

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP AT AVONDALE

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Avondale Youth Group Mission & Exploration - Summer 2021

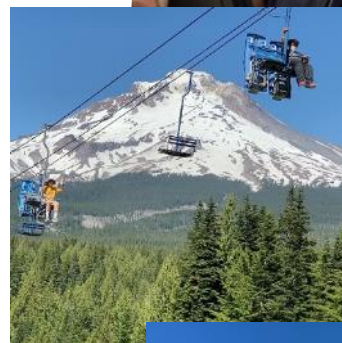
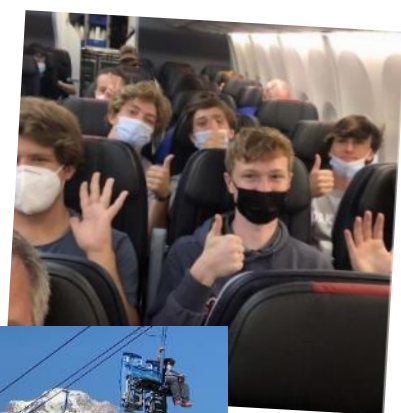
Our Avondale high school youth had a great trip to the Pacific Northwest June 17-30th! Every four years we plan an international trip. But when last year's trip to Peru was postponed and then cancelled due to COVID, we had to improvise to meet our goals of mission, exploration and cultural immersion for this year's trip instead.

With those goals in mind, we decided to spend five days on the Yakama Indian Reservation. We prepared in the months leading up to the trip by studying the book, *One Church, Many Tribes*, suggested by the Mending Wings organization. The study helped us to open our minds and hearts to the Yakama people as brothers and sisters—not as a mission field, which is how the Christian church has historically treated them. We spent the week learning from Tribal elders, leaders, and youth from the Native Mending Wings youth group in central Washington. Our youth and adult leaders worked alongside Indigenous youth from Mending Wings as well as a Methodist youth group from Peoria, Illinois, completing service projects for elders in the community. We

experienced the Yakama culture and learned from our hosts as they opened up their world to us. They shared a traditional salmon and frybread feast, taught us how to make tule mats, performed the traditional Jingle and Chicken Pow Wow Dances from the group *Dancing Our Prayers*, and invited us to participate in a Native Talking Circle worshipping Yeshua (Jesus) and Creator on our last night on the reservation.

The leaders from Mending Wings placed great value on the cultural experience of learning and sharing with each other, and our youth took that to heart. We spent one morning visiting the treaty site where the Yakama Reservation was established, assigning 14 local Tribes a boundary area, which was a portion of their Native lands, for their reservation. It also included a ceded area where they would have the right to continue hunting and fishing on their Native lands even outside the reservation. However, it was only 12 days after the initial signing that the treaty was broken by the governor, leading to the Yakama War. One of

cont. Pacific Northwest



Worship at 7,000 ft.



cont. Pacific Northwest

the Tribal elders, Yellowash, told us how those rights are still fought for in the present day and have been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

With our focus on k'wyaamtimt, roughly translated as the virtue of honesty or truthfulness, we also learned about some of the historical failures in cross-cultural understanding between Native Tribes and the Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries who started coming to the area in the nineteenth century. The ability to get to know and exchange ideas and stories with another culture within our own country was eye-opening in many ways and a great experience for youth and adults alike.

Before and after their time with Mending Wings, our youth had the opportunity to camp and explore the wilds of the Pacific Northwest, hiking at Multnomah Falls, on Mount Hood and Mount Rainier, and sea kayaking in the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington! We even had the opportunity to go-kart, ride down a summertime Alpine slide, go mountain biking, climb a rock wall, and, of course, try lots of good local restaurants in the small towns we visited. We spent one last afternoon in Seattle before our flight home on the last night.

Please talk to our church youth about their favorite parts and the ways they changed and grew on the trip! Here's what one of them had to say on the next page.

highlights video
Pacific Northwest Trip
<https://youtu.be/0m2-kme2BqM>



The girls



The boys

Avondale Youth Group & the People of the Yakama Nation

Yakama Indian Nation | Wapato, Washington

One late afternoon, our three vans pulled into the parking lot of a small church in Washington State. The twenty-four of us stumbled out, with the hot desert sun beating down on our heads. After several days previously camping, most of us were preoccupied with thoughts of flushing toilets and warm showers. This would be the beginning of the Avondale youth group's transformative experience with the people of the Yakama Nation.

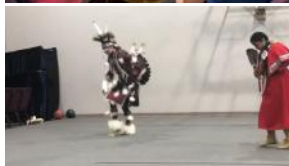
As we walked into the church, none of us were exactly sure what kind of welcome awaited us, we didn't know what the Yakama people thought of us, and we didn't know what they had planned for us over the next week. Despite this nervousness, we were greeted with an abundance of love and acceptance from our new friends. A few minutes after our arrival, another youth group from Illinois walked in, they would be staying on the reservation for the next week as well. Our twenty-four-person youth group dwarfed their eight members in comparison, and later they shared how nervous they were at the number of strangers they were about to be living with for the next week.

Still, our three groups of people from different parts of the country, walks of life, and world views would slowly come closer over the rest of that day, and over the course of the next week. We were taught some of the traditions of the Yakama and listened to them speak about their history and beliefs. We also learned some new games to bring back and play with the rest of the Avondale youth group. As we learned from the Yakama, we listened and thought about what they were saying and asked many questions. In turn, the Yakama listened and learned from what we, and the other youth group, had to share. Above everything else, the main purpose for us being there was to learn from each other and breach the gaps between people. I believe our youth group, the group from Illinois, and the Yakama people, accomplished this to the best of our abilities.

Personally, during the week, I had several emotional, joyful, and impactful moments where I was able to bond



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with the Yakama and others on the trip. Out of all those moments, one of my favorite experiences was when Wilson Major, Gram Chambers, and I left the others for a few hours to go with Tom, the Yakama leader in charge of the worksites, to complete a couple of tasks. Our first stop was at the home of Anna, one of the other leaders in charge of the program. We were there to help move a broken washing machine down three flights of stairs, but before we did that, we were invited into Anna's home. There was a surprising number of relatives in the apartment when we entered, including sisters, sons, daughters, nephews, and nieces. Despite being total strangers, they greeted us with open arms and instantly made us feel like we belonged with them. Afterwards, we drove around the reservation, to and from the dump, talking with Tom. While that may not seem like the most interesting experience, learning from Tom and telling him about our lives back home made me feel very close to him, and gave me a lot of respect for the type of person he is. As a testament to his character, the Mending Wings program allows him to keep their work truck so he can use it in his spare time to help the community. As we drove around the reservation, Tom stopped often to say hello to people or simply honk his horn as a greeting.

Altogether, there were several lessons ingrained into me during this transformative week on the Yakama Reservation. First, I came to fully appreciate the importance of treating everyone, no matter who they are, where they come from, or what they look like as family; because in the end, we must come together as family to build for the future. Also, I was reminded of the importance of being fully open and honest with the people close to you; because without that vulnerability, you will keep yourself at a distance from others, making it more difficult to begin healing your own inner turmoil.

Thank you to Garrett Whitesides for sharing his experience with us!
#Grateful



Avondale Youth

Middle School Youth - Summer Trip

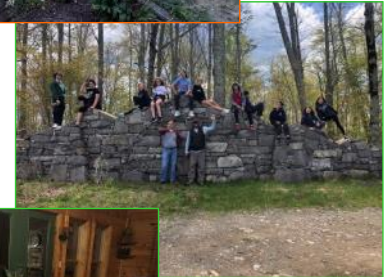
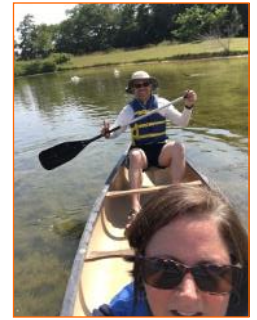
Our middle schoolers had a great time at the "Rooted in Love" middle school conference at Massanetta Springs! They played games, got to know other middlers from First Presbyterian of Asheville, sang songs, learned about the importance of roots and good soil, and participated in workshops such as a Creation scavenger hunt and Gardening with God. They also got a little wet and messy with some of the games and the camp slip-and-slide! Thank you for your support of our youth as they continue to grow their roots and learn the height, length, depth, and width of Christ's love!

Middle School Youth - Spring Retreat

On May 14, the Avondale Middle School Youth headed to the NC mountains on a full tank of gas and praying for the ability to fill up* and return home at the end of the weekend. Our 11 youth and 3 adults spent the weekend expanding our faith as it applies to racial justice, growing in God's love, and growing in relationship with each other. We took advantage of the big sky for amazing star gazing, played more than a few rounds of pool and karaoke, hiked around the top of the mountain we were staying on, and kayaked the French Broad River in Asheville's arts district. And nothing quite satisfies the soul after a float down the river more than a visit to the French Broad Chocolate Factory for some ice cream and brownies, or hot tea and bonbons! Prayers were answered when we were able to fill our gas tanks to return, and prayers continue for the seeds that are planted in our youth and our leaders as we get uncomfortable in order to bring about justice in our world. *(Charlotte and eastern U.S. had a sudden fuel shortage after a cyberattack crippled a major pipeline.)

High School Youth - Spring Retreat

The High School youth are becoming quite the experienced white water rafters. After last summer's warm-up on the Nolichucky River in Tennessee, we attacked the cool waters of the New River in West Virginia. This time the air temperature was much cooler which led to a few less involuntary swimmers. We conquered the Class V's with ease and finished the day enjoying the nation's newest national park. We had a great time escaping with two nights of camping, adventure, and fellowship. Exactly what we needed before returning home to face final exams. Our bonding is now complete as we head-off to the Pacific Northwest in June.



Celebrating Our Youth - Graduates -

Tribute to Youth Group 2021 Seniors

A video was put together to celebrate the graduating seniors of our youth group. You won't want to miss this video! [Watch](#)

Graduates 2021

Avondalers joined families in celebrating the graduates in their lives.

High school and college...the accomplishments are many.

Consider sending a note of congratulations and encouragement for the future. Click here to [Read](#) or [Watch](#) the graduates!

YOUTH GROUP AT AVONDALE



KICK-OFF
August 29
2021

JOIN YOUTH GROUP
6th - 12th grades



[AVONDALEPRESBYCHURCH.ORG/CONNECTYOUTH](https://avondalepresbychurch.org/connectyouth)

Join other youth as we journey in our faith. A strong faith takes exploration, questions, and fellowship with others on a similar journey. Join us Sunday evenings as we, together, learn new things, and make new friends. Kids have fun, talk a lot, enjoy activities, do service work in the community, travel, and much more. To find out more about our Youth Group, contact Avondale at 704-333-6194.

You do not have to be an Avondale member to join Youth Group.

Avondale Presbyterian Church / 2821 Park Road / Charlotte, NC 28209

FEATURING •
Sunday
evenings,
weekend
retreats,
summer work
camps...

All give the
youth a forum
to explore
what a
relationship
with God
means, and
build bonds
between
each other.

704-333-6194



Avondale Presbyterian Church
2821 Park Road
Charlotte, NC 28209

Newsletter Publishing Schedule

Avondale Avenues is published quarterly on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Content deadline for the next newsletter is a week prior to publication. Send submissions to caroline@avondalepresbychurch.org.

Avondale In Action

Rally Day

Sunday, August 29, 2021

Faith formation happens over a lifetime and in many settings of church life together. Join Avondale to celebrate the kick-off of Christian education programming and "Blessing of the Backpacks." Come learn about Avondale's ministries and opportunities for all ages.

Youth Group

Kick-off is August 29!

Join other youth, 6th-12th grades, as we journey in our faith. Sunday evenings, weekend retreats, and summer work camps give the youth a forum to explore what a relationship with God means, ask questions, and build bonds between each other. To find out more about our Youth Group, contact Avondale at 704-333-6194.

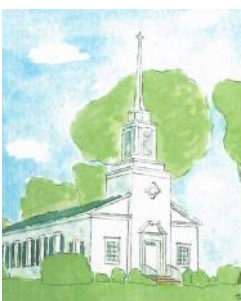
Avondale Adventures

Begins October 6!

Our next Adventure begins October 6. Stay tuned for more information about this popular kids' program! Registration will open September 8 for this program for young children.

Next Steps Class

Coming soon!



Interested to learn more about Avondale and the Presbyterian Church? A new member class is coming after Labor Day. Put your name on the list to receive information. Visit www.avondalepresbychurch.org/nextstep and complete the form.

www.avondalepresbychurch.org



Worship

Join us Sundays at 10 AM in our Family Life Center or online via YouTube "Avondale Presby Church."

Avondale Dates

- Jul 31- Mission: Welcome Home Kits
- Aug 3- Taizé Prayer Service in-person
- Aug 6- ACE Ministry- summer camp ends
- Aug 8- Session monthly meeting
- Aug 25- CMS first day of school
- Aug 26- ASAP Program
- Aug 29- Rally Day
- Aug 29- Blessing of Backpacks
- Aug 29- Youth Group begins
- Aug 31- Lunches for Roof Above
- Aug 30- ACE Ministry- first day of TLC
- Sept tbc- Next Steps new member class
- Sept 8- Avondale Adventures registration
- Sept 13- Stewardship Kick-Off
- Sept 25- Property Work Day
- Oct 4 - Dedication Sunday
- Oct 6- Avondale Adventures program
- Dec 4 - Christmas Marketplace