



Jonah and the Whale

Children's Choir Program for

December 5, 2021 at 10 AM in the sanctuary

The Unitarian Church in Westport

On occasion the Children's Choir learns and presents a musical for the congregation. During the pandemic they have learned a musical called "Jonah and the Whale." On Sunday, December 5th, they will present this 35-minute piece as a part of the morning service. There will not be a sermon that morning since we think of the musical as the sermon. This will be a multi-gen service and the children will be invited to the front to have a set on the floor and get a first-hand look as the drama unfolds and as the whale comes down the aisle. After the music is finished there will be a chance to talk about the themes and pose questions to the cast as a way for the young people to integrate the story and see how it relates to our time and our life.

Why a musical and why Jonah? There are some Biblical stories that are so large, so important that they have been referenced in many literary and dramatic works since they were written. We feel it is important for our children to know what those stories are and why they have withstood the test of time. It is a part of their education. A musical is a way for the youth to remember the storyline.

This particular story is rich in meaning on multiple layers. It shows how important the influence of any one person can be. Some of the themes that are brought out are self-worth, dignity, the importance of community, the issues of narcissism and the undisciplined mind, and most importantly, responsibility.

Another aspect of the children learning the musical is to experience how individuals actually work in a community context, or in this case, work within the 'troupe.' They are learning how important it is to take their part and be responsible for it, i.e., the need to memorize their part. They are also learning about vocal projection, enunciation, and gesture. This year they will be further challenged by having to use masks.

This is an event that the entire family can relate to. These young people have put a lot of time and energy into this, and I hope you will have a chance to see and hear this musical.

- *The Reverend Ed Thompson, Minister of Music*