

# Who is my Neighbor?

## A Summer Evening Program for the Whole Community

Kelly Moody, Director of Children's & Family Ministries  
in conversation with The Rev. Cristi Chapman

**It's been a while since Saint Mark's has offered a summer formation program. Why this year?**

Folks of all ages are telling me they want more unstructured time together, supported by the frame of faith

and liturgical life. We've had a great turnout at seasonal evening events that include dinner and creative programming for all ages, so I wanted to try a consecutive program that allowed people to enjoy one another

regardless of age, while being invited into a deeper conversation with God.

**What's distinctive or special about this summer program?**

Firstly, it's not for kids, it's for *everyone!* Another feature: it will include dinner made by our own Marc Aubertin, which is always a treat. Finally, instead of aiming for short-term growth in a small age-specific group, this model seeks to make a greater impact on long-term spiritual formation for the whole church in four big areas: intergenerational relationship-building; integration of the heart and the mind; body-based awareness of God; and rest/playful reflection.

**What gave you the idea to open this program to all ages?**

It's been done with success across denominational lines for the past 5–10 years. So, I talked with a few parishes across the country who have done it, and they had nothing but good things to say! Next, I looked at the intergenerational curricula they'd used and found it compelling—many were oriented toward social justice and practical love, which is true to who we are as a parish at Saint Mark's.

**What are some of the activities you envision for the week?**

Our general theme is "Who is my neighbor?" So, we will consider what it means to be a neighbor in ever-larger contexts throughout the week. I



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imagine that we will divide the group into three by how we sit at dinner. That way, people who are naturally drawn together can stay together regardless of age, family make-up, etc. After a brief dinner program, we will rotate through a bible storytelling station, an artistic building station, and a play section. Those who have been using this model for a while say that you really can't cut out the games, particularly for the adults! We will end praying Compline together in the chapel.

**What excites you when you think about this summer program?**

Maybe it's four nights of dinner you don't have to cook. Maybe it's some time out of the house doing something fun and meaningful with new companions on long August days! I get excited thinking about folks find-



ing one another and having a whole new world of connections available to them. My hope is that people will come for all sorts of reasons, but will go forth refreshed in body, mind, and soul.

**How does this fit into a big-picture plan for Christian formation?**

We want to root our outreach to our city in the God we meet in the Bible, in our experiences of divine grace, and in a mindfulness of God's presence in all people. This program is intended to give us all a concentrated opportunity to dive deeper and grow our roots in ways we may not find when we are worshipping on Sunday morning, or practicing on Wednesday, or advocating on behalf of others. It's a chance to imitate Christ in simple ways that root us in the Paschal mystery and help us rediscover the image of God in one another. ♦

*Summer Evenings at Saint Mark's will occur August 12–15, 2019.*