

2024 Faith Formation Report

Children and Intergenerational:

Camp Bishopswood

Though there is a separate report available specifically from Camp Bishopswood, it is important to include camp as a thread in the fabric of our formation ministries in Maine. Camp offers a place where young people from various parishes across our state come together to build lasting relationships, connect with simplicity and the natural world, and practice building and living in community as God's beloved.

Godly Play

Several congregations across the diocese have begun new Godly Play ministries and others have ended theirs but shared the materials they no longer need. Beautiful connections have been established this way! We are blessed to have two Godly Play trainers in New England who make it their ministry to provide free monthly calls to support and equip those using the Godly Play method.

Traveling Welcoming Library

Thanks to an interdiocesan grant awarded in 2024 from Province I, both the Episcopal Diocese of Maine and The Episcopal Church in New Hampshire partnered with local Portland non-profit I'm Your Neighbor Books to make a traveling library full of picture books available to our churches. Each story is about New American and Immigrant experiences, and each contains a prayer and discussion questions to help us enter into difficult conversations through the power of story. If your church would like to host the library, please be in touch with [Emily Keniston](#) to be added to the list.

Summer Finale

In its 11th year, the Summer Finale event at Camp Bishopswood is an opportunity for anyone and everyone connected to the Episcopal Diocese of Maine to come together at Camp Bishopswood for rest, play and prayer. With both weekend and day-long options, participants share in meals and worship, crafting, singing, and play on beautiful Lake Megunticook. This program has become a powerful way for people to connect across parish lines.

Youth (teens and tweens):

Diocesan Youth Events

For two years, The Episcopal Diocese of Maine has partnered with The Episcopal Church in New Hampshire to host *Have Your Say*, a winter youth retreat focused on making connections with our bishops and church leadership, and understanding youth needs in our churches. In 2025, we will add a Faith in Action component to this retreat. Past retreats have yielded a list of

priorities for program development in the coming years, including advocacy, music and time in nature.

Convention and Official Youth Presence

During the General Convention of The Episcopal Church in Louisville, KY last summer, one of Maine's high school youth represented Province I on the Official Youth Presence, led by Canon Myra Garnes from the churchwide office. The application process was thorough and competitive, and Catherine Mansir represented herself, youth and her diocese beautifully as she participated in deputy activities at Convention.

Gun Safety Training & Public Witness with Bishops United Against Gun Violence

Youth from Maine participated in a gun safety training and public witness sponsored by Bishops United Against Gun Violence during Convention in Kentucky. Youth spent three days learning about gun safety and faith-based advocacy, and ended their time together with a public witness attended by Maine deputies, bishops from around the church and the presiding bishop-elect.

Pride Parade Ministry

Our diocesan youth have begun a tradition of hosting pride parade ministries in our diocese, and many youth gather to offer hospitality and welcome during the Portland Pride Parade.

Young Adults and Campus Ministry:

Wilson Center, University of Maine at Orono

In 2024, we continued our support of the Wilson Center financially and began to deepen our diocesan relationship with the work of this interfaith program. The center has launched a capital campaign this year to renovate a small and outdated kitchen to better accommodate their weekly dinners featuring faith-based conversations, and we are exploring ways that our diocesan and church-wide relationships can help to advance that mission.

Young Adult Ministry at St Luke's Cathedral in Portland

The Young and the Restless is a group of young adults who worship at the Cathedral Church of St Luke in Portland. They meet in fellowship and prayer, and are discerning future ministry and direction. They welcome your prayers!

Do you have a young adult ministry at your congregation? Please be in touch with Emily so you can be connected to others doing this work!

Adult Formation:

Bible studies and small groups

Adult formation across the diocese continues to be supported and enriched by small group meetings, often around a book or particular study.

Advocacy

Through discernment and prayer, adults may discover they are called to serve our neighbors and/or participate in advocacy as an expression of our Episcopal faith. Because we know that God is always at work in and through us, Episcopalians in Maine choose to become involved with the Maine Episcopal Public Policy Network or any of our social justice ministries at the parish, diocesan or churchwide level. Such work forms us in our Christian identity! Please be in touch with [John Hennessy](#) if you would like to learn more.

Congregational support and vitality:

Monthly formation Zoom calls

On the third Thursday of each month, formation practitioners of all types join a zoom call to share joys, challenges and to ask questions and share experiences with one another.

Emily visits churches

In her capacity as Faith Formation Director for the diocese, Emily visits congregations who express interest in having her come to discuss topics in faith formation, preach or share a Godly Play lesson, and to pray together about how God might be working in each of our congregations to build, strengthen and sustain The Body of Christ called to be the Episcopal Diocese of Maine. Please be in touch with Emily if you would like her to visit your church.

Province I Formation Network

The Province I Formation Network meets quarterly and is a resource for anyone interested in faith formation to connect with colleagues from around New England. In 2025, the network will sponsor a combination of the annual P1 Conference and the Forma Conference to offer a week of embodied formation learning and connecting with folks across the province. See Emily for more details.

Looking ahead to 2025:

Save the Date for:

Jan 27-30 Come Away Together, an in-person shared conference between Province I Formation Network and Forma, at Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center.

Feb 7-9 Have Your Say Youth retreat at Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center

August Summer Finale at Camp Bishopswood