

July 9, 2015

Dear Parents,

We are excited and looking forward to the start of Awana 2015/16 on Wednesday August 26th and we are excited about some fresh initiatives that we trust will be a blessing to the children and their families.

Praising God for Dave and Camille Cantwell

One of the initiatives was prompted by the unexpected news that David and Camille Cantwell will not be coming back to serve as the directors for Journey---the Awana program for Sr.-High students. The Cantwell's have been faithful and effective leaders who have been a blessing to our young people for several years. They will be greatly missed. I want you to know that the leadership of the Church is very appreciative for all of the time and effort on the part of the Cantwell's to share the love of Christ with our youth. If you have the opportunity please take some time to express your appreciation for them and for their faithful and fruitful ministry to our young people.

Our Long Range Plan

Working with my team, we have developed a long range plan that would continue the Awana ministry as our midweek children's program up through 6th grade and then in the future, would provide for one, unified, multi-faceted ministry for Junior and Senior-High students under the leadership of our Pastor for Student Ministries, Joe Wittmer. Joe's vision for Student Ministries includes ongoing midweek programming that we believe will serve our students well and help them to continue to grow in their knowledge of and delight in God's Word. In the following description, Joe gives us a glimpse of what will be available to students this fall.

Wednesday nights are a time for students to break into small groups for the purpose of digesting God's word and discussing how scripture applies to their everyday lives. This is a time for students to grow closer to fellow believers and hear truth from an adult leader. Our small groups are gender-specific and include a combination of 7th-8th grade students in Jr. High and 9th - 12th grade students in our Sr. High. Students are placed in small groups through a selection process by both the students themselves and Student Ministries leaders. The aim of the process is to group students with both peers and leaders who will best encourage them in loving God, loving others and putting their faith into action.

Even though we did not anticipate implementing this plan this year, after considerable thought, prayer, and discussion with our CPC leadership, our Next Gen team, Joe Wittmer, the Student Ministry team, and Awana leaders it seems wise that we move forward and make the change.

Options for Trek and Journey Students this Year

As we have considered this option we are mindful that many students have benefitted from Trek and Journey over the years. Personally, one of the joys I had in my first year of ministry at CPC was witnessing the growth in our Trek and Journey students. We know there are a number of students who are looking forward to continuing in Trek and Journey this year and several parents who are eager for their children to have this experience.

Even though we are encouraging our Trek and Journey students to participate in our Junior and Senior-High program on Wednesday night, we also want to do our best to serve and accommodate those students who have been working hard toward Awana awards and scholarships and who would be disappointed and frustrated if there was not an opportunity to continue in Trek or Journey this year. To this end I would like to introduce an option that has emerged from our discussions

Our plan is to offer a hybrid of the College Park Church program and what is called “Awana Home School” in order to support families wanting to provide a Trek or Journey level program for their children. We will help these families acquire the “Awana Home School” material and also do what we can to encourage and facilitate families teaming up and doing Trek or Journey together. Each group would have the independence and flexibility to pick the location, time and format that works best. If any of these groups wish to meet at church we will do what we can to assist with reserving space. We will also include Trek and Journey students in recognition events at church and we would look for other ways to include, encourage and support these students and their families.

If you would like to receive the “Awana Home School” material and/or you would be interested in connecting with other families who are interested in providing a Trek/Journey experience for their children, please contact us. It would be helpful if you can contact us before August 7th.

Also, please let us know if you would like to be kept informed as groups form and plans develop over these next few weeks.

If you have input or questions please do not hesitate to contact us. Jenn Markette is the Awana Ministry Coordinator and she may be reached at jmarkette@yourchurch.com

Your Fellow-Servant for the Joy of the Next Generation,

David Michael

Pastor for the Next Generation
College Park Church