



August 2022

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Monday, August 15: First Day of Preschool Classes

August 27 & 28: Rally Day at St. Luke Lutheran Church (see page 2)

September 1: Tuition due — Beginning with September's payment, a \$15 late fee will be accessed for payments received after the 5th of each month.

Monday, September 5: Labor Day — No School

Tuesday, September 20: Preschool Committee Meeting at 7:00 pm

Our hallways are once again full of children's joy, energy, and laughter! Whether you are a new family or a returning family, we are so blessed that you are sharing your child with us this year, and we welcome you.

Each month, we will be sending you a school newsletter to keep you updated on a variety of topics such as special events, news about the preschool community, reminders, and information that may be of interest to you about parenting or child development. Please let us know if you would like to see something posted in a future edition of the school's newsletter.



COVID Safety Information

As we hope you know by now, St. Luke Preschool is licensed by the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) in the state of New Mexico. As such, we are required to adhere to all health, safety, and COVID related requirements. We are committed to keeping you informed as these requirements are updated and revised. The health, safety, and wellness of children, families and staff is our highest priority.

As we move into this school year, we will be asking if your child is vaccinated for COVID and if so, to provide us with a copy of your child's vaccination card. Children (and staff) who are fully vaccinated are allowed to remain at the preschool following an exposure, provided they are symptom free and wear a mask. Children (and staff) who are not vaccinated or who are under vaccinated are required to quarantine (not attend the preschool) for a minimum of 5 days, following a direct exposure. See Quarantine and Isolation Guidance for All Providers attached to this e-mail.

At this time in the state of New Mexico the COVID vaccine, like the flu vaccine, is optional and parents have the right to decide whether or not to have their child vaccinated. Vaccination decisions will always be respected, kept confidential, and our asking you is simply to inform us of how to proceed if your child experiences a direct exposure.

Be sure to see additional COVID policy information throughout this newsletter.



You are invited to join the preschool staff the weekend of August 27/ 28, 2022

at 5:00pm Saturday and/ or 8:15/ 10:30am Sunday worship services at

St. Luke Lutheran Church

Recognition and Blessing for the children, families and staff of St. Luke Preschool.

Parking Lot Safety

Please be sure to keep your speed down and park safely in our parking lot. We understand that drop off and pick up times can cause the parking lot to become busy, and we want to make sure that no accidents take place.

Please do not leave children, sleeping babies, or any valuables in your car, as preschool and child care parking lots are often targeted by thieves.

Please park in a designated parking space and not in the marked red fire lane (not even for a few minutes).

For health and safety reasons, our accrediting agency requires that vehicles not idle or be left running in the preschool parking lot.



Currently, mask wearing at the preschool is optional, except with respect to COVID positive cases and exposures. Please see the Quarantine and Isolation Guidance for All Providers that is attached to this e-mail.

Day-to-day mask wearing decisions for children and staff (where illness is not involved) are supported and respected.

Our experience with the children has been that mask wearing has gone quite smoothly at the preschool. Teachers are creative with their approaches to supporting children and offer solutions when a child is uncomfortable. Taking a brief break from mask wearing while eating, napping, and playing on the playground can be helpful. Children who wear masks learn to place them in a clean paper bag whenever they are removed, and we have extra masks on hand, just in case.

If your preference is for your child to wear a mask regularly, we ask that you communicate that to us, send your child to school in a clean, fresh mask each day he / she attends, pack a few extras in his or her backpack, and let us know they are in there.

St. Luke T-Shirts Are Coming!

A complimentary St. Luke t-shirt will soon be ordered for your child in his / her class color. T-shirts will feature our logo and can be worn on special "spirit days" (or anytime)!

Your child's teacher will soon be asking you to select your child's t-shirt size and we will take care of the ordering for you.



Your Child's Transition

We always expect to see a few tears the first several days of school. If your child seems to be having a rough time with the transition of starting a new class or a new school, here are some ideas that may help:

1. Establish a consistent good-bye ritual. Children find comfort in routine, so each time you leave your child, make it the same. For example, three kisses, an "I love you" and one hug. Establish a ritual that feels right for your family and stick to it.
2. Share stories about your first days of preschool or elementary school. Tell your child about how you felt and show him or her pictures of you when you were his or her age.
3. Select a special comfort item from home, such as a favorite stuffed animal, family photo, or loved book, for your child to bring to school for the purpose of easing the transition.
4. Make a book at home that tells the story of your child coming to school. You can take photos of your child with his / her backpack, in front of the school, at pick up time, etc. with wording about his / her day.
6. Read books about coming to school and saying goodbye. Some suggestions are:



- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- *Lola Goes to School* by Anna McQuinn
- *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen
- *When I Miss You* by Cornelia Maude Spelman
- *Hello Preschool* by Priscilla Burris
- *Take a Kiss to School* by Angela McAllister
- *It's Time for Preschool* by Esme Raj Codell
- *David Goes to School* by David Shannon

Separation is a process, so expect that your child (or yourself) will need some time to feel comfortable. Please let us know how we can help with these transitions.

We Need Your Help At Drop Off and Pick Up Time!

Drop offs and pick ups will take place through the preschool main front door for all children. The use of one entrance allows us to be vigilant about who is in the building. We ask you to join us in helping to maintain the security of the school by closing the front door behind you when you enter and leave. Please use your door code to gain entrance into the building and share it only with those who are involved with the drop off and pick up of your child.

Drop off and pick up times will smooth out, once we all get the routine down! We value your help with on time drop off and pick up, as it helps us maintain our ratios and vigilantly supervise children.

Here are the details:

- If your child's day begins at 9:00, please plan to arrive during our drop off window between 8:50 and 9:00. Consistent on time arrival allows your child to transition into the program successfully and teachers to begin the day on time.
- It is important that your child be picked up on time, when his/ her day ends – whether that is at 12:00, 12:45, 3:00, or 5:30. On time pick ups allow us to maintain our required ratios and vigilantly supervise all children in our care.
- If you find you are running late or need to pick your child up early (for an appointment, for example), please let us know, so we can be prepared.

We thank you for partnering with us to make this a great school year!

Illness Policy

Thank you for helping us adhere to the mandates set by the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD). **Your willingness to partner with us truly makes all the difference.**

- Call the preschool office at 292-8812 or send an e-mail to both Lori and Jane (stlukesesc@thuntek.net **and** stlukepreshool1956@gmail.com) **any** time your child will be absent, even if he/she is not sick.
- Please see the Quarantine and Isolation Guidance for All Providers that is attached along with this e-mail for how to proceed, in the event a child (or staff member) has experienced a direct exposure to COVID or has tested positive for COVID.
- In order to return to the preschool, following a non-COVID related illness, children (and staff) must be **fever free (without medication), diarrhea free, and vomiting free for 24 hours, and exhibit two or less symptoms. Children must also be able to participate in the school day successfully with respect to energy level and engagement.**

If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be called to pick him/ her up within 30 minutes of receiving the call. Please be sure to keep your contact information updated with us and let us know of any questions you may have.

More detailed information about illness, health, and safety can be found in the Family Handbook starting on page 20.

Upcoming Fire/ Property Evacuation Drills

We are required by our licensing authority to conduct weekly fire/ property evacuation drills for the first four weeks of school. The teachers will prepare the children for these drills by walking them through the process and explaining that the alarm will be loud.

State Licensing requires us to practice these drills so that every child has the opportunity to experience a scheduled drill at least twice in the first month of school. We never want children to be afraid, so we use the same consistent message. The language we use is: "We are practicing so we will know what to do in an emergency."

Many of the children only attend two or three days a week, so practicing at least two times in the beginning will help them feel more comfortable and know what to do. Upcoming drills are scheduled for:

Thursday, August 18, at 9:30 am

Friday, August 26, at 9:30 am

Thursday, September 1, at 10:30 am

Friday, September 9, at 10:30 am



Please let us know if you have any questions.

Welcome To Children's Worship!

Preschool classes meet on alternating Tuesdays and Fridays throughout the school year for Children's Worship. During this time, we sing, pray, and experience age appropriate Bible stories together. Parents and other family members are welcome to join us for Worship in the sanctuary of the church! Times are as follows:

KinderPrep (Kathy and Staci) — 9:30 am on Tuesdays only
Older Multi-age (Claudia and Cherish) — 10:30 am
Intermediate Multi-age (Kelly and Danita) — 11:00 am
Younger Multi-age Monarchs and Swallowtails (Kaylynn, Candice, Clarisa, Deborah, and Tarin) — 11:15 am

Here is our September Worship schedule:

- Friday, September 9th and Tuesday, September 13th: Welcome to Worship
- Friday, September 23rd, and Tuesday, September 27th: Creation — Genesis 1:1-2:3

For September, we will be exploring a variety of bibles for babies, children, teens, and adults, including ***Baby's First Bible*** by Standard Publishing, the ***Early Reader's Bible*** by ZonderKidz Publishing, the ***Spark Story Bible*** by Augsburg Fortress, and the ***Faith Alive Student Bible*** by Concordia Publishing House. Perhaps your family can read the Creation Story from a special bible.

"Praise Him, Praise Him, All You Little Children"

We will be singing this joyful song in Worship throughout September. You and your child may wish to sing it at home together.

Praise Him, Praise Him, all you little children.
God is love, God is love.
Praise Him, Praise Him, all you little children.
God is love, God is love.

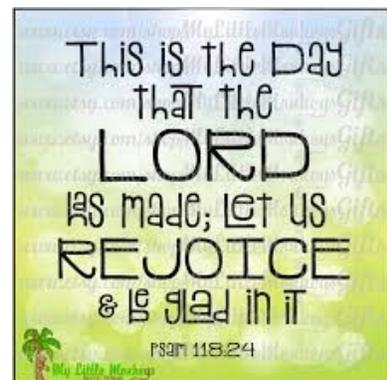
Additional verses include:

Love Him, love Him, all you little children...
Thank Him, thank Him, all you little children...
Serve Him, serve Him, all you little children...

Ask your child to make up his or her own verses!



We need to hire several new substitute teachers. If you know someone who is passionate about working with young children and would enjoy part time, flexible hours, please let us know!





PRESCHOOL Community Events!

As we continue to move forward from the pandemic, we are hopeful about offering some of our annual events, in a way that celebrates our community, while at the same time is cautious with respect to illness. Our **tentative** plans include:

- Friday, October 21st in the evening: **Fall Festival** — We are imagining this to be a downsized version of previous events and held entirely outside at the preschool.
- Monday, October 31st and Tuesday, November 1st at 9:15 am: **Costume Parades and Pastries for Parents** — To be held entirely outside in the courtyard, playground, and parking lot.
- Monday, December 19th and Tuesday, December 20th: **Christmas Programs and Receptions** — On a smaller scale with individual classes, as opposed to the whole school at once, to be held in the sanctuary of the church.
- Wednesday, May 17th and Thursday, May 18th: **Spring Programs and Receptions** — Again, on a smaller scale with individual classes, as opposed to the whole school at once, to be held in the sanctuary of the church.
- Friday, May 19th: **End of the Year Family Picnic** — 10:00 am-12:00 noon — To be held entirely outside at Hoffman Park.

These **tentatively** planned events are a starting place and we will share more details with you soon!

Volunteers in the Classrooms

While we **very much** value parent and family involvement in the life of the classrooms and the preschool, we plan to proceed with an abundance of caution. As such, we are not yet ready to invite volunteers into the classrooms. This difficult decision is completely COVID driven, as cases of COVID (even as recently as in our summer camp sessions) at the preschool create numerous challenges for the entire preschool community. Many of our working families depend on us for child care, which we cannot follow through on if our classes are closed due to COVID. The one exception is our invitation for parents to join us for Worship, since the church sanctuary is spacious enough for us to spread out in (See page 5). We thank you for your patience and understanding and are hopeful for a return to warmly welcoming volunteers at some point this school year!



We are excited to be working with the Brightwheel online platform for early learning centers this school year! While Brightwheel offers many features, our goals for the start of the school year include using two features:

1. Billing and Tuition—parents will have access to their own portals and can make payments online.
2. Messaging—teachers will be able to engage with parents and send information, along with photos for each individual child, as well as the whole class.

If you haven't already downloaded the Brightwheel App and set up your portal, you will need to do that soon, since September tuition will be billed through Brightwheel for all preschool families. Thank you for your patience, as we all learn to use Brightwheel!

Snack and Lunch Times

Preschool families are required to sign up to bring morning snack approximately once a month. The teachers create snack menus in accordance with CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) guidelines and our no nut policy. Please be sure to sign up for a day that your child attends. If all of the days are taken, please talk with your child's teachers about providing a back-up snack item. We appreciate your help with providing a nutritious snack for children to share together in the morning.



While eating together, children have the opportunity to engage in conversations, strengthen language skills, build on friendships, problem solve, try new foods, and more!

If your child stays for lunch, please be sure to take his/ her lunchbox home each day for a thorough cleaning and sanitizing. In addition, we ask that you take your child's water bottle home each day for a thorough cleaning and sanitizing. Together, we can work to minimize illness at the preschool.

Please be sure to label all lunchboxes and water bottles with your child's name and keep in mind that we are **only** allowed to serve **water** (no soda,