

## Worshipping with Children

*At Soapstone UMC, we want families with children to feel genuinely supported from the moment they walk in the door. This includes children of all ages and abilities. Below you'll find the spaces and resources available during Sunday worship.*

*There is no one right way — choose what helps your family be present!*

### Options for Sunday Worship | 8:30 & 11 am

#### **The PrayGround — Front Left Sanctuary Seating ★ NEW — Trial Run beginning June 14**

##### **Geared for age 5 and up, but all are welcome**

A soft, child-friendly space up front, where kids can see and be woven into the heart of worship. Children can engage with God the way children do best: through movement, wonder, and quiet play.

**What you'll find:** quiet, child-safe toys · sensory tools · coloring pages and other activities connected to the liturgical season · a comfortable area to sit and explore. All materials are chosen with intention — to support presence, not just distraction. *Parents and caregivers are welcome to sit in the row of chairs just behind the PrayGround to stay close, or leave the supervision to trusted volunteers.*

#### **Rocking Chairs — Back of the Sanctuary**

Rocking chairs are available at the back of the sanctuary for families who find gentle movement helpful — whether for a fussy infant, a child who needs to wiggle, or a caregiver who just needs a little extra comfort.

#### **The Quiet/Nursing Room — Room 109**

A quiet, lower-stimulation space with a livestream of the worship service, designed for parents feeding babies or children who need a calmer environment to engage well. *Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. A privacy-please sign on the door will signal whether it is okay to enter.*

#### **The Sensory-Seeking Room — Room 115**

A friendly active space with a livestream of the worship service for kids who need to jump, rock, spin or move without being shushed. *Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times.*

#### **Nursery — Room 116**

Our nursery offers loving, attentive care for children 5 and under. Children can play in this room staffed by trained caregivers in a safe, nurturing environment. Children are still invited forward for the Children's Moment before heading to the nursery.

### Children's Sunday School

There's a place for kids of every age in our Sunday School hour.

- **Age 0–2** – Nursery care in Room 116
- **Age 3 through 5th grade** – Graded classrooms on our children's hallway using the Deep Blue curriculum by Cokesbury Kids
- **6th–12th grade** – Upstairs in the youth rooms

### Adult Sunday School

All of our adult Sunday School classes are open to all adults. Some offerings that draw parents in particular include:

- **Parenting on the Path** – An informal gathering focused on building relationships with other parents and offering support for raising kids in the faith
- **Life in the Middle** – Icebreaker, video, discussion, prayer requests — for anyone who wants support for living a Christian life in the middle of competing responsibilities
- **Church-Wide Study** – Short-term and seasonal studies led by our pastors in Room 200. Easy to drop in and try out a specific topic
- **Wonderfully Made** - Designed for adults who are differently abled, using a curriculum with the participants' needs in mind. This group enjoys prayer, and fellowship before engaging their lessons through music, singing, and discussion of the Biblical story.

#### A Word for Families

You are not a burden. Your child is not a disturbance. You do not need to keep them perfectly still or perfectly quiet. These spaces exist so that you can be present in worship — and so your children can begin to know Soapstone as their sanctuary, too.

If you need the nursery, quiet room or sensory-seeking room, these are available. If you want to stay in the sanctuary, please stay! We hope Soapstone can be a place where you and your children feel supported and welcomed.

#### A Word for the Whole Congregation

Children in worship are a gift. The laughter, the questions, the wiggles — these are signs of life. A church with children is a church with a future, and creating spaces for children tells them: you belong here, right from the very beginning.

If you see a family using any of these spaces, offer them a smile, and let them know how grateful we are that they are here!

*“Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’*

— **Matthew 19:14**