



**Since 1991, 124 churches in 29 states and the District of Columbia have received Union Presbyterian Seminary Congregational Leadership Awards.**

### **Presenting the 2018 Award Recipients:**

#### **First United Presbyterian Church of Belleville, Illinois**

**received this year's Katherine Hawes Award for effective youth ministry.** The youth group experience mirrors the church's ministry in many ways. Meaningful **worship** is a highlight of the experience of youth at First United. This ministry involves youth in meaningful worship on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, including leadership once a year in both worship services. This year the service included a time where the congregation was invited to share why they think following Jesus is not foolish. Adults and young people alike stood up and shared their answers.

**Education** is an important element, with youth discussing scripture and participating in a family confirmation experience with their parents and mentors. **Hospitality** is shown through the inclusion of students from seven different high schools and ten different middle schools, and the welcoming of many special-needs students. The church also holds special Sundays which make it easy to invite others.

The group practices **mission and service** by partnering with different organizations to benefit their community, Souper Bowl of Caring, and last year the high school group went to Puerto Rico to work on a men's home, painting with the Salvation Army, and a Vacation Bible School for kids.

Probably the most important aspect of First United's youth ministry is the wide support they receive from their congregation!

## **First Presbyterian Church of Auburndale, Florida**

**received this year's James Goodpasture Award for ministry with special populations.** First church has about 82 members, but their outreach to people with intellectual disabilities in their community shows their care for one another in a big way.

In order to address the needs of parents and caregivers of children with disabilities, the church hosts monthly "HangOuts," to give these tired and overworked folks a little rest. For three hours on the second Saturday of every month, guests arrive at the church at 5 p.m. for three hours of well-supervised care by well-trained and screened volunteers. While they are there, they are treated to their favorite activities, from art, sing-alongs, and dancing. Dinner is served, followed by some form of entertainment.

Not only do guests have a wonderful time, and parents/caregivers are given some welcome relief, but the volunteers from the church are also enriched in fulfilling the church's mission: "Reaching out with the heart and hands of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit leads, to serve all people in love." In the words of the award applicant, "Since our congregation is generally elderly, this activity offers an excellent and perhaps surprising opportunity to bridge generations, allowing senior citizens to share their life experiences and talents with HangOut guests . . . you cannot volunteer at "The HangOut" without your life being changed."