

Children's Ministry at Decatur Presbyterian, 2016-2017

Register your child for the 2016-2017 school year [here](#). We look forward to getting to know more about you and your family. Don't hesitate to contact [Jamie Butcher](#), Director of Children's Ministry, with any concerns or questions.

Sunday School, 9:15am to 10:10am

Nursery, 3 month-olds to 2-year-olds, Bradley Building, Room 204

Our professional childcare workers will make you and your babies/toddlers feel at home! Ask for a copy of our [nursery brochure at](#) check in.

Toddlers, rising 3-year-olds (2 by September of new school year) to 4-year-olds, Bradley Building, Room 207

With professional Childcare workers, beginner's Bible stories, and simple songs, your little ones will feel loved and cared for in this class.

Pre-K and Kindergarten, Bradley Building, Room 205

With dedicated teachers, preschool curriculum, crafts, and music, your preschoolers will enjoy learning about Jesus and the Bible.

1st to 3rd Grades, first floor of McGeachy Building, Room 109

4th and 5th Grades, first floor of McGeachy Building, Room 103

A large group opening offers music, skits and prayer to introduce the lesson for the day. Classes will split for hands-on learning. The accompanying document has more on our Sparkhouse curriculum, Sunday School teachers, and ways to get involved.

CAMPUS NOTES: The **Bradley Building** may be better known as Decatur Presbyterian Children's Community Building. Enter Bradley building through any doors off of the Church Street parking lot. Please note the change in location for the Nursery. We are no longer located across the street in the Sycamore Building.

The first floor of the **McGeachy Building** may be better known as the music floor. Enter through the awning doors off of Church Street and take an immediate left to go downstairs. Or come through the Fellowship Hall off of the Church Street parking lot. Please note the change in location from the top floor of McGeachy.

For the parents- Who doesn't love a fresh cup of joe? The Children's Committee has one for you! Coffee carts are placed in the preschool and upper grades hallways for you to enjoy. We hope you linger over your cup to peek in on one of our classes or take a minute to get to know some of the other families with children. Adult classes are available during the Sunday School hour with many options for spiritual formation.

Worship, 10:30am to 11:30am

Children are welcome in worship at DPC. Located in the front pew and narthex, worship bags are available to help children learn more about and feel comfortable in the worship environment. Also check out our Family Workshops held throughout the school year. Sessions such as "Let's Talk about Lent" and "Let's Talk about the Sacraments" equip parents and children for more meaningful worship.

Children's Chapel is an interactive worship experience for Pre-K to 2nd grades. Children engage the Bible stories through a variety of activities: storytelling, music, prayer, arts and crafts, and movement. Children's Chapel is meaningful worship at the same time that it is preparation for worship with the wider congregation. Check out the accompanying document for more information.

Children leave for Children's Chapel following the Children's Moment in the Sanctuary. Check in your child by signing the notebook on the front pew or by placing an identification sticker on your child. ID stickers are found in the friendship pads or pew racks. Check out is in the Children's Ministry Room 109 on lower McGeachy. If this is your first time, don't hesitate to ask someone for help navigating the hallways!

Nursery and Toddlers continue with professional caregivers during the worship hour in Bradley Building rooms 204 and 205. See Sunday School description for details. Our professional Childcare workers will make you and your babies/toddlers feel at home!

Safety and Hospitality

DPC strives to be a tree nut- and peanut-free campus. Please alert us to any allergies at registration and with check in. We provide a snack of Goldfish for children in 2/3s and Children's Chapel.

DPC follows a Child and Youth Protection Policy adopted by its Session. To learn more about our code of conduct and commitment to a safe and healthy environment for our children, read the policy at the end of this handbook.

Wednesday Nights, 4:15pm to 7:15pm

Join us for a family-friendly meal, amazing choir for children, and fun programming for all ages.

Dinner with child-friendly options, served from 5:00—6:15pm
Together Time 6:15—6:30pm

Children's Choirs and Kid's Club

Cricket Choir, PreK & Kindergarten, 4:15—4:45pm

Carol Choir, 1st and 2nd Grades, 4:45—5:15pm

Chapel Choir, 3rd—5th Grades, 5:20—6:05pm

Choirs meet on the 1st floor of McGeachy Building, Room 111. Contact Director of Children's Choirs, Lori McMahan, lmcmahan@dpchurch.org to sign up.

Kid's Club, 1st to 5th Grades, 6:35-7:15pm

KC meets on the 1st floor of McGeachy Building, Room 109 for fun-filled activities and meaningful fellowship.

Nursery, Kindergarten and under, 4:15pm to 7:15pm

Professional childcare workers care for our younger children in Bradley Room 205.

Adult Growth and Learning, 6:35pm to 7:15pm, Fellowship Hall

Interested in more detailed information on Children's Choirs and Kid's Club? Check out the accompanying document.

Youth Bible study, 7:45pm (in homes)

Campus notes: The first floor of the **McGeachy Building** may be better known as the music floor. Enter through the awning doors off of Church Street and take an immediate left to go downstairs. Or come through the Fellowship Hall off of the Church Street parking lot. Please note the change in location from the top floor of McGeachy.

MORE INFORMATION

Children's Ministry at Decatur Presbyterian, 2016–2017

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Our Teachers:

Valuing an intergenerational approach to Children's Ministry, the teachers in DPC's classrooms are young adults, parents, empty nesters and seniors. Teachers are trained at the beginning of the year to engage children, utilize curriculum, and maintain high standards of safety and hospitality. Quarterly teacher support sessions offer support on an ongoing basis. We are grateful to God these folks share their gifts with our community in this way.

Pre-K and Kindergarten (Bradley Room 205): Lucia Sizemore, Catherine Carter with Laura Candler Hampton

1st to 3rd Grade (McGeachy Room 109): Hikia Allen and Mary Ann Allen

4th to 5th Grade (McGeachy Room 103): Julie Harris, Sarah Connors, with Tom Adams

Service, Art and Drama Projects: Frank Mastrogiacomo, and Nancy Weitnauer

Music: Lori McMahan

Children's Chapel (pick up in McGeachy Room 109): Jamie Butcher and Lori McMahan

Our Childcare Workers:

At DPC, we take seriously the well-being of your toddlers and infants. Our professional childcare workers come with years of experience, background checks, receive First Aid/CPR training, and follow the Child and Youth Safety Policy. This year we are privileged to work with teachers who spend their weekdays at DPCC, College Heights, and Henry County School System. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions or share any concerns, by e-mailing Jamie Butcher, jbutcher@dpchurch.org

Nursery (Bradley Room 204): Nigist Woldegiyorgis, Emily Howell, and Gerlynn Henry.

Toddlers (Bradley Room 207): Natasha Poole, Kari Rheney, and Kelsey Rheney.

Our Topics:

Sunday School - Spark Activate Faith takes children on a journey through the Bible with key stories from the Old and New Testaments. Every Spark lesson follows a four-part sequence: Gather, Open the Bible, Activate Faith, and Send. Each week, kids and their leaders gather together to explore their Bibles, enjoy fun activities, pray, and grow in faith. In addition to the important stories of Jesus at Advent and Holy Week, this year's lessons include a three-part series on the 10 Commandments, a look at the Woman at the Well, and a study of Jesus' blessing of the children. More information can be found at www.wearesparkhouse.org.

Children's Chapel - Godly Play is a Montessori style approach to religious education. Children engage fundamental Bible stories through multi-sensory learning, imagination, and play. Children's Chapel is meaningful worship at the same time that it is preparation for worship with the wider congregation. It is a theologically sound and developmentally appropriate way for equipping children to articulate their own language of faith. Visit DPC's Children's Library to check out *Young Children and Worship*, by Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman.

Kid's Club- Kid's Club on Wednesday evenings is an easy-going time full of fun, fellowship and service. This year, we'll explore the series "Surprise! Stories of Discovering Jesus" while committing to one service project a month. Kid's Club meets in McGeachy Room 109.

Our Choirs:

The objective of the children's choir program is to instill an appreciation for music and singing, teach responsibility, confidence, independence, and the importance of church involvement, and to usher children into the presence of God.

Led by Lori McMahan, Director of DPC's Children's Choirs and teacher at DPCC, the children's choirs provide music for Sunday worship about once a month and for special services (i.e., Easter, Christmas Eve) throughout the year. All are welcome and encouraged to join one of our choirs.

For Parents:

We are glad you and your family are a part of Children's Ministry at DPC! Parents have so many decisions to make with and for their children these days: how to pack a lunch, what to do after school, when to let them get on screens. By choosing to be involved with Children's Ministry at Decatur Presbyterian, you've made a good choice for your child. You're connecting her to her community, helping him deepen relationships, nurturing in her a sense of empathy, and grounding him in moral principals. Also, you are surrounding your child with people who have made baptismal vows to love and teach him/her about God's great love. Way to go, parents!

Here are some tips for the year:

Stay involved: Follow up with your child at home. Every Sunday your child will bring home leaflets from Sunday School and/or activity bags from Worship/Children's Chapel. Explore these with your child. Encourage their questions and share stories of your own.

Stay engaged: Learn more about the families and children of DPC by volunteering as a teacher, greeter, or supporter on Sunday mornings. Contact [Jamie Butcher](#) for more information.

Stay connected: Sign up for our [bi-weekly newsletter](#) and log on to our [Shutterfly site](#)

Decatur Presbyterian Church Child-Youth Protection Policy

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Decatur Presbyterian Church Child-Youth Protection Policy

Introduction and Purpose

As people who seek to live the commandment to “let the children come” (Matthew 19:14), the members of Decatur Presbyterian Church take seriously the importance of providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children and youth participating in the activities and programs of DPC.

With the establishment of this Child-Youth Protection Policy, Decatur Presbyterian Church is setting an example and taking a stand against the child abuse, neglect, and exploitation that breaks the relationships and trust to which our Church is committed.

The Child-Youth Protection Policy is intended to protect the children in our Church community, the adult volunteers and employees who work with them, and the Church itself.

The Policy establishes standards and procedures for:

- Supervision of and interaction with children and youth
- Screening and training volunteers and staff
- Reporting of and responding to suspicious or inappropriate activity

This Policy seeks to be practical and reasonable – relying upon sound judgement and good sense – while at the same time ensuring that necessary safeguards are in place to protect our children and youth.

Scope and Applicability

The Child-Youth Protection Policy applies to all Decatur Presbyterian Church staff and any Church member or non-member volunteer working with children or youth.

Covered activities and programs – both on and off church premises – include but are not limited to: Sunday School classes, Extended Care, Youth fellowship programs, nursery, Decatur Presbyterian Children’s Community, Vacation Bible School, music camp, children and youth choirs, church-sponsored retreats and mission trips, Sunshine Summer, and confirmation mentoring.

Guidelines for Interacting with Children and Youth

Code of Conduct

Decatur Presbyterian Church expects that all staff and volunteers with children and youth will exemplify Christ's love of children in all that they do and will offer a healthy and positive Christian role model. DPC employees and volunteers:

1. Will support and promote spiritual and emotional growth and development in their interactions with children and youth.
2. Will provide proper supervision and exercise sound judgment in maintaining a safe environment at all times.
3. Will observe the Two-Adult Policy as documented in the Child-Youth Protection Policy and will avoid one-on-one situations with a child or youth except in emergency or pre-approved situations.
4. Will respect the rights of children and youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and will discourage children from touching one another in an inappropriate manner.
5. Will be alert to possible signs of abuse to children participating in church programs and immediately report any suspicions to the staff person responsible for the program.
6. Will not verbally, emotionally, physically, or sexually abuse children.
7. Will not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
8. Will use physical restraint only when necessary to protect the child or others from harm and will report circumstances to the child's parent or guardian or the staff person responsible for the program.
9. Will release children only to adults authorized by the child's parent or guardian.
10. Will not possess or use illegal drugs or alcohol or smoke or use tobacco during church programs for children and youth.
11. Will not supervise children or youth in the event judgment and ability is impaired by legally prescribed medication.
12. Will not engage in profanity, inappropriate language or jokes, or any kind of harassment in the presence of children, youth, or parents.
13. Will not share inappropriate details of their personal life or ask children or youth to share inappropriate details through written, verbal, or electronic communication.
14. Will not date youth program participants.
15. Will give gifts only on a group basis or for specific occasions (e.g., baptism, confirmation, birthday, graduation). Giving gifts to individual

children or youth should be done only with the knowledge and permission of parents.

Two-Adult Policy

At least two adults, as defined below, should supervise all church-sponsored programs and activities involving children and youth whether on or off campus. Adults should make every reasonable effort to remain in sight of one another at all times except in emergency situations and when circumstances demand otherwise.

One adult in any program for children and youth at Decatur Presbyterian must be at least 21 years of age and at least five years older than the oldest program participant. The second adult present in these situations may be 18 years old and a high school graduate. In any one-on-one situation outlined in this policy, the adult must be at least 21 years old.

High school youth who are 15 years old or older may function as in the role of the second adult provided they have been through a child safety training designed for high school youth by the staff person responsible for the program. This training should educate them on child abuse prevention and reporting procedures, as well as any other information necessary for their particular leadership role.

Adults should make every reasonable effort to avoid being in a one-child, one-adult situation. When one-on-one interactions between children and youth and employee/volunteers are necessary (e.g. in emergency situations or occasions of pastoral care or mentoring as described under Specific Situations below), care must be taken to conduct the meeting in an environment that provides visibility by other adults. Another adult must have knowledge of the employee/volunteer's whereabouts and with whom they are meeting.

With youth in Sunday School, two adults should be present whenever possible. However, one adult may teach 6th grade or above as long as there is more than one youth present in the class. If only one youth is present, the class should combine with another group.

Specific Situations

Transportation

Adult leaders should make every reasonable effort to avoid being alone in a vehicle with a child or youth. However, it is permissible for one adult driver to transport several children and youth in a vehicle in a convoy of vehicles traveling to or from an event.

If it is necessary for a child to get home after an event and circumstances dictate that a volunteer, staff member, or intern take the child home, an effort should be made to contact the family and inform them of the situation before transporting

the child. If the parents cannot be reached, another adult should be made aware of the transportation plans and should be contacted once the child is safely home.

Pastoral Care and Mentoring

Sound discretion should be exercised by adult staff and volunteers in one-on-one pastoral care or mentoring situations with children or youth. To avoid the appearance of impropriety, such meetings may take place privately but with others nearby and not isolated from view.

Examples include meeting in a public place, meeting with an open or cracked door, or meeting in a room or office with a clear glass window in the door. Under no circumstances should a door be locked when one adult and one child or youth are alone.

Bathroom Guidelines

Infants and Toddlers

- Diaper changing must always take place in line of sight of another adult.

Kindergarten and Younger

- No child should be sent to the restroom alone.
- When a group of children goes to the restroom together, two adults will escort the children.
- If only one child needs to go to the restroom, one adult caregiver may escort the child to the restroom after informing another adult. The caregiver will wait outside the door and escort the child back to the group. The adult will call the child's name if he or she is taking longer than seems necessary.
- Generally, an adult should not be alone with a child in a restroom. If, however, this is not possible because a child needs assistance, the caregiver should inform another adult of the assistance needed and provided.
- An adult should never go into a stall with a child and shut the door.
- In any circumstances where the bathroom is isolated from the group, when reasonable and practical two adults should escort a child to the restroom.

Elementary School Children

- When a child in this age group needs to use the restroom, an adult should monitor his or her whereabouts.
- If the restroom is isolated from the group, two same sex children may be sent inside together.

Overnight Trips

On overnight trips with children or youth, reasonable boundaries should be in place to respect the privacy of each person. Males and females should sleep in

separate rooms. An adult may sleep in a room with two or more youth of the same sex. An adult should never share a bed with a youth or sleep alone in a room with only one youth.

Under no circumstances can one adult alone take or accompany children or youth on an overnight outing. In addition, two adults who are married to each other should not be the only adult chaperones on any overnight trip.

Screening and Education for Volunteers and Staff

Volunteers and staff will be screened and educated as described below. Results of background checks and self-disclosure statements will be kept strictly confidential.

General Volunteers include individuals volunteering in situations where there will be two or more adults present in the company of children, such as Sunday School Teachers, Vacation Bible School, Extended Care, nursery volunteers and others. All general volunteers:

- Will have been regularly attending DPC for at least 6 months before volunteering with children and youth. Exceptions will be granted only by the approval of the Christian Education Council.
- Will complete an interview with a program staff person or volunteer designated by a staff person. During this interview, the volunteer may be asked to provide background information and references.
- Will complete a Child Protection training and educational event arranged by the Christian Education Council within 3 months of beginning to work with children or youth. Parents of high school-age volunteers should provide written permission for the young person to attend the training as well as written acknowledgement that their child has never been arrested.
- Will acknowledge in writing that they have reviewed, understand, and will comply with the Child and Youth Protection Policy and will verify that they have never been the subject of a formal complaint to governmental authorities such as the police or the Department of Family and Child Services or convicted of a crime against children or a violent crime. The supervising staff person will use his or her best judgment in determining how disclosed information will affect the person's ability to volunteer.
- Will be checked to ensure that he/she is not listed on the sex offender registry.

Overnight and One-on-One Volunteers include individuals volunteering in a position that may include the following situations: any overnight activity with children (e.g., chaperoning camping trips, ski trips, conferences or retreats) and any potential one-on-one activities with a child (e.g., counseling, tutoring, mentoring). All overnight and one-on-one volunteers:

- Will have been a member of DPC for at least 6 months before volunteering with children and youth. Exceptions will be granted only by the approval of the Christian Education Council.
- Will complete an interview with a program staff person or volunteer designated by a staff person. During this interview, the volunteer may be asked to provide background information and references.
- Will complete a Child Protection training and educational event arranged by the Christian Education Council within 3 months of beginning to work with children or youth.
- Will acknowledge in writing that they have reviewed, understand, and will comply with the Child and Youth Protection Policy and will verify that they have never been the subject of a formal complaint to governmental authorities such as the police or the Department of Family and Child Services or convicted of a crime against children or a violent crime.
- Will agree to a national criminal records check and any other background checks that are deemed necessary by the church. Background check information will be reviewed by the direct supervisor and a file maintained by either the Head of Staff or DPCC Director. The supervising staff person will use his or her best judgment in determining how disclosed information will affect the person's ability to volunteer.
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- Will provide a copy of a valid driver's license

Staff and Interns includes all current and prospective employees of the Church and Decatur Presbyterian Children's Community. All interns and paid employees of the Church and Children's Community:

- Will complete a written application and provide personal references.
- Will complete an in-person interview during which the potential staff member will be asked to provide background information and references.
- Will complete a Child Protection training and educational event arranged by the Christian Education Council within 3 months of employment (Parents of high school-age volunteers should provide written permission for the young person to attend the training as well as written acknowledgement that their child has never been arrested).
- Will acknowledge in writing that they have reviewed, understand, and will comply with the Child and Youth Protection Policy and will verify that they have never been the subject of a formal complaint to governmental authorities such as the police or the Department of Family and Child Services or convicted of a crime against children or a violent crime.
- Will agree to a national criminal records check and any other background checks that are deemed necessary by the church. Background check information will be reviewed by the direct supervisor and a file maintained by either the Head of Staff or DPCC Director. The supervising staff person will use his or her best judgment in determining how results of background checks will affect the applicant's employment

- Will provide a copy of a valid driver's license

Reporting and Responding

Allegations

Every employee and volunteer of Decatur Presbyterian Church is expected to report any situation that presents a suspicion that child abuse may have occurred. Such report shall be made within 24 hours to the Director of DPCC, Director of Christian Education or Director of Youth Ministries or other program director, who will report to the Head of Staff. If the allegation is against the Head of Staff, a report should be made to the most senior associate pastor and the clerk of session. They will make sure that policy is followed as outlined in this document.

In the event of an allegation of child abuse, the following procedures shall be followed at Decatur Presbyterian Church:

- Every allegation of abuse shall be taken seriously. Adequate care, respect, and confidentiality shall be offered to alleged victims and perpetrators until the allegation is substantiated or cleared.
- The Head of Staff should report allegations of child abuse to the police department that has jurisdiction and to DFACS as required or necessary. If the allegation involves a report of abuse by a church employee or volunteer or on church property, the Head of Staff should make a report to the church's liability insurance provider and may wish to consult with an attorney.
- If a report is made, parents will be notified unless parents are the alleged abuser or it would pose a risk to the child to inform the parent. Staff members will use their best judgment in revealing the identity of the alleged abuser to parents.
- Written documentation relating to the matter shall be kept in a confidential file. The protection of the child is of primary importance. The Head of Staff will use his or her best judgment in terminating or suspending accused staff members and in the separating of alleged victim and alleged abuser.
- All church employees and volunteers will refer any inquiries regarding the situation to the Head of Staff. The Head of Staff, or his/her designee, shall be the only person authorized to release any information regarding an allegation except where the law requires others to release information, such as to a protective services investigator or a police officer.

Concerns

From time to time, concerns arise regarding the conduct of our children, youth, and adults at DPC that are not clearly abuse related issues but impinge upon

child and youth protection and safety and may require attention and review. Sometimes patterns and trends of a questionable nature may be noticed.

Examples of such concerns might include inappropriate behavior by leaders or participants, unsafe swimming conduct, inappropriate language, dress or leadership, or failure to follow church policy.

All adults, youth and children are encouraged to report any issues as soon as possible to the responsible staff person or Head of Staff as soon as possible. Such notification may be oral.

All concerns reported shall be documented and addressed to ensure the safety and well being of the children and youth. A file of documented concerns shall be maintained by the Head of Staff or his/her designee and shall be reviewed at least annually by the Head of Staff.

Addressing Members Who Are Known Offenders

Decatur Presbyterian Church seeks to embody the love of Christ to all. In addition to requiring us to ensure the safety and nurture of all children and youth, this love requires us to be a place of redemption and grace. Therefore, if a staff member is made aware that a member or visitor is a convicted offender, the Head of Staff should be notified. The Head of Staff should use his or her best judgment in counseling the offender and setting appropriate expectations on that person's life in the community. The Head of Staff should also use his or her judgment in advising other staff members of the offender's presence in the church.

**Decatur Presbyterian Church
Child-Youth Protection Policy**

Acceptance and Affirmation

I have reviewed, understand, and will comply with the Child-Youth Protection Policy of Decatur Presbyterian Church _____ (initial)

I have never been the subject of a formal complaint to governmental authorities such as the police or the Department of Family and Child Services or convicted of a crime against children or a violent crime. _____ (initial)

Printed Name

Signature

Date