

Our Parent Handbook  
for the upcoming  
Summer and Fall Sessions  
is on the following pages.

For more information,  
please call the Preschool Office at  
(256) 353-1353

or email the Director at  
[Preschool@StPaulsDec.com](mailto:Preschool@StPaulsDec.com)

*Have a blessed day!*

# St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care



*National Lutheran  
School Accreditation*



## Parent Handbook 2023-2024

*a ministry of*

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**



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# **St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care**

## **Church Mission Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church glorifies God by connecting people to Jesus through teaching, serving, caring, and telling!

## **Mission Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care provides a quality early childhood education program guided by Christian philosophy and doctrine and acts as a mission outreach of this congregation to community.

## **History of Program**

In the fall of 1991, St. Paul's Lutheran Church initiated a new ministry for their families by beginning a Mother's Morning Out Program. After four years and much prayer and study, this program was expanded into a preschool format incorporating a Christ centered educational curriculum. Classes were originally held in the east wing of the campus, but were moved into a new education wing, upon the completion of a Christian Life Center in the fall of 2000.

Seeking acknowledgement of the quality of our program as well as demonstrating accountability to our community, participants, and congregation, the Preschool began the rigorous national accrediting process of National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) in 2008. NLSA, supported by more than 2000 schools, is the second largest national accrediting entity and assures parents that a high-quality Lutheran school exists wherever NLSA accreditation is found. The St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool was awarded accreditation on July 31, 2009, with continuing accreditation granted in 2019.

While St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool had met the needs of many member families and families of our extended community by providing a half-day Preschool, a barrier to enrollment and service to others existed due to the need for continued care before and/or after the Preschool classes. With the educational emphasis of the Preschool's core hours of instruction remaining central to its ministry, the addition of Extended Care was offered to students in the winter of 2012. This quality education and Christian teaching of our Preschool is maintained during these hours to further enhance the preschool experience of those participating in this St. Paul's program.

The enrollment for the 2022-23 schoolyear is 73 students, and since 1991 the St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool has touched the lives of over 800 children and their families.

## Statement of Philosophy

The Preschool at St. Paul's Lutheran Church will teach and make disciples of the children God has entrusted to us.

We believe children are valuable gifts whom God has forgiven through the death and resurrection of His Son.

Children learn best when taught in a Christ-centered environment that includes interaction with others, various learning experiences, and a variety of educational methods.

## Goals

The goals of St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool are to:

- Provide a safe and nurturing Christian environment where children experience the love of Jesus.
- Offer each child the opportunity to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, intellectually, and creatively through age-appropriate instruction.
- Prepare children for kindergarten.
- Help parents and children deal with "breaking away" anxieties.
- Support parents and families.

Our preschool program strives to be a laboratory for young children to explore themselves and God's world around them through experimentation and imagination and by using all their senses.

## Policy Authority – Preschool Advisory Board

The St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care Advisory Board, reporting to the Board of Parish Education, sets and/or approves all policies regarding the Preschool.



## Personnel

The Director is an employee of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and is responsible to the Preschool Advisory Board. The Director meets regularly with the Preschool Advisory Board and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Preschool. Together with the teachers, the Director plans a curriculum that is age-appropriate, Christ-centered, and faith-integrated and meets the stated mission of the Preschool program. The Director does not determine policy but ensures that procedures are being followed. Qualifications of the Director include a college degree with prior experience and on-going training in early childhood education programs as well as certification in infant/child CPR.

Teachers are employees of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and are responsible to the Director. Under the direction and supervision of the Director, the teachers plan, implement, and evaluate the curriculum in accordance with the mission and philosophy of the Preschool program. Teacher qualifications include prior experience and on-going training in early childhood education programs as well as certification in infant/child CPR.

## Curriculum

The Preschool uses the *Learning Foundations Curriculum* and incorporates aspects of the *High Reach Curriculum* and the *Creative Curriculum* recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the State of Alabama. All teachers have the Alabama Standards for children birth through age 5. The Preschool also incorporates *One in Christ, Voyages, The Blessing Place, Little Lambs and Little Lambs Too* curricula from Concordia Publishing House of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, St. Louis, Missouri.

This combination of curricula incorporates:

- Spiritual / Social Living
  - Language Development
  - School Readiness
  - Fine/Gross motor skills
  - Expressive Arts
  - Discovery about the World
- Planning for the year includes Bible themes, unit studies and concepts, interest centers, music, field trips and special celebrations.
  - The program offers an exciting and stimulating curriculum that is appropriate for each child at his or her own level of understanding.

- The children participate in weekly Chapel time in the Sanctuary with the Pastor and/or Director of Christian Education.
- Children attend weekly music classes.
- Structured science classes are offered to PreK3 and PreK4 students.
- PreK4 students have computer class.
- Extracurricular classes such as art, karate, and soccer are available to PreK 3 and PreK 4 children who are potty trained.
- Teachers create weekly lesson plans and communicate learning and schedules to parents on a regular basis through our newsletter, monthly calendar, and daily notes.
- Field trips and servant events are scheduled regularly.
- Each child takes home a yearly scrapbook.

### **Class Sessions and Composition**

- Toddler Program (Ages 15 through 23 months)  
Class size is limited to 5 children per adult.  
Children attend a minimum of 2 days per week.
- Two-year-old Program  
Class size is limited to 6 children per adult.  
Children attend a minimum of 2 days per week.
- Three-year-old Program  
Class size limited to 8 children per adult.  
Children attend a minimum of 4 days per week.  
Children are encouraged to be potty-trained.
- PreK4 Program  
Class size is limited to 12 children per adult.  
Children attend 4 days per week minimum.
- Children are placed according to their age as of September 1st.
- Preschool core classes meet from 8:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
- Children attending Preschool core classes without Extended Care must attend Mon-Thur when Core Preschool meets. *Fridays may be added with 5-day Extended Care.*
- Full and part-time Extended Care is available Monday – Friday from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm.
- Please see page 14 for dates the Center is closed for holidays.



## Enrollment

- The following forms must be kept on file in our office:
  - Registration Form/Tuition & Fee Agreement
  - Health & Immunization Record
  - Parent Authorization Form
- Enrollment is accepted on a first come, first-served basis except during Pre-Registration in the spring. At that time, priority is given in the following order:
  1. Children already in the program
  2. Children of congregation members
  3. Children on the waiting list
  4. Other children
- Children may be enrolled at any time during the year, provided there is space in their age group.

## Tuition and Fees

The Registration fee collected includes a \$50 non-refundable fee for Preschool children and a \$100 non-refundable fee for children enrolled in Extended Care. This fee will be applied toward the Supply Fee for the 2023-2024 school year.

### **PRESCHOOL HOURS ONLY PLAN**

	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Supply Fee</u> <u>(Aug-May)</u>	
2 days 8:45a-12:45p	\$230/month	\$ 100	<i>Toddlers &amp; 2's only</i>
4 days 8:45a-12:45p	\$305/month	\$ 125	<i>All Ages</i>

### **PRESCHOOL WITH EXTENDED CARE PLAN**

	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Supply Fee</u> <u>(Aug-May)</u>	
5 days 7:00a-1:00p	\$120/week	\$ 125	<i>Please see the</i>
5 days 8:45a-5:30p	\$150/week	\$ 150	<i>Application for</i>
5 days 7:00a-5:30p	\$170/week	\$ 150	<i>Admission for</i> <i>more EC options</i>

- A charge of \$3 per meal (pizza, cookie, drink) for those wishing to participate in monthly Pizza Day may be included with the tuition.
- Families with multiple children: The first child's tuition will be 100%, with a 10% discount offered on the tuition of any additional siblings.
- Member (or joining) Preschool Families will receive a 25% tuition discount according to the Preschool Tuition Covenant (*see pg 8*).

- New students shall pay the total month's charge if the child is enrolled prior to the 15th of the month and one-half of the month's charge if the child enters on or after the 15th of the month.
- The Director must be given a two-week written notice if a child is to withdraw from the program. If a child withdraws after the program begins, the parent is responsible for tuition for the entire month in which the child withdraws.
- A \$5.00 late fee will be charged for tuition not received by the date set forth in the tuition agreement.
- A \$5.00 late fee will be charged for each five minutes a child is not picked up after normal departure time.  
Preschool – 1:00; Extended Care – 5:30
- Additional fees may be charged for field trips, special projects, etc. as deemed necessary.
- An Insufficient funds fee of \$35 for checks and \$5 for EFT will be charged for each incidence. The fee, as well as the amount of the original payment, must be paid in full within 4 working days of the request.

## **St. Paul's Preschool Tuition Covenant**

*"The Lord bless you and keep you" (Numbers 6:24)*

### **General Covenant Agreement**

- Member (or joining) Preschool Families that attend Sunday School twice a month and Worship Services twice a month will be given a 25% percent discount on tuition at St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool.
- Member (or joining) Preschool Families will also receive priority enrollment.

### **Covenant Specifics**

- Please tell the Preschool office about your interest in participating in the tuition covenant.
- Please speak with Pastor if interested in becoming a member of St. Paul's. Ten new member classes are required to join.
- Please always sign attendance pads each week to record attendance in both worship and Sunday School.

As a congregation we are blessed in blessing you!  
Bless us as part of our church family!



## Arrival

- Children will be received for Extended Care beginning at 7:00 am, and children enrolled only in Core Preschool will be received beginning at 8:45 am.
- An adult must escort the child in and sign in at the Welcome Desk.
- Extended Care children will be escorted to their preschool classrooms between 8:45 and 9:00 am.
- Those arriving after 9:00 a.m. will need to ring the doorbell for entrance.



## Departure

- Children attending Core Preschool are to be picked up between 12:45 and 1:00 pm; Extended Care children must be signed out and picked up by 5:30 pm.
- The Preschool will only release a child to his parent or guardian and those previously authorized on the registration form kept on file in the office. If someone not authorized on the registration form is to pick up a child, the parent is to call or send in a note informing the teacher of this change. For the safety and protection of your child, the person picking up a child should always be prepared to show picture identification.

## Attendance

Children learn best in an environment of consistency and routine. Significant absences or repeated late arrival will result in a conference between the parents, teacher, and director to assess the appropriateness of the child's enrollment.



## What to Bring

- Each child needs to bring a lunch and drink in an insulated lunch bag. Children with a food allergy or strong dislike should have this noted on the Health Record.
- A snack will be provided before Preschool and after rest time for children in Extended Care.
- Extended Care children should bring a small blanket for rest time; the blanket will be returned weekly to be cleaned at home.



Toys should not be brought to school except on designated "show and share" days. No toy guns or weapons will be allowed at school.

## Dress

- Each child should be dressed for active play in simple, washable, practical play clothes with convenient fasteners for self-help. Girls should wear shorts or leggings under skirts/dresses.
- The children play outdoors when the weather permits; each child should be dressed accordingly with an appropriate coat or jacket.
- A change of clothes (including socks) for each child should be sent to Preschool in a zip lock or plastic bag labeled with the child's name; soiled or wet clothing will be returned home in the bag in case of mishaps.
- Loose articles of clothing (jackets, sweaters, raincoats, etc.) should have the child's name marked in the label.
- Children not yet potty-trained are to wear regular diapers and not the “pull-up style” while attending class unless they can be put on without undressing the child.
- Children should wear closed-toe shoes. We have found that crocs are not safe to wear, especially in the gym; a pair of closed-toe shoes may be left at school if the parent desires.
- Proper footwear is required for students to participate in structured P.E. time.



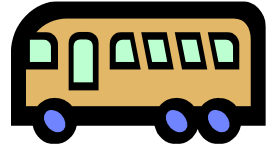
## Inclement Weather Policy

We will send information through our Facebook page with our decisions regarding St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Preschool. Children and staff will gather in our “safe hall” in the event of a tornado warning during Preschool hours. The walls of this hallway are constructed of reinforced concrete to serve as our tornado shelter. In the event of tornado damage, parents would be called and notified if we are unable to remain in the building; if telephone and cell phones are inoperable, parents should tune in to local broadcasts for emergency management instructions.



- A list of emergency procedures is available in the Preschool Office.
- **During rain or other severe weather, children will be dropped off or picked up under the portico at the Sanctuary entrance at the back of the church.**

## Field Trips



- A field trip permission form must be signed and on file for each child to attend special outings. If a Preschool child cannot go on an outing, he or she is to be kept home that day and the teacher is to be informed that he or she will not be attending. Arrangements will be made for Extended Day children to remain at school.
- Children 2 and under must be accompanied by an adult. If that is not possible the day of the field trip, please contact the teacher to see if a substitute adult can be available.
- Children under the age of five are required by the State of Alabama to use car seats and booster seats until age six in cars, pick-up trucks, SUVs, and vans (10 or less passengers). The church van is equipped with seat belts and is often used for field trips. Alabama's seat belt law does not pertain, and booster seats are not recommended.
- Parents will be notified in advance of scheduled field trips and method(s) of transportation.

## Parent Involvement

Parent participation in special classroom activities, parties and field trips is encouraged. If a parent wishes to bring something from home to share, the teacher should be notified in advance so that the day's schedule may be adjusted.

- Special events will be planned throughout the year for the children including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and End-of-the-Year. There will also be special "Open House" dates. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help during special activities.
- Birthdays are celebrated very simply at the school. If desired, a special treat (preferably mini cupcakes or cookies) may be brought for the children for dessert. Summer birthdays may be celebrated in the month of May.
- Due to confidentiality concerns, special events are not the appropriate time to approach a teacher about a child's progress or specific issues concerning your child. Please see the "Communication" section in this handbook.

## Discipline

- Corporal punishment will not be administered under any circumstance.
- Reasonable, age-appropriate behavior limits will be set; "time out" or restriction of play privileges will be used for unacceptable behavior (biting, hitting, fighting, etc.).
- If a child exhibits disruptive behavior, a conference with his/her parents and teacher will be arranged.
- If the conflict remains unresolved, further steps will be taken up to and including expulsion from the Preschool.

## Health Policies

- The Preschool can only accept well children to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses within the center.
- When is your child too sick to attend school?
  - Fever
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Undiagnosed rash
  - Red eyes and/or drainage
  - Nose with colored discharge that require constant wiping
  - Headache that will not respond to ibuprofen or acetaminophen
  - Cannot participate in the daily activities of the program
- Your child can return to school once symptom free for 24 hours or as determined by your physician.
- A child should be kept home if, within the preceding 24 hours, the child has had a fever, sore throat, rash, an unusual cough or diarrhea or has vomited.
- Prescription medications will only be administered with doctor's orders. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered under any circumstance. Medicines will be kept in the office.
- If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, the parent should notify the teacher or Director. Parents will, in turn, receive notice of any possible exposure at the Preschool.
- If a child is injured at school, a Child Injury Report will be sent home. For more serious injuries, the parent or guardian will be notified IMMEDIATELY. The Preschool will take all necessary steps to see that the child is assured proper medical attention while under the Preschool's care as indicated on the Permission Form.
- In case of emergency, we will exercise due diligence in assuring the child receives proper medical care.



## Communication

Monthly calendars and *Scribble's* publication provide important programming and event details. Families are encouraged to read the print publications as soon as they are sent home with their child and to post them in a prominent location in their home for constant referral. Our Facebook page provides descriptions and pictures of ongoing activities and events.

Communication between parents and teacher is a vital part of a successful educational program. If a problem arises, the parents and teacher will meet privately to seek a resolution. If the conflict is not resolved, the concerned parties will meet with the Director privately to seek a resolution. If the conflict is still not resolved, the concerned parties will meet with the Preschool Advisory Board and/or the Senior Pastor.

Conferences are available with teachers or the Director at the parent's request at any time. It is encouraged that parents participate in conferences with the child's teacher during the year. The teacher will be able to give you information about your child's progress at these meetings as well as suggestions that might be beneficial to your child's overall achievement.

Bible classes, parent workshops or meetings may be held at various times throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to attend and join in the fellowship.



## Non-Discriminatory Policy Statement

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities accorded our students or our school.

## Professional Affiliation

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool is a member of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA).

Preschool Closings: St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool follows the Decatur City School schedule. Preschool children will not attend when Decatur City Schools are closed. Our Extended Care closes for 8 holidays each year.

## 2023-2024 Holidays Observed – Center Closed

<b>Labor Day</b> .....	September 4
<b>Thanksgiving and Day after</b> .....	November 23, 24
<b>Christmas Day</b> .....	December 25
<b>New Year's Day</b> .....	January 1
<b>Good Friday (half day)</b> .....	April 7 (close at noon)
<b>Memorial Day</b> .....	May 27
<b>Independence Day</b> .....	July 4

## Accreditation



### **National Lutheran School Accreditation**

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) awarded St. Paul's Lutheran Church Preschool accreditation on July 31, 2009 with continued accreditation granted in 2019. Accreditation assures parents that the school complies with national standards. It indicates the school's commitment to on-going improvement. Parents can be certain that when a school is accredited by NLSA, it has been observed by a team of qualified educators, evaluated, and recognized.

## Acknowledgment

The *In His Hands* artwork is used by permission of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Board for Parish Services - School Services Unit.

**Revised 02/28/2023**

