

Program Philosophy

St. Luke's United Methodist Church is a fellowship committed to receiving, sharing, reaching out, and celebrating God's love through Christ. In keeping with this philosophy and in response to the needs of our community, St. Luke's has established St. Luke's Preschool. St. Luke's Preschool began as a Mothers'-Day-Out Program in 1995. The school is a ministry of St. Luke's United Methodist Church, intended to serve the children in this and surrounding communities. The school, as a ministry of the church, shares God's love with the children by ministering to their developmental needs.

We believe in providing environmental stimulation through educational play and exposure to varied learning experiences. We encourage independence, social interaction, and problem solving at each child's appropriate level of development. A richly experienced preschool is a sound basis for later schooling and a healthy adult life. We are interested in the *total child*. Our program is designed for social and intellectual growth as well as spiritual growth. Each child is unique and we strive to tailor our program on an individual basis.

St. Luke's Preschool provides a Christian atmosphere for children to grow socially, emotionally and spiritually while learning through play. Our program provides a loving, caring environment for social interaction for children ages 2 ½ to 5 years with emphasis on Christian morals, principles and values while ultimately providing our students with a solid academic foundation for kindergarten and beyond.

Purpose

- To provide experiences that meet children's needs and stimulate learning through a developmentally appropriate curriculum that stresses physical, cognitive, emotional, intellectual, creative and spiritual growth.
- To see each child as a unique person with different levels of development and ability.
- To design appropriate activities that facilitate individual learning styles.

Objectives

Children vary in the time it takes to master a skill or take developmental steps. The objectives for each child are to:

- Like himself or herself
- Feel comfortable expressing his or her ideas
- Develop language skills
- Enjoy exploration and concentration
- Make choices and complete tasks
- Accept and follow directions
- Enjoy and respect friends
- Learn about and experience Christ's unconditional love for all people

Children begin the process of building their faith and values at a very early age. We feel that the curriculum at St. Luke's Preschool, which balances the teaching of Jesus Christ and academics, will give each child a solid foundation to continue through life. Our children will attend

Chapel Time, a time for spiritual growth and knowledge, with our Pastors every month. Parents are welcome to join us on Chapel Time days. Check the monthly newsletters for dates and times.

Teaching Staff

St. Luke's Preschool shall be staffed with appropriate teachers and assisting personnel. They shall have the professional training, experience and other general qualifications necessary. Each member of the staff is certified annually by a practicing physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. St. Luke's UMC files the appropriate criminal records checks for each staff member.

Enrollment

Children between the ages of 2½ and 5 years of age are eligible for enrollment. St. Luke's Preschool offers three preschool classes as follows: Children at least 2 ½ years of age by December 31 may enroll in the two-day 2 1/2-year-olds' class but must be 2 ½ to attend. Children at least 3 years old by September 30 may enroll in the two-day or three-day three-year-olds' class. Children at least 4 years old by September 30 may enroll in the four-day or five-day four-year-olds' class. Enrollment will be accepted on a space-available basis when the following forms have been received:

Application for Admission
Contract
Annual Registration Fee

A student may not attend the first day of classes without receipt of the following forms and fees:

Immunization and Health Form
Annual Supply Fee
First Month's Tuition

In order to provide the best care in meeting the needs of each child, enrollment will be limited to 10 children in the two and one half-year-old class and 12 children per class in the three-year-old classes. Enrollment in the four-year-old program will be limited to 16 children per class. A child may only be enrolled in one class.

Members of St. Luke's UMC and families currently enrolled in St. Luke's Preschool will be given the opportunity to register children one week prior to open registration for the community. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis. St. Luke's Preschool will maintain a waiting list.

All children must be completely daytime potty trained and require no special care. Children who depend on disposable training pants (Pull-Ups) are not considered to be potty trained. Therefore, "Pull-ups" will not be worn to school. Complete potty training is an indication of developmental readiness for school. While we understand that occasional accidents may happen, incomplete training imposes unfair difficulties on the children and their teachers. We are unable to make any exceptions to this policy.

Program Schedule

St. Luke's Preschool offers four preschool classes. The schedule is as follows:

Two-day Class (2 ½ year olds)	Tues. and Thurs.	9:30 to 12:30
Two-day Class (3 year olds)	Tues. and Thurs.	9:30 to 12:30
Three-day class (3 year olds)	Mon., Wed., Fri.	9:30 to 12:30
Four-day Class (4 year olds)	Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur.	9:30 to 12:30
Five-day Class (4 year olds)	Mon. through Fri.	9:30 to 12:30

Conferences, Holidays and Inclement Weather Schedule

St. Luke's Preschool will follow the York County Public School calendar unless otherwise noted on our own calendar. Our school year calendar can be found on the last page of this handbook. In cases of inclement weather, if York County Public Schools are closed or have delayed openings, St. Luke's Preschool will be closed. Please check your local news channels for York County School closings and/or delays.

Parent-Teacher conferences are a valuable tool for parents and teachers. Time will be set aside in January for this purpose. During Parent-Teacher conferences, school will not be in session. Conference time will be available for every student during this period. Should an additional conference time be desired, an appointment can be made with your child's teacher.

Registration Fee

An annual, non-refundable registration fee of \$35 will be charged for each child enrolled in the program. If a child is withdrawn from the program and then wishes to re-enroll, the registration fee must be paid again. This fee includes a tote bag bearing the school's logo to be used as the student's backpack for the school year.

Tuition and Supply Fees

Annual tuition for either two-day class is \$765 (\$85.00 per month). Annual tuition for the three-day class is \$945 (\$105.00 per month). Annual tuition for the four-day class is \$1125 (\$125 per month). Annual tuition for the five-day class is \$1305 (\$145 per month). If more than one child in a family is enrolled, there is a 10% discount for the younger sibling. Please make all tuition checks payable to St. Luke's UMC Preschool. Your canceled check will be your receipt. Annual tuition is payable in monthly installments in advance by the first of each month. It is considered overdue on the 5th of the month. A late fee of \$15.00 will be charged for overdue payments. A returned check fee of \$25 will be imposed on any check that is returned to the school. If tuition is not paid by the last school day of the month, we reserve the right to withdraw a child for non-payment. There will be no refund due to absence or school closing due to holidays or unscheduled closings. Parents must provide 30 days written notice prior to withdrawing a child from St. Luke's Preschool.

Supply fees are paid annually. The supply fee for the two-day classes is \$45. The supply fee for the three-day class is \$65. The fee for the four-day class is \$85. The fee for the five-day class is \$105. Each fee is per student and must be paid before classes begin.

Stay-n-Play

Children who wish to remain at Preschool after hours will have the opportunity to participate in Stay-N-Play. Stay-N-Play is an extra time set aside for children to remain at school in an unstructured setting. Stay-N-Play's hours are 12:30 to 2:30. Stay-N-Play is offered twice per month. A child can only attend Stay-N-Play on days he/she is enrolled for class. Check your monthly calendar for exact days each month. A minimum of ten students is required for each session. Sixteen students will be the maximum. The charge for Stay-N-Play is \$10.00 per child. Payment must be made one week prior to the Stay-N-Play date to hold your child's slot. St. Luke's Preschool will provide the snack at Stay-N-Play.

Field Trips

Field trips are extended learning opportunities. They also provide an opportunity for parents to have a one-on-one experience with their preschooler. Many of our field trips are structured so the parent can participate by meeting us at the field trip location with his/her child. Some field trip locations require limiting the number of attendees. On those occasions, we will require that no siblings or children not registered in our program attend. Advance notice will be given to allow ample opportunity for childcare arrangements to be made.

Occasionally, the church bus/van are used for transportation. In those instances, a limited number of parents will be asked to chaperone. A valid driver's license, proof of insurance and background checks may be requested of any parent participating in field trips. All children taking field trips will be restrained in seat belts or car seats. We ask for parent volunteers as drivers/chaperones for our field trips. If parent drivers are needed, their automobiles must have adequate seat belts. Parent drivers/chaperones must be able to arrive ten minutes before school begins on field trip days. Parents who are not driving will secure their child's car seat in the vehicle of a driver before leaving the preschool. This is to ensure the car seat is properly installed in the car. Parent drivers/chaperones must be willing/able to accommodate more than one extra child to drive. All children must ride in the back seat of vehicles in their own car seat. Each teacher determines the number of drivers. The names of parents wishing to drive/chaperone for each trip will be placed in a hat and names drawn. Each parent who wishes to participate in field trips will be given an opportunity to drive/chaperone prior to using a parent driver multiple times. The teacher will assign students to drivers. This list will not be changed. It is requested that siblings of students not attend field trips unless otherwise noted.

If a student arrives at St. Luke's UMC after his/her class has departed for a field trip, the child may join the class at the field trip location. The parent or supervising adult must remain with the child and provide transportation back to St. Luke's after the field trip or confirm alternate plans.

A child may NOT remain at St. Luke's in the care of a staff member if his/her class has departed for a field trip.

Late Pick Up Fees

There is a 5-minute grace period allowed for late pick-up. A \$1.00 per minute childcare fee will apply to any child left more than 5 minutes after the appointed pick-up time. This fee also applies to Stay-N-Play. Late fees will include the grace period. Please call if you know you will be late so we can reassure your child that you are on your way. After advanced notification, this fee will be billed to the family payable on the first day of the following month.

Lunch

Children will bring their own lunch each day. Please label all containers with child's name. If there is a special occasion such as a birthday celebration or holiday party, parents will be notified in advance.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

Young children learn best with hands-on activities. Children at St. Luke's Preschool need to wear clothing that is comfortable and washable. Art materials can sometimes end up on what your child is wearing! While every attempt will be made to prevent damage to your child's clothing, St. Luke's Preschool is not responsible for accidents that may occur. Tennis shoes or some other type of closed-toed shoe is recommended. Please label all garments including outerwear. Any additional belongings brought to school will be kept in your child's personal backpack. ***Please send only essential items for the day.***

Arrivals and Departures

The doors will be open every morning from approximately 9:20 to 9:35 to welcome students from the drop off line. Please be punctual. If you are the first vehicle in line, please pull up one car length past the double doors and wait for a staff member to assist your child. If you arrive after the door is closed, please enter the building and drop off your child at the Director's Office. Do not send your child in the building alone and unsupervised.

Parents who have not picked up their child by 5 minutes after the session ends will be charged a fine of \$1.00 per minute for each minute they are late. The five-minute grace period will be included when calculating the fine.

Children must be signed out every day. If someone other than the authorized persons will be picking up a child at school, it is required that the parent send a note to the teacher indicating that permission is granted. The Staff of St. Luke's Preschool will request to see photo identification before dismissing the child.

Health and Safety

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires a completed Virginia health form, signed by a physician, be on file in our school office before the first day of school.

If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact you immediately. Children who become ill during school hours are isolated from others. If your child will not attend the program due to illness, please let us know. We are not authorized to dispense medications of any kind.

Please keep your child home if any of the following symptoms occur:

- has a fever or had one during the last 24 hour period
- has diarrhea or has had diarrhea in the last 24 hours
- has vomited in the last 24 hours
- has heavy nasal discharge
- has symptoms of conjunctivitis ("pink eye")
- it has been less than 24 hours since receiving antibiotics
- child is too ill to play outside
- has a constant cough or upset stomach
- is fussy, cranky and generally not him/herself

Please notify the school if your child will not be attending by calling the school at 898-3017.

Every precaution for safety is taken: however, if an accident should occur the parent will be notified immediately. An accident form requiring a parent's signature will be sent home. *Please make sure all telephone and cell phone/pager numbers are kept current.*

Parent Volunteers and Substitutes

Parents are encouraged to become involved with our program. We need parent volunteers to man our Art Room for about 2 hours each day. These volunteers will be supervising up to 8 students in two 20-30 minute shifts each day. Materials will be provided. A background check will be required. Should there not be enough parent participation for our Art Room, there will be alternatives offered for parents to volunteer.

The opportunity to become a paid substitute is available by informing the Director or calling the church office at 898-3017. Parents are always welcome for special occasions and are encouraged to attend.

Faith Curriculum

There will be two Chapel Times per month. St. Luke's UMC's Pastors and Director of Discipleship Ministries will lead them. Chapel Time will be held in the Sanctuary beginning at 9:45 and last about 10-15 minutes. Parents are welcome to attend. Check your monthly calendar for dates.

There is a monthly Bible verse reviewed each school day. Memorization is not required. We sing or say a table grace at lunchtime and Christian holidays are observed. Families find a loving Christian environment at St. Luke's where children of all faiths are welcome.

Library

The three and four-year-old classes will go to the library once per week. Each child will be allowed to check out one book. *Prior to further books being checked out, the library book must be returned.* If the book is lost or damaged, an exact copy must be purchased. Overdue book notices will be issued to students who don't have their books on library day. Please return library books only on your child's assigned library day.

Student Conduct

The social and emotional development of each child is important to St. Luke's Preschool. Children are encouraged to begin to resolve conflicts and to cope with fears and anxieties constructively. If any behavior creates an unsafe situation or is harmful in word or deed, it will be addressed. Behaviors involving harm toward another child cannot be tolerated in the preschool setting. Time-outs and parental contact will be initiated.

A child may be excluded from the program if the child's inappropriate behaviors impact the learning environment. A partial list of unacceptable behaviors includes biting, tantrums, spitting, pushing, kicking, shouting, inappropriate language and inappropriate physical contact.

Birthday Parties

Birthdays are special days in your child's life. We encourage you to help us celebrate by providing a simple birthday treat. Please contact your child's teacher in advance to make special arrangements. Staff members will not pass out invitations/thank you notes for parties not held at school. Addresses for classmates are printed in the school directory. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

Withdrawals and Absences

A child may be withdrawn from school with a written 30-day notice. In the event 30 day's notice is not given, thirty days' tuition will be charged from the date on which notice is given. In the latter case, a credit may be given if another child is enrolled from the waiting list to fill the vacancy created without adequate notice.

If a child misses school temporarily because of illness, family vacation, or other reason, tuition charges will continue.

Governing Body

The Board of Directors of St. Luke's Preschool is responsible for establishing policies and procedures and for ensuring their implementation. The Parent Representatives are volunteers and will be announced in the newsletter. The Board of Directors shall consist of the following representatives:

Chairperson
Preschool Director
Director of Education
Education Committee Member
Board of Trustees Member
Finance Committee Member
Staff-Parish Committee Member
Two Parents of enrolled children

With the recommendation of the teacher, the Preschool Board of Directors reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program for non-cooperation, delinquency in payment of tuition, or inability of a child or parent to adjust to the program.

The Board of Directors meets a minimum of two times per school year. Parents with questions or concerns should direct their comments to a Board member. The Board meetings are open to any person wishing to attend.

A Final Word

At St. Luke's Preschool we strive to enrich the spiritual lives of the children we serve, as well as the total family. We invite you to visit St. Luke's United Methodist Church and would welcome the opportunity to share with you our beliefs concerning God's Word.

St. Luke's Preschool is operated by St. Luke's United Methodist Church and has filed documentation as a religiously exempt child day center with the Department of Social Services for the Commonwealth of Virginia.



Please read, sign/initial each statement, detach and return this portion.

Child's Name _____

Date _____ Teacher _____

I give permission for our names, addresses, phone number and email address to be shared with other St. Luke's Preschool's families for the purpose of planning school events.

(signature)

I give permission for photos, which may include my child, to be used on the preschool or church website, brochure, newsletter, bulletin board or other media.

(signature)

I have read and agree to abide by the policies outlined in this handbook.

(signature)