



**“Awakening the Promise in Each Child”**

Welcome to St. Mark Preschool!

We are glad you have chosen St. Mark Preschool for your child’s preschool. It is our desire to provide a loving, enriching, and positive educational experience for your child. Although our program is NOT a state licensed facility, we have well qualified and caring teachers who have been carefully selected to do just that! We thank you for entrusting your child to our care.

We hope this parent/child handbook will be helpful to you in learning more about our program. Please read it carefully and keep it on hand for ready reference. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. Your concerns are our concerns.

We are looking forward to a great year,

Erica Bender  
Director

Preschool Board

## ST. MARK PRESCHOOL FINANCIAL POLICY

Revised as of August 2023

### REGISTRATION FEES

The registration fee for all Preschool classes is \$100 per child. Registration fees are due at the time of registration and are **non-refundable**. There are no discounts on this fee.

### TUITION PAYMENT

Monthly tuition fees are due on the first day of the month and delinquent after the tenth of the month. A late fee of \$5 will be added to all payments made after the tenth with an additional \$5 added for each additional day. Payments will be considered excessively late if not paid by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. A conference with the Director will be necessary to determine if future enrollment will be possible and to set up a plan for payment.

Payments are due in full each month even if the child does not attend every day or if holidays occur. Payments can be made by card, cash, check or money order (payable to St. Mark Preschool). Students who enroll during the school year and wish to begin attending in mid-month will be charged a pro-rated amount for the first month. Withdrawal before the last day of the month will require payment for the whole month's tuition, unless at least one month's notice of withdrawal date was given in advance. There will be no refunds of tuition paid.

### RETURNED CHECKS

A \$25 fee will be charged on all returned checks. More than two returned checks will result in fees payable only by money order.

### LATE PICK-UP FEES

All Preschool classes begin at 9:00 AM and end at 12:30 PM. Children may not be left unattended at school before 9:00 AM. Their teacher will take children who remain after 12:35 PM to the office for pick-up there. You will be required to sign your child out and pay the appropriate late charges. Late fees will begin at 12:36 PM. You will be charged \$1 for each minute that you are late. If you arrive at 12:40, you will owe \$10. If you arrive at 12:37, you will owe \$7 and so forth. Pick-up time will be calculated according to the St. Mark Preschool office clock. Staff members depart at 12:45 PM and the building is closed. If a child is still here after 12:45, we will take the child to the CDC if there is space available. The parent will then be charged the \$15 late fee by the Preschool and will be charged the drop-in-rate at the CDC of \$50. After-school care is not available through the Preschool. If you have need of after-school care you may choose to make prior arrangements with the St. Mark Child Development Center.

## MISSION AND PURPOSE

The St. Mark Preschool is a ministry of St. Mark United Methodist Church and shares the church's mission to *Worship, Love, Reach, Teach, and Serve for the Glory of God*. Those connected with the Preschool strive to *Worship* Jesus by showing His love to all children, *Reach* children and their families, *Teach* them about Jesus and His love, and *Serve* them and Him by loving and caring for children. The Preschool classes are led by individuals who share our common mission. Classes emphasize God's Word and the precepts of the Christian life, along with teaching that encourages and challenges each child at his or her level of understanding.

## OUR COMMITMENT

We commit to treat your child as though he or she is our own. It is very important to us that your child is happy in our care, and that you have confidence in us as caregivers. We will treat your child with Christ-centered love, respect, and fairness. We will keep your children safe and help them develop physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially.

## RELATIONSHIP OF THE PRESCHOOL TO THE CHURCH

The St. Mark Preschool program is a part of the St. Mark United Methodist Church and under the direct supervision of the Administrative Council of the church. The Preschool Board serves in an advisory capacity to the director and staff of the annual budget and makes major policy decisions for the program. The board reviews the financial statements of the program each month. The Preschool Board advises the church Staff Parish Relations Committee regarding the employment and dismissal of the director.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission to the Preschool is open to any child meeting the age and health requirements (i.e., the child must have up-to-date immunization records with a current expiration date and reach class age by September 1<sup>st</sup> to be placed appropriately.) Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis, with priority given only to children of staff and those already enrolled in the program. Interested parents should contact the Director to have their child's name added to the waiting list for classes that are currently full. We do not discriminate because of race or religious affiliation.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

The following application documentation is required for each child attending the Preschool:

Entrance Application

Certificate of Immunization (with current expiration date)

In addition to the above documentation, parents are asked for their signature on a designated portion of the application confirming receipt of the Parent/Child Handbook.

The financial policy, a copy of items needed (supplies list), and school calendar are included in your application package.

### REGISTRATION

A non-refundable registration fee is due upon registration, and annually thereafter. All requirements for entrance and necessary documentation must be fulfilled prior to registration. Your child's space is not guaranteed until appropriate fees are paid, and all required documentation is on file.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

The Preschool is open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. To ensure your child's safety within the facility the doors will be locked at 9:30, please ring the bell on the playground door for entry. Please try to have your child at school by 9:15 each day as it is disruptive to the class when a student arrives late.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Children will be dropped off either at the entrance of the playground or at preschool door depending on the weather. Teachers will greet your child, help them sanitize their hands and direct them to the appropriate location to start their day. It is easiest for students if they are given a hug, a wish for a great day and then encouraged to go play. Anything more can be confusing and makes the child think their parents are staying. Set up a routine from the beginning and try to stick to it. This will enable your child with confidence and security.

Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone except a parent or guardian, unless someone is designated in advance. Please notify your child, and his/her teacher (and/or the Preschool Director) in advance, on days that your child will be picked up by someone else. You will need to pick up your child on time to avoid late pick-up fees, as stated in the financial policy.

If it is actively raining children will be dropped off and picked up from a car rider line under the portico. Please drive under the awning and allow teachers to help your child in and out. If your child needs extra time to buckle, please pull out and into a parking spot to assist them. Please do not get out of your car, this becomes time consuming and makes it difficult to keep the line moving.

### TUITION AND PAYMENT OF FEES

The Preschool Board of St. Mark United Methodist Church sets the tuition fees according to program needs. Tuition fees are calculated on a yearly basis, then averaged into ten equal monthly payments August through May. Higher fees are not charged for months with more days and lower fees are not charged for months with fewer days. This is all averaged in to make it easier for your budgeting and our bookkeeping. Payment is due on the first day of the month and is late after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, unless other advance arrangements have been made with the Director. A late fee will be added to all delinquent payments as stated in the financial policy.

This policy also details the handling of returned checks and late pick-up fees. A copy of the financial policy is included with your registration package. Since our program is based on a certain number of children enrolled, refunds for sickness, vacation, holidays or other temporary absences cannot be given. Days are not exchangeable and cannot be made up. As long as there is a place held for the child, tuition will be charged. The full tuition amount must be paid every month.

### GENERAL POLICIES

All children and parents are obligated to comply with the rules and regulations contained within this handbook. Failure to do so is grounds for your child's dismissal. We reserve the right to dismiss a child if, in the opinion of his/her teacher, and the Preschool Director, the child is unable to adjust to the Preschool setting. This will be discussed first with the parent(s), and at least two weeks notice will be given.

In addition, please ensure that your child does not bring any of the following to the Preschool with them: toys, gum, candy, or any other personal items/property not requested by the Preschool, and/or not approved in advance by the teacher and Director.

### WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

Parents may withdraw their child at any time, with a one-month advance notice, please. Fees will still be due during this period; and you will be obligated for any fees previously accrued.

### DISCIPLINE

The Preschool uses a very positive disciplinary system. An attempt is made to anticipate possible problems and prevent occurrences. When problems do arise, positive reinforcement is made of expected behavior, with a minimum of emphasis on negative behavior. Please see the attached Hurtful Behavior Policy for more information on discipline and the Incident Report. These will be sent home if needed and if these methods are unsuccessful, or behavior is still disruptive to the class, the child will be taken to the director's office. Parents of unmanageable children will be called and will be expected to assist in developing appropriate behavior. If behavior is consistently unmanageable, you may be asked to withdraw your child from the program.

### POTTY TRAINING POLICIES

It is understandable and age appropriate that children in our 1's and 2's classrooms are not completely potty trained. When children are in the 2's class we will work together with parents to work out a plan to start potty training when we feel your child is ready. If you want to start the process before a teacher mentions just talk to your child's teacher. We are always happy to help. We require that students in our 3's classroom either be potty trained or be actively working on it. Students must be potty trained to enter our 4's classrooms. That being said, we do understand accidents happen.

## HEALTH

We are always concerned about your child's health. Please help us by not bringing your child when he/she is sick, and might pass illness along to other children. Children will not be accepted into class, or will be sent home if they exhibit any of the following:

- A fever of 100 degrees or greater
- Chronic cough, runny nose, watery eyes, or sore throat
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Abscess
- Draining sores or burns
- Rash (unless diagnosed in writing by physician as non-contagious)
- Headache or head pain

We follow the school system in its 'no nit' policy regarding head lice.

Please do not return your child to the Preschool until his/her temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours (un-medicated). Since we are only here for a half-day, we do not administer medication. We do apply Neosporin or first aid cream to cuts and scrapes. Please let us know if you would not like us to do this. There is not a registered nurse on staff; however, all staff members participate in CPR and first aid classes.

If your child is diagnosed with any of the following, they must have a Doctor's note to return.

- Covid
- Hand Foot and Mouth (all bumps must be dried out no matter when the Dr's note says.)
- RSV
- Flu
- Strep
- Pink Eye

## Allergy Policy

Please alert staff of any allergies. All allergies will be posted in every classroom, so staff members are aware. If allergies require a prescription medication, we will require a Dr.'s note and the medication must be locked in the preschool office. We will not be able to send the medication back and forth daily. If allergies require an over-the-counter medication a note from parents giving permission for staff to administer medication as well as specific instructions on when and how to give medication will be needed. We will keep the medication locked in the preschool office. If foods need to be removed from the preschool due to an airborne allergy a Dr.'s note will be required.

## NUTRITION

Students will have a daily snack at mid-morning. Students must bring in a leak proof water bottle daily! Parents are asked to bring snacks to the school on a rotating schedule. Your child's teacher will organize this. Parents may also send special snacks on special occasions, such as your child's birthday. Please notify your child's teacher in advance of this.

## LUNCH

All children should bring a healthy lunch, including a beverage, to be eaten at approximately 11:00 am. Please make sure that all lunch boxes and containers are labeled. Please send items that do not need to be heated, as this will limit the time that the children have to eat. Please have all food ready to eat (apples peeled, eggs shelled, etc.). If a child forgets their lunch box and parents cannot be notified, they will be fed an additional snack. Please do not make this a habit, as the lunchtime is an important part of your child's school day.

## SPECIAL OCCASIONS

All children love parties! In addition to celebrating your child's birthday, as outlined above, the children will be celebrating other occasions as well. You may serve as a volunteer room parent, and help coordinate parties, and special events. If you are interested in helping in this way, please contact your child's teacher. You may be asked to participate, or supply items needed for these special occasions.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned throughout the year for the three- and four-year-olds. By law, every child must have a child restraint seat approved for their age to be transported on the field trip by the school. Also, every child must have a signature of permission to participate. Your child's teacher and an aide will accompany them on their field trip. Parents are welcome, and their assistance may occasionally be needed as additional chaperones. Please let your child's teacher know if you will be available to help with a particular field trip.

## TO HELP THINGS GO MORE SMOOTHLY

If you have any specific objections or concerns, please discuss the matter with the director and she will in turn present the concern to the Preschool Board.

Please inform your child's teacher of any significant changes in your child's routine or family situation so that she can be more understanding toward the child.

Please label your child's lunchbox and clothing, especially jackets, sweaters, mittens, hats, and raincoats. Please provide a change of clothing for your child, in a Ziploc bag, labeled with their name.

## HAVE A GREAT YEAR!

Please know that we are here to serve you and your child. We are always ready and willing to sit down and discuss your needs and wishes. We look forward to establishing and maintaining a long-standing relationship with both you, and your child.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and yours this year!

## Hurtful Behavior Plan

Physically harming behaviors such as biting, hitting, kicking, pinching, scratching, and hair pulling are normal behaviors for young children. There are many reasons why young children hurt, including:

Frustration or Anger	Impulsivity	Overcrowding
Teething/not feeling well	Tiredness	Lack of social or verbal skills
Lowered Coping Ability	Exploration	Over stimulation
Wanting attention	Defending toy, space or self	Hunger
Anxiety/stress	Lack of motor control	Boredom

At St. Mark Preschool we have a specific way of handling hurtful incidents. We acknowledge the feelings of the child who is hurting, while emphasizing that hurting is not acceptable behavior, for example: "It looks like you are very angry with Jared, but it is never o.k. to hit another person. That hurt Jared's body. That made him very sad!" We then try to help the child find a more appropriate way of expressing his/her anger: "If you are mad, you can use your words to tell Jared 'I'm mad!' or you could stomp your foot if you are mad." The child who was hurting is then redirected to an area away from the area where the hurting occurred. The child who was hurt is given the appropriate first aid when necessary and given more attention than the child who did the hurting. This process varies slightly between individual children and individual circumstances.

Because of confidentiality issues, no information about the child who did the hurting is given to anyone other than the parents of that child and the staff working with the child. If the child hurts or attempts to hurt other children more than four times in any one day or if the hurting is serious enough to leave a mark on another child more than once in one day, the parent/caregiver will be contacted to remove the child from the Preschool for the remainder of the day. This is not a discipline measure and will not be conveyed that way to the child.

If hurtful behaviors continue and are happening frequently, parents will be asked in for a conference. The first conference will be a warning with a plan of action agreed upon by parents, staff, and preschool board. The second will result in a one-week suspension. The third time a conference is necessary it will result in the child being withdrawn. Through hurtful behavior, the child is communicating that this environment is not working for him/her today. Continual and/or seriously hurtful behaviors are not compatible with group care for several reasons. Firstly, the safety and well-being of the other children need to be protected. Secondly, this behavior requires a significant amount of one-on-one attention from the classroom's primary teachers, and therefore effectively puts the classroom out of ratio. This puts a stress on the whole classroom, as teachers are not able to provide the other children with the attention that is essential for quality care.

Our goal is to help children develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and the environment; while children develop tools to solve problems. To help prevent hurtful behaviors from accruing the classrooms do many things. Some examples are positive redirection; modeling behavior; limit setting; and structuring activities that promote positive interactions, problem solving, and peer cooperation, as well as health and safety.

We reserve the right to bypass these guidelines and withdraw a child sooner if it is deemed necessary.



## Incident Report

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please help us by discussing this incident with your child. Remind them the rules of the preschool are to keep our hands and feet to ourselves and to love, look and listen to teachers.