

We're Getting a Youth Minister!!

With more than 200 infant baptisms at St. Leo in recent years and more of our children entering and advancing in school, the need for a youth minister has become a priority. We have been blessed to have Gabbi Montavon lead the Children's Liturgy of the Word for the past 4 years for the younger children but we have had no consistent program for junior and senior high students. The need was certainly there and we had no money to hire a youth minister—quite a dilemma—but not for God!

Like many other things at St. Leo's God surprised us and supplied what we needed. Judie Kuhlman, who has been working in that ministry at St. Susanna's in Mason, will become our part-time volunteer youth minister in June.

While completing her master's in theology at Xavier University Judie became interested in interfaith efforts and got involved with the local faith leaders alliance and fell in love with the community and ministries here. She planned a retreat for St. Susanna's and St. Leo's confirmation class at St. Leo's in March. She got to know our youth and witnessed what happened when youth from different backgrounds prayed and interacted together. This reinforced the calling she was beginning to feel to leave her current job and offer to come to St. Leo's.

It wasn't the first time her career took an unexpected turn. She was trained as an engineer at Notre Dame and worked in that field for many years. Later she earned an MBA from Xavier and worked as a project manager. As she and her husband David had their three children Rachel (14), Emily (11) and Will (8) she chose to work part-time to be more available to them. She began doing youth ministry at St. Susanna after earning her theology degree at Xavier.

Youth ministry is not a one-person job and Judie is seeking adult, college, and high school volunteers to join a leadership team to help with meetings and activities. She's already begun planning summer activities and will be working on a program for middle school (6th-8th grade) and high school (9th to 12th grade) youth. She plans to develop a meeting schedule and meeting topics that correspond to the needs of the community, the parish, and participating youth, as well as those in the USCCB guidelines—community building, pastoral care, advocacy, peace and justice, praise and worship, evangelization, catechesis and leadership. She will also direct the Children's Liturgy of the Word during Sunday Mass.

Because she believes that all benefit from collaboration and diversity she plans to work with other parishes and youth groups as well.

