceeded to take our band of a dozen clergy on a tour of the agency’s facility. The first stop was a warehouse where stores of food were stacked. The executive director explained that many churches receive a needed item of food each month, say, green beans or cereal. At Knollwood, look for the baskets in the narthex, by the chapel, and in the lobby of Building B where donations of peanut butter are received.

As the group lingered in the warehouse, our leader then said, “By far, the largest single donation of food we get each year is from Knollwood. They have a Sunday Ingathering where we back up our truck to their door, and they fill it up.” I permitted myself a small smile and soon the group moved on.

Our next stop was a large, amply-stocked food pantry, arranged like a grocery store, where guests can select the food that best meets their needs. The executive director nodded over at some hygiene kits, carefully stacked to the side. “The Knollwood Youth Group came over and packaged those for us,” she said. And when we passed the cereal aisle, our host added, “A lot of area preschools participate in our cereal drive. The Knollwood Preschool has done that for years.”

This is when I started feeling a little self-conscious. Thankfully, the executive director soon gratefully acknowledged all the partners who give so willingly to support this ministry.

Later, during the tour, I ran into two Knollwood volunteers, cheerfully assisting that day’s guests. And I was at this event in part because a Knollwood member of the agency’s board asked me to attend.

Then the executive director said, “The daughter of our founder works here as a volunteer. Sometimes, I ask her, ‘How are we doing?’ And I’m always pleased to hear her say, ‘We’re doing great! Daddy would be proud.’”

You guessed it. The daughter of the agency’s founder is a Knollwood member.

My visit to this important ministry center was a powerful reminder of what I often tell people about Knollwood: “Part of what makes Knollwood so special is not just the outpouring of generosity, service, and love that comes in and through the church, but also all the ways one finds Knollwoodians quietly serving throughout the community: in their chosen professions, in their volunteer service, and in their leadership and investment in a host of non-profits throughout the city.”

In our church’s ministry plan, a.k.a., the church budget, more than two dozen ministry partners are listed. Ten percent of the offerings our church receives (unless otherwise designated) are given to those mission partners in support of their vital work. But in addition to this tithe of our financial resources, Knollwoodians are also invested in most of those partnerships through leadership, volunteer service, and periodic mission projects.

I’m grateful our church gives generously of our financial resources to the work of God’s kingdom. But I’m also grateful the money is but a sign of a larger and even more significant contribution: the gift of ourselves.

Blessings,

Bob
Celebrating Diane Lipsett

On Wednesday night, Oct. 23, and at the close of the worship service on Sunday, Oct. 27, Dr. Diane Lipsett was honored for her nearly five years of service to our church. A love offering for Diane is being received; please designate your check or online gift, “Love Offering for Diane.”

Photos by Stephen Ball and Alicia Freimuth

Overflow Shelter Opens December 1

We at Knollwood have been key partners in this work since the women’s shelter opened 7 years ago. St. Timothy's Episcopal Church hosts the shelter in partnership with City with Dwellings. This is Winston-Salem’s only women’s Overflow Homeless Shelter for the four coldest months of winter. We are looking for new and veteran Knollwood volunteers to join the effort to make this shelter a safe, warm, community building place. Volunteer sign-ups can be found at http://signup.com/go/sttimsoverflow2019. For more information contact Corinne Causby at corinny@gmail.com

AMONG OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our prayers and support are offered to Jade Mims in the hospital, and Bob Yarbrough in rehabilitation.

We continue to remember Melanie Wilkinson, “Hoagy” Carmichael, and Judy Williams, who were released from the hospital.

Our deepest sympathy is expressed to Josh Godwin and family on the loss of his great-aunt Grace Holland Burton, in Charlotte.

Bill Poole on the death of his cousin, Trei Hrabar, age 30, in California.

Ben, Sam, and Ivan Holleman and families, on the death of their mother, Marjorie Holleman, Oct. 5.

John and Pam Boehme on the Oct. 7 death of their infant grandson Cayden. The grieving parents are Austin and Lara Boehme.

Helen Webb on the death of her nephew, Barry Walker.

Congratulations to Emily and Andy Dothard on the birth of Eleanor (Ella) Elizabeth Dothard, Sept. 29. Ella’s grandparents are Mark and Mary Hix.

We also offer congratulations to Gary and Margaret Herring on the birth of their granddaughter, Louise Herring, Sept. 22.

NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is published monthly by Knollwood Baptist Church.

KBC Photographer: Stephen Ball
Preparing for Advent at Knollwood

By ROZANNA GOOCYE AND SYLVIA MARVELLI

Minister of Music Advent Coordinator

“A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” Isaiah 11:1

This Advent, you’ll notice that our sanctuary wreaths look a little different than those of previous years. This year, the wreaths will be adorned with bare tree branches, and these branches remind us of two promises that the church foregrounds throughout Advent: the need for Christians to prepare our spirits for the coming of God and that God does indeed come and dwell in places that are deserted but prepared.

As we pray for God to come among us this Advent, these bare branches on our sanctuary wreaths should remind us that we must actively work to make room for the Christ Child by pruning the excess from our lives. We must become barren and empty, like winter trees and Mary’s spirit, which was empty of pride and self-sufficiency. We empty ourselves of these things so that we can be filled with the humility and love of Christ, the true power of the Divine.

And that is the second challenge and promise of Advent. Just as bare branches will sprout beautiful foliage when the appropriate season has arrived, we hold confidently to the promise that our soul, too, laid bare before the world and God, will produce spiritual fruit in its season. God will come and reside among those who are humble and contrite.

The Hebrew scriptures which Christ fulfilled provide us with a firm foundation for this hope. We know that God will come to dwell in our barrenness, because the Almighty came to the people of Israel, to Sarah, Elizabeth, and Mary. The Prophet Isaiah proclaimed it most succinctly,

For thus says the high and lofty one
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the humble,
and to revive the heart of the contrite.

As you prepare your spirit this Advent at Knollwood, consider your own life. How can you create room for Jesus’ coming? How might you look inward and anticipate the fullness of life that is to come?

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday School for all ages .......... 9:45 AM
Worship Service ......................... 10:55 AM
Knollwood Brass rehearsal .......... 8:45 AM
Knollchat ................................... 9:15 AM
HS Handbells .............................. 4:00 PM
Youth Choir ................................ 4:45 PM
Chancel Bells ............................... 5:45 PM
Youth Fun and Food ..................... 5:45 PM
Sunday Night Youth Group .......... 6:45 PM

SUNDAY AUDIO RECORDINGS

Dr. Bob’s Sunday sermons are available online at knollwood.org. Recorded worship services are available on CD for $1.

Contact the church office, 336-725-1343, or frontdesk@knollwood.org.
Family Retreat/Family Growth

By CHRISSY HARDY
Children's Ministry Associate

When I started in this role at Knollwood, one of my visions was for an overnight family retreat. I knew the power of being away from campus for an extended period of time, of sharing meals and playing games together and worshipping together in a space that feels holy and separate from our everyday routines.

The first year I was hoping that we would have 10 families come so we could meet our minimum for the camp. This year, we have almost 90 people signed up to travel an hour away to Camp Mundo Vista. There will be meals and games and worship – all the things that were a part of my first vision for this event.

What I could not have imagined then was the ways that this retreat would change our community. Each year I've noticed that after the retreat, the conversations in the lobby outside the gym and in the hallway leading into Sunday School are richer and deeper because of the time we spent together. I was hoping for individual growth and for family growth, and I believe that those things happen, but what I think I love the most is the growth that happens within this community.

This year, Josh, Rozanna, Katharine and I are all four helping to lead the retreat. The pews on Nov. 17 that are usually filled with families will be a bit emptier. But if things feel different at Knollwood that morning, I want you to know that they'll be different when we return, too. Because we'll all come back a little more connected – to the Spirit, to our families and to each other. Be praying for us.

Fire Safety and Our Children

By LUCRECIA NORMAN
Minister to Senior Adults & Weekday Preschool

During the month of October, TTWS celebrated Fire Safety Week with a visit from our local fire fighters. The fire fighters taught the children when to stop, drop, and roll. They learned not to be afraid of the firefighters when they are wearing their gear and oxygen masks, and were shown what tools are used for fighting fires.
Summarizing the content:

**Beginnings**

*By Katharine Martin*

In 2003, I began my first year at Wake Forest University Divinity School. Brent and I were newly married and had just moved into our first house on Watson Avenue in Ardmore. Leaving half-unpacked boxes in every room, and feeling the thrill of several new beginnings all at once, I drove to my first class of my first seminary semester: Introduction to the New Testament. Diane Lipsett was my professor.

Throughout Divinity School and ever since, Diane has been a mentor to me. She has taught me what healthy relationship with the Bible looks like: hard-working attention to how, when, and by whom its diversity of books was written; reverence for the justice, hope, and love proclaimed by its scripture; and always, always, rigorously careful speech about our inspired and inspiring Good Book. Diane has demonstrated to me conscientious dedication to equipping her fellow Christians, in the words of the prophet Micah’s injunction, *to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly (Study Bible in hand) with God*. Diane has shown me, by her own humble example, how to love God and love people, and how to put this love into practice as part of a ministry staff.

Diane Lipsett’s contributions to faith formation ministries at our church over the past almost five years are invaluable. I have been moved, inspired, and enlightened on countless occasions by the Wednesday night programs, Sunday School electives, and other special faith formation events she has helped bring to the Knollwood community. Her work has mattered profoundly and has energized and enhanced faith formation in our congregation.

I feel very fortunate to begin this interim period with such a strong foundation for faith formation and adult education securely in place. Diane and the Faith Formation and Education Committee have facilitated life-giving and edifying programs throughout the church year and supported Sunday School classes and Small Groups with care. My intention, as we begin the next chapter of this ministry, is to continue the steady nurturance of programs and practices that support faith formation and education at Knollwood.

I look forward to offering my ministry gifts, as well as my energy and passion for spiritual formation. I believe that both Bible study and contemplative spiritual practices invigorate, and indeed enable, the active involvement in social justice work to which we are called. I am eager to collaborate with the Faith Formation and Education Committee to plan enriching Wednesday night programs, and I happily anticipate working with Adult Sunday School teachers and Small Group leaders to ensure the vitality of these critically important communities of spiritual growth.

As I now feel the thrill of this new beginning, I am deeply grateful for the chance to serve with you, glory be to God.
Wednesday Night Programming

NOVEMBER 6
AMOS Health and Hope - Tonight we welcome back respected missionary partners from Nicaragua whose broad health care initiative continues to develop community leaders to improve the health of vulnerable people in need.

NOVEMBER 13
Envisioning Missions – with Knollwood’s Missional Support Team and Dean Clifford, chair

NOVEMBER 20
Ministry Plan Presentation for 2020 by Knollwood’s finance committee

DECEMBER 4
Crafting Advent Traditions – an Intergenerational Advent experience with Chrissy Hardy, Katharine Martin, and many artistic helpers

DECEMBER 11
The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant – an Intergenerational Advent experience led by Knollwood’s children, Chrissy Hardy, and other ministers

DECEMBER 18
Christmas Jazz and Service of Remembrance

Walking with Jesus on a Journey of Generosity

By GARY HERRING
Stewardship Committee Chair

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me” he said to him and Matthew got up and followed him. ~Matthew 9:9

Over the past few weeks you have seen footprints leading outward from our sanctuary and other areas. You have read writings from fellow members and listened to a sermon by Dr. Bob - all expanding on the meaning of those footprints for our lives and the ministry of Knollwood. Our children have been learning about stewardship through the children’s time in worship and Kids Connect. It is now time for us as a congregation to decide how we will continue to grow and answer Jesus’s call just as Matthew answered Jesus’ call.

The practice of generosity is a faith discipline. Growing in generosity is the mark of a developing faith and deeper walk with Christ. Margaret and I were drawn to Knollwood because we found a church where members acted out their faith through missions and being genuine disciples of Christ. We were seeking to be involved in something that really matters in our community. We found a congregation seeking to be fed spiritually and to actively engage the world where its deepest needs met with our abilities to be a difference for good.

Our campaign theme this year is “Walking with Jesus on a Journey of Generosity”. Our walk gets to the heart of the matter. God is working through us and the things we do to make a positive change in the world. Every time you give, that gift becomes both ministry and mission.

We are inviting you to take the next step in your journey with Jesus. This may mean you take the first step toward generosity by beginning to give regularly. It may be a commitment to increase your giving by $1 a day. Others farther along in their journey may consider increasing their giving by 1% of their income. No matter the amount, the gifts we bring allow good things to happen.

The Stewardship Committee asks that you challenge yourself to that deeper faith discipline that leads to Generosity and make a commitment on Nov. 3.

Faith In the City

Tuesday November 5
Noon-1 PM

Rev. Dr. Paul Robeson Ford, pastor of First Baptist Church, Highland Avenue, will share theological reflections on equity in light of local disparities in education. The gathering will also invite discussion of a significant and well-attended Oct. 10 event that featured New York Times Magazine investigative journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones.

Knollwood Baptist Church offers this monthly series of conversations, running October-May on the first Tuesday. These gatherings will invite participants to deepen community conversations about complex issues and find ways to work together to address injustices that might seem overwhelming to us as individuals. The lunch series is free and open to the public. Bring a bagged lunch. We will provide beverages and desserts.

Bldg. B, Dining Room

Rev. Dr. Paul Robeson Ford
Hunger Emphasis in November

By BRENT MARTIN
Chair, Missions Affiliations and Allocations Committee

The problem of hunger is significant in Forsyth County, ranking as one of the worst in the nation. Our 2019 mission allocations include several items targeting local food needs: $9,200 for Crisis Control, $3,500 for Samaritan Ministries, $5,000 for Second Harvest Food Bank.

However, the needs are far greater than this. You can make a difference and have a direct impact on hunger, both locally and internationally, by contributing money to our World Hunger Offering and nonperishable food items to our annual ingathering for Crisis Control.

WORLD HUNGER OFFERING
Throughout November, please consider making a special offering beyond your normally budgeted gifts by simply noting “World Hunger Offering” on a donation check and dropping it into the offering plate or at the church office.

These funds are divided and distributed through two channels:

Locally: Samaritan Ministries provides the only seven-day-a-week soup kitchen in Forsyth County. In 2018, the Samaritan Kitchen served 144,889 meals.

Internationally: Baptist World Aid, funded through the Baptist World Alliance, feeds the starving and malnourished, especially in countries suffering from drought and food shortages. For over 80 years, these funds have been used to provide food, medicines and medical equipment and to support agricultural and educational projects.

INGATHERING FOR CRISIS CONTROL
Grocery bags will be handed out after worship services on Nov. 10 and 17 and after dinner on Wednesday nights, Nov. 13 and 20. On the bags will be a list of non-perishable food items in particularly short supply at Crisis Control (also listed at left). Please return your filled bags to the chancel area of the church on Sunday, Nov. 24.

Please bring your donation to the chancel area on Sunday, Nov. 24.

KNOLLWOOD INGATHERING
for Crisis Control Ministries
Sunday, November 24

Regular-sized packages, no glass jars, please

☐ Saltine Crackers
☐ Canned Fruit
  Applesauce, pineapple, peaches etc.
☐ Canned Greens
  Collards, Kale, Mixed Greens, etc.
☐ Canned Meats
  Salmon, Ham, Roast Beef, Tuna, Chicken
☐ Juice
☐ Baking items
☐ Yams or Sweet Potatoes

Please use this list as a guide only. Crisis Control is happy to receive any food collected, as well as cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items.

Please bring your donation to the chancel area on Sunday, Nov. 24.
Looking for discussion, friendship and growth?

We have small group options.

Monday Morning Men
Mondays • 7-8 AM - This weekly gathering of men, mostly in late career stages or early retirement, discusses current events, reflects on the Christian life, and supports one another. 380 Knollwood Street, Ste. 700. Contact Chip Mims, cpmims3@gmail.com

Companions in Christ
Mondays, 10 noon
Please contact Evalynn Davis, eb.davis@yadtel.net, or Melanie Wilkinson, melanie.o.wilkinson@gmail.com for information about upcoming opportunities

Enneagram I
2nd and 4th Mondays
6 – 7:30 PM • Sept. 9 – May 11
D102, WCC

Enneagram II
2nd and 4th Tuesdays
2-4 PM • Sept. 10 – May 12
D102, WCC, Contact Melanie Wilkinson, 254-715-0073, or melanie.o.wilkinson@gmail.com.

Daytime Book Group
2nd Mondays • 1-3 PM
In 2019-20, this group will resume discussing books exploring interfaith understanding and social awareness. All are welcome. Held in Bldg. A. in the seating area near the resource center, Contact Dean Clifford, cliffordconsult@mindspring.com

Evening Women’s Book Club
3rd Mondays
Women of a wide range of ages meet monthly in homes to discuss contemporary fiction and non-fiction. Come join the lively discussions. Contact Judith Kuhn, judithkuhn44@gmail.com

Tuesday Morning Women’s Bible Study
Tuesdays • 7-9 AM – This supportive group gathers weekly for Bible study, starting with an early morning breakfast. Meeting in group members’ homes, they support each other through life’s many changes. Contact Dean Clifford, cliffordconsult@mindspring.com

Racial Self-Awareness Small Group
A book study is under way this fall of Robin DiAngelo’s “White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism.” Due to the high level of interest, two groups are meeting, each for four sessions. Contact Lisa Sykes, lisa@dogwoodmicro.com, or Jeff Stallings, stallingsj@triad.rr.com for more information.

Relationship Matters
Couples in committed long-term relationships meet once a month to work on communication and couple intimacy skills. Two groups are currently meeting with leaders Chuck and Renée Hinson, who have been trained through BetterMarriages.org. Although the groups are currently full, couples interested in joining a group in January or February 2020 may contact Chuck and Renée, chuck@thehinsongroup.com or renee@thehinsongroup.com

Wednesday Morning Women’s Bible Study
7:30-9 AM – This group shares life, laughter, and Bible study, meeting in groups members’ homes. Contact Rachel Wiggins, rdwiggins21@gmail.com or Diana Long, dlong1221@gmail.com

Seasons: Bible Study for Moms of Young Children
2nd and 4th Wednesdays • 9:30-11 AM
Sponsored by the Knollwood Children’s Ministry, this reflective group of younger moms meets to study the Bible and share life. Knollwood Bldg. C. Contact Chrissy Hardy, chrissy@knollwood.org

Women and the Word: Bible Study for Moms
1st and 3rd Tuesdays • 7:30-9 PM
Sponsored by the Knollwood Children’s Ministry, this group offers event Bible study and discussion for moms. Contact Chrissy Hardy, chrissy@knollwood.org

Welcome New Members
Teresa and Drew Hinkle with Holden
615 Valleybrook Lane
Winston-Salem, 27104
teresambeck@gmail.com
sanford.hinkle@gmail.com

Brian and Megan White with Owen
360 Lewisville Trails Rd
Lewisville, 27023
brian@thirdemember.com
meganpwhite@gmail.com
WELLNESS & COMMUNITY CENTER

WCC WALKING TRACK

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<tr>
<td>MONDAY</td>
<td>8 AM - 8 PM</td>
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SUNDAY
8 AM-12:30 PM  
Closed during worship
1:30-4 PM
Open to congregation by request
Call (336) 496-0403 for building access during this time slot only.
4:30-6 PM - Cub Scouts
1st/3rd Sundays
6:30-8 PM - KBC Organized Men's Pick-Up Basketball
1st/3rd Sundays

MONDAY
9 AM-12 PM - TTWS Play
7-8 PM - KBC Members Pickleball

TUESDAY
8-11 AM - Open Pickleball
10:30 AM-12 PM - TTWS Play
10:45-11:45 AM - Gentle Yoga (D102)
4:30-6:30 PM - Open Pickleball
6-7 PM - Yoga (Bldg C)

WEDNESDAY
9 AM-12 PM - TTWS Play

THURSDAY
8-11 AM - Open Pickleball
10:30 AM-12 PM - TTWS Play
4:30-6:30 PM - Open Pickleball

FRIDAY
9 AM-12 PM - TTWS Play
8 AM-5 PM - Walking Track Open

For the full schedule in grid form, please go to www.knollwood.org/wellness

Arts & Hearts Ministry Fall Schedule

REGISTER FOR CLASSES ONLINE:
www.knollwood.org/arts

Kids' Lunch & Art
with Guest Artist Betsy Messick for Kindergarten through 5th grade
Sunday • 12-1:30 PM
November 3 (leaves)
December 1 (stars)
Bring a bag lunch to eat before we begin learning and creating together.

Zentangle® Beyond the Basics with Sylvia Marvelli
Thursday, November 7 • 6:30 - 8 PM
If you have previously attended a Zentangle® workshop please join us to explore some new tangles and create beautiful images. All materials will be provided.

Holiday Appetizers with Mary Cutler
November 11 • 7-9 PM
Learn to prepare holiday appetizers with an emphasis on presentation. Dining Room, Bldg. B

Pottery - Clay for Christmas with Rodney Stilwell & Pam Boehme
Thursday, November 14 • 6:30-8:30 PM
We’ll learn to use clay to make ornaments of angels and stars that can hang in our homes or be shared as gifts. After the class, our ornaments will be fired and ready in time for the Advent season. Ages 16 and up; class maximum: 16

Vivid Colored Pencil Magic with Ann Cooper
Every Thursday • 2:30 PM
No Registration, just show up. Come learn technique for getting smooth, vivid color from colored pencils. First, you will learn and practice the technique, then produce a small work of art with our Prismacolor pencils. All materials will be provided.

A Flower Arrangement Demonstration with Jennifer Davis
Sunday, November 3 • 2 PM
Come watch as Jennifer talks through her process of making flower arrangements. Learn tips for your own holiday arrangements.

Kids' Lunch & Art with Guest Artist Betsy Messick for Kindergarten through 5th grade
Songs of the Soul

By JOSH GODWIN
Minister of Youth and Recreation

Music has been a large part of my life. I do not claim to be a musician by any stretch, especially with so many excellent and esteemed virtuosos in our community here at Knollwood. Nevertheless, I made music in wind ensembles and other instrumental groups throughout my adolescence. Before that, my parents raised me in a house filled with music from their very distinct, and somewhat opposite, tastes. My mom is a singer and was our tiny church’s go-to soloist, so between her singing along to the radio, my brother and I would hear her practicing the song she would sing that Sunday morning.

Music was to my growing up like a root is to a vine; it enlivened me and pushed me to grow, connecting me to the surrounding world. I loved the symphony of music I grew up in, with a variety of sources and genres, because it taught me how music reaches us in places inaccessible by other means.

This fall, our youth group has been moving our way through Psalms, reading the lyrical words written by composers long gone. A treasured collection of poetic hymns, the book of Psalms is a rich source of emotion in our scriptural readings. The psalmists let out their emotions, often in messy and jarring ways, in honest conversations with God. With the youth, we talk about how they resonate with us in the present, helping us process thoughts, emotions, and happenings in our lives.

It’s true we don’t have a tune or any musical accompaniment for them, but still the rhythm of the lyrics underlie the potent poetry encountered in the psalms. The poetic words help us process our own emotions and help us encounter God in the circumstances of our lives.

So far we’ve touched on blessing, anxiety, comfort, and fear. These have been brave conversations from our folks, themselves up to talk freely and powerfully about topics often passed over the heads of young people by we adults. Our youth are boldly willing to engage their fears alongside their peers and contemplating what it means to be confident in God’s presence but also genuine in naming their ongoing fear.

These psalms, and all the hundred or so others we won’t be able to get into, are songs of our souls. Written millennia ago by people seeking God in the midst of their celebrations, their worries, their fears, and their joys, they retain this spiritual linkage that connects us to the Divine today. They are poetic paths for us to walk alongside God and one another, opening up our conversations to honestly share. It is a privilege to be alongside our young people who are willing to engage in these sometimes scary, often enriching conversations.
Knollwood Baptist Church is an inviting, inclusive family of faith open to all persons, whatever their race, gender, socioeconomic status, special needs, or sexual orientation, who want to walk in the way of Jesus.

Weekend Minister on Call

Please call 336-283-5067 if you have a pastoral emergency on a weekend.