



**Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool**

# **Parent Handbook**

## **2021-2022 School Year**

**Bethlehem United Methodist Church**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Staff</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How to Reach Us</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Philosophy</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preschool Curriculum</b>	<b>3</b>
Curriculum	<b>3,4,5</b>
Evaluation	<b>5</b>
Daily Routines	<b>5,6</b>
<b>Admissions</b>	<b>6</b>
Non-discrimination Policy	<b>6</b>
Age Requirements	<b>6</b>
Readiness for Preschool	<b>6</b>
Enrollment Procedures	<b>7</b>
Physical (Health) Form	<b>7</b>
Immunization Form	<b>7</b>
Health & Immunization Requirements	<b>7</b>
Illness and Medication	<b>7</b>
<b>Financial Information</b>	<b>8</b>
Tuition and Fees	<b>8</b>
<b>Schedules</b>	<b>8</b>
School Times	<b>8</b>
Weather	<b>9</b>

<b>Newsletters</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>9</b>
<b>Communication</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>9</b>
School Code of Conduct	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>10</b>
<b>General Information</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>10</b>
First Day of School	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>10</b>
Arrival and Dismissal	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>11</b>
Hand Washing	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>11</b>
Labels in Clothing	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>11</b>
Extra Change of Clothes	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>11</b>
Snacks/Lunch	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>11</b>
Birthday Celebrations	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>12</b>
Field Trips	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>12</b>
Toys	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>12</b>
PALS PreK Assessments	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>12</b>
Safe Sanctuaries	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>12</b>
Volunteers	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>12</b>
<b>2021-2022 Party and Field Trip Calendar</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>14</b>
<b>2021-2022 School Year Calendar</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>15</b>
<b>Acknowledgment Form</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<b>16</b>

**Welcome to Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool.** We thank you for choosing our school for the care and education of your child. We view our role as a partnership between the home and school and consider it a privilege to have your child join our preschool family. We encourage you to be actively involved in your child's education this year.

This handbook outlines our policies and procedures. However, like all handbooks, it is impossible to cover all the questions that may arise from time to time. Therefore, we encourage you to contact us at any time with any questions you may have.

## **Staff**

The director and most teachers have a bachelor's or master's degree in education or a related field, as well as multiple years of preschool experience. All assistants have a minimum requirement of a high school diploma, as well as years of experience with preschool age children.

As per Virginia Code, all staff working with the children have undergone both a criminal background check, as well as a child abuse check from the Virginia Department of Social Services. In addition, all staff complete Safe Sanctuary Training through Bethlehem United Methodist Church and all staff are certified in CPR and First Aid training.

### **Director – Maegan Mitchell**

#### **Pre-Kindergarten**

**Teacher – Billie Jean Elmer**

**Assistant – Terra Vaughan**

#### **Thrilling Three's**

**Teacher – Cheryl Humbarnd**

**Assistant – Linda Cochran**

#### **Terrific Two's**

**Teacher – Joy Bowles**

**Assistant – Haley Stinnette**

#### **Extended Days:**

**Teacher – Tammie Woodall**

**Assistant – Ryann Stephenson**

### **Preschool Board of Directors**

The preschool functions as an extension of the Educational wing of the church. Through its Board, the preschool program is directly responsible to the Administrative Board of the Church and to the Pastor. The work of the preschool Director, Teachers, and Assistant Teachers is directly under the supervision of the Pastor, Staff, Parish, Relations (PSPR) Committee and Administrative Board, as well as the Preschool Board.

## How to Reach Us

The church office telephone number is **(540)-297-7957** and is open Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Messages may be left at any time. Please feel free to contact your teacher or the director directly at any time.



## History

Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool opened its doors in 1984 as an outreach ministry of Bethlehem United Methodist Church. The program is open to all members of the community and neighboring counties. Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool operates as a preschool by the Commonwealth of Virginia as a Religious Exempt Center with Department of Social Services and undergoes a renewal process annually. A copy of the letter is kept by each classroom. Bethlehem United Methodist Church also carries comprehensive liability insurance on all our programs, including preschool, facilities, staff, and people. Our coverage is with Church Mutual Insurance.

## Our Philosophy

Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool is an integral part of the outreach ministry of Bethlehem United Methodist Church. Our Preschool's educational programs help children develop spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and emotionally while gaining readiness experiences to enhance their public or private school program for kindergarten. Our program encourages the children to develop self-discipline, a positive self-image, a curiosity for the world around them, and an appreciation for the value of human life shown through God's love.

## Program

Our programs are designed to help our children develop spiritually, physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially. Each child receives individual attention and is directed toward reaching his or her maximum potential. The Three-year-old and Pre-K schedules include age-appropriate guided free play, circle time, reading readiness/language arts activities, math, science, social studies, music, art, snack or lunch time and technology activities. Additionally, children participate in chapel with our pastor and children and youth ministers.

## Goals

Our Goals are to:

- Foster a sustaining relationship with God.
- Provide a safe, nurturing, and non-threatening environment for growth and development.
- Provide for self-discovery learning at each child's pace.
- Develop language skills.
- Assist each child to play cooperatively with other children and groups.
- Develop acceptable means of expressing emotions.
- Improve fine muscle and gross motor coordination through physical activity.
- Encourage children to initiate, perform and complete activities independently.
- Increase awareness of the world around them through hands-on learning centers, resource people from the community (who come in to share their skills and knowledge), and field trips.
- Prepare for kindergarten using the Virginia Standards of Early Childhood.

## Preschool Curriculum

Our curriculum supports *Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS): Birth to Five Learning Guidelines* by preparing children for next preschool year.

### ***The Terrific Two's program encourages ....***

- Fine motor skills and hand eye coordination
- Manipulative activities that enhance problem solving abilities and decision making
- Free play activities to enhance socialization, pretend play, and language development
- Performing tasks independently

### ***Incorporated throughout the program are ....***

- Art activities encompassing painting and drawing with a variety of tools, use of scissors, use of glue and a variety of other materials.
- Water play, matching and sorting activities, puzzles, eye-hand coordination, fine motor and gross motor activities to improve muscle coordination (stacking, sorting, matching, blocks, etc.).
- Games and song activities using colors, shapes, letters, and counting, following one and two step directions, concept building
- Sharing, turn taking, problem solving and interactive play with their peers

## **Thrilling Three's**

Thrilling Three's curriculum has been adapted with age-appropriate skills, social, and motor development lessons.

### ***The Thrilling Three's program encourages ....***

- Listening and communication skills
- Fine and gross motor skill development
- Development of social skills
- Music and art appreciation
- Colors, shapes, numbers, and letter recognition and sounds
- Name recognition

### ***Incorporated throughout the program are ....***

- Music and art activities
- Sensory activities
- Science exploration
- Colors, math concepts including shapes, numbers and letters
- Chapel time as well as a daily Bible story

## **Pre-K**

Pre-K curriculum incorporates the following monthly themes for a focused integration of skill development of oral/written language, science, math, art, music and dramatic play. These skills are taught at an age-appropriate fundamental level throughout the year.

### ***Incorporated throughout the program are ....***

- Fine and gross motor skill development
- Chapel and worship time as well as daily Bible story
- Field trips and community exploration
- Guided/focused facilitated play
- Development of social skills
- Development of personal independence and responsibility
- Art and Music appreciation and development

***Our monthly themes and activities for Pre-K classes will include:***

**September** – All About Me, Making New Friends

**October** – Seasons, Halloween, Columbus Day, The Five Senses

**November** – Election Day, Pilgrims, Native Americans, Thanksgiving, Food/Nutrition

**December** – Birth of Jesus, Cultural Celebrations, Homes

**January** – Weather, Hibernation, Martin Luther King Day

**February** – Valentine’s Day, President’s Day, Dental Health, Animals

**March** – Dr. Suess Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Community Helpers

**April** – Easter, Spring, Life Processes & Growing Things

**May** – Mother’s Day, Water, Transportation

**Evaluations**

Pre-K children are formally evaluated two times throughout the school year; once in fall and once in spring. At these times, a conference will be scheduled for you with your child’s teachers to discuss their progress and goals for learning. Two’s and Three’s teachers are in contact with parents with their child’s development throughout the year. Teachers informally assess children on a daily basis through observations and student progress. If you have concerns or questions about your child’s progress, please feel free to contact his/her teacher to arrange a time to meet.

**Daily Routines**

***A Typical Morning at Preschool:***

- Arrival – Themed activity or free exploration of activities such as:  
Blocks, Legos, puzzles, books, games, dramatic play, housekeeping, transportation, music, play dough, arts and crafts
- Circle – Welcome song, calendar, weather, story pertaining to theme of month, introduction or review of skill(s)
- Centers – Writing, math, science, art
- Music – Singing, dancing, creative expression
- Play outside
- Snack – Blessing, Bible story, discussion
- Wrap up – Discuss day, show & tell
- Dismissal

## ***A Typical Afternoon at Preschool***

- *Outside Play*
- *Lunch*
- *Learning Activity*
- *Rest Time/Nap*
- *Snack*
- *Learning Activity*
- *Outside Play*
- *Dismissal*

**Note:** Books read by the teacher or by your child, Bible stories, finger plays, singing, playing musical instruments, games, etc. will occur throughout the day. While the topics are the same, the material is very different.

\*\*Chapel and music are also provided on a weekly basis.

## **Admissions**

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool is committed to admitting and welcoming students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin. No employee or student shall undertake, participate in or support any action, verbal or otherwise, which is intended to harm, injure or insult any other student on the grounds of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin.

### **Age Requirements**

Children must be 2, 3 or 4 (depending on the class assignment) by September 30 of the year in which the child is enrolled.

### **Readiness for Preschool**

Toilet training: Children in the three and four year old classes must be toilet trained by the beginning of the school year. Pull-ups may be used, if necessary.

## Enrollment Procedures

The following items are necessary for enrollment in Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool:

1. Registration forms are on our website or can be mailed upon request. Please contact the church office at 297-7957 or [www.bumcmoneta@gmail.com](mailto:www.bumcmoneta@gmail.com) with any questions you may have.
2. Photocopy of child's state birth certificate (required by DSS).
3. School Entrance Health Form (form is on website or can be mailed upon request). Most physicians have online as well. **Must be signed by a physician and parent.**
4. Registration fee of \$100 (non-refundable). Please make check payable to Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool.
5. Return completed information to the church office with the registration fee or mail to Bethlehem Preschool, P.O. Box 458, Moneta, VA 24121.

## Health and Immunization Requirements

Copies of the School Entrance Health Form and a copy of the child's birth certificate **are required** to be on file in the Preschool office **before** a student may begin school.

## Illness and Medication

Children with signs of illness within 24 hours of their preschool class such as fever, nausea, diarrhea, or cloudy nasal discharge should not be brought to school. Parents of children who become ill while at school will be notified immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, those listed on the child's information sheet (emergency card) will be contacted, so the child may be picked up. Please keep this information updated.

Please contact the school (**540-297-7957**) and report to the director any **communicable disease** that your child may have contracted so the school can take extra precautions to insure it does not spread. (For example, head lice, flu, etc.) All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

Please notify your child's teacher if your child has a medical condition of which we should be aware.

## Financial Information

A non-refundable registration/supply fee of \$100 for each school year is required as part of your child's enrollment. Your child is enrolled for the entire nine-month school year.

Tuition may be paid in advance or monthly, and it is due by the **10<sup>th</sup> of each month**. **Checks should be made payable to Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool.** You may mail them to Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool, P.O. Box 458, Moneta, VA 24121, or, you may give them to the church office from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. If you choose to pay cash, please place it in the provided envelope and obtain a written receipt. Other payment options including Paypal and online banking are found in your welcome folder.

*Preschool staff are not authorized to receive tuition and fees of any kind. Please submit all payments to the front office.*

## Monthly Tuition:

8:30am -12:00pm - \$160/month for 3 days/week & \$225/month for 5 days/week

8:30am - 4:00pm - \$260/month for 3 days/week & \$360 for 5 days/week

*Registration* for a second child (and subsequent children) enrolled in preschool is reduced by 50% for the second child when they are enrolled in the same year. *Monthly Tuition* will be reduced by 10% for additional children enrolled in the preschool the same year.

## Schedules

All classes meet September through May. **Our preschool follows the same schedule as Bedford County Public Schools for holiday closings and hazardous weather conditions.**

## School Hours

8:30am – 12:00pm for half days.

8:30am – 4:00pm for full days.

Please do not bring children early and please be prompt for pick-up. Parents are asked to sign out children at what time they are picked up at afternoon dismissal.

Late fees are \$1/minute and will be added to your account.

We suggest you arrive by 11:50am for half day dismissal and 3:50 for full day dismissal.

## **Weather Contingencies**

***...If Bedford County schools have a delayed opening,***

All classes will come in at 10:00 a.m. and dismissal will remain the same times.

***...If Bedford County schools are closed, preschool will be closed.***

Bedford County closings and delays can be heard on local radio and television stations.

## **Newsletters**

Frequent communication between home and school is important to us and to your child's success. Parents will receive a class newsletter, e-mail, or calendar of activities by each class. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep parents informed about what their child will be doing so that parents may support the child's learning at home, and, secondly to share other pertinent information that may arise from time to time. Look for them in your child's backpack and/or e-mails from your child's teacher. It is important to keep up with what is going on in the classroom.

## **Communication**

The school agrees to keep you informed of your child's progress in all areas. We will contact you promptly if your son/daughter is having educational or behavioral difficulties. In addition to parent conferences held twice a year, the school welcomes informal communications between teachers and parents. Feel free to call or to e-mail for updates at any time.

We seek a partnership with parents. Parents who understand that teachers are trained professionals who understand children's developmental needs find that mutual respect leads to positive results for their children. Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool is committed to treating parents with respect, recognizing that they are their child's first teacher. Together, we have the same mission: the nurturance and development of the whole child.

## **School Code of Conduct**

To be a member of our school community is to accept and abide by the following expectations in the school parent partnership, it is expected that all school parents will:

- Seek, in selecting a school, an optimal match between the needs of their child, their own expectations and philosophy and programs of the school.
- Recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be achieved.
- Respect the school's responsibility to do what is best for the entire community, while recognizing the needs of their individual child.
- Familiarize themselves with and support the school's policies and procedures.
- Provide a home environment that supports the development of positive learning attitudes and habits that are consistent with those of the school.
- Involve themselves in the life of the school, through volunteerism and other means, to promote the best interests of their child.
- Share with the school any cultural, medical or personal information that the school may need to best serve their child and the school community.
- Seek to resolve problems and secure information through appropriate channels (i.e., teacher, director, Preschool Board – in that order).
- Treat everyone with respect and maintain an educational, rather than adversarial tone, in face of the inevitable conflicts and challenges.

## **General Information**

### **First Day of School**

The first time in a new environment may be difficult or uncomfortable for a child as well as a parent. Whether your child seems to be having difficulty or not, we ask that you bring your child into the classroom, assure him/her you will be back soon, say a quick good-bye and leave. Your child may try to draw out the process, but we have found if these steps are followed from the beginning, the unhappiness, if any, usually lasts only a few minutes.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

### **Two's and Three's Classes**

When you arrive, please park in the main parking lot to the left of the sanctuary, walk your child through the main doors to check in inside the fellowship hall (big room). Temperatures will be taken by staff or volunteer. Adult needs to initial questions regarding COVID, and sign child in.

**Two's and Three's Dismissal:** At dismissal we will bring your child into the Narthex/Office Area for you to sign out. Please park and walk into the church to pick up your child, there will be no pick up car line. **If you child stays for extended day, please see dismissal information below.**

### **Pre-K Class**

When you arrive, please park in the parking lot to the right of the sanctuary, near the preschool playground. Please walk your child in through the playground entrance and sign in at the double wooden doors/Pre-K entrance. Temperatures will be taken by staff or volunteer. Adult needs to initial questions regarding COVID, and sign child in.

**Pre-K and Extended Day Dismissal** – Please park in the parking lot to the right of the sanctuary, near the preschool playground. Please walk through the playground entrance and sign out/pick up your child at the double wooden doors/Pre-K entrance. There will be no pick up car line.

### **All Classes - Dismissal/Sign Out:**

You will be asked to sign your child out each day. If someone else will be picking up your child, please let us know ahead of time. If we do not know the person picking up your child, we will ask for their identification to make sure this is the correct person.

PLEASE keep the school updated on any phone number, address changes, e-mail changes or changes in those listed as having permission to pick up your child.

### **Hand Washing**

Children and teachers wash their hands at the beginning of the school day, after using the bathroom, after outdoor play, and before and after eating.

### **Labels in Clothing**

Please put your child's name on all belongings that come to school such as coats, sweaters, hats, book bags and lunch boxes.

### **Extra Change of Clothing**

Please put a complete change of clothing in a zip lock bag with your child's name on it. It will be kept at school to be used if needed. As the seasons change and/or your child grows, don't forget to exchange these.

**Snacks every day: (Half day – 1 Snack, Full day – 2 Snacks):**

Children are to bring their own snack each day. We are trying to encourage healthy snacks. Please pack a cup/thermos of water, a napkin, and any utensils needed.

**Lunch every day: (full day only)**

Pack a healthy lunch as we will all enjoy a full lunch together. Please pack a cup/thermos of water, a napkin, and any utensils needed.

**Birthday Celebrations**

Special treats for birthdays, un-birthdays (for those with summer birthdays), or other special occasions may be provided by parents. **Please talk to your teacher ahead of time for approval of items that can be brought in.**

**Field Trips**

Parents or another adult designated by the parent are expected to provide transportation and supervision for their child on all field trips. Admission fees, etc., where applicable, are payable by the parent.

**Toys**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys or other belongings to school unless asked to do so.

We are also aware that there may be days when your child is going to someone's home after school and wants to bring something special with him or her. That is fine, but their treasure must stay in the school bag.

**PALS PreK Assessments**

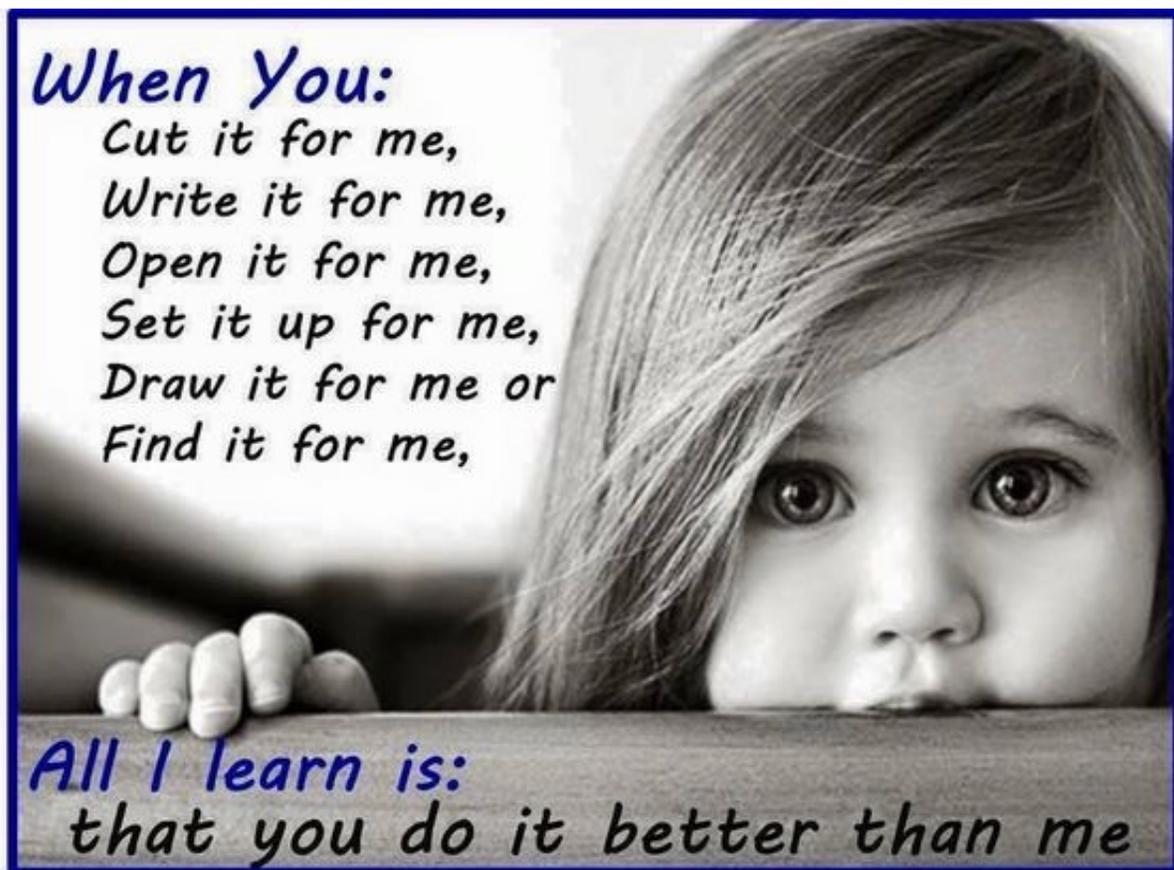
We will be assessing all PreK children using the PALS PreK Assessment in the fall and again in the spring. This information will be shared with Bedford County Public School System, as it is the same assessment tool they use. This is a great measurement tool for teachers and parents on the progress of each child. We will fully explain the purpose and procedures, as well as go over all results with parents.

## Safe Sanctuaries

At Bethlehem United Methodist Church, we offer a place where children can find unconditional love and care they need to grow and thrive. We take our responsibilities to our children seriously. We take precautions against abuse in our churches; doing our best to protect the children in our care. We follow a policy of prevention known as "Safe Sanctuaries." Through the "Safe Sanctuaries" Program, churches train and certify persons as safe workers with children and youth. These policies include such things as screening and checking references for paid employees and volunteers; preventing abuse; recognizing signs of abuse and reporting of abuse; making sure insurance coverage is adequate; and developing building usage policies. In all things done, we want to ensure we are treating these precious little ones just as Jesus would do.

## Volunteers

As the year progresses teachers may request parent volunteers to assist in classrooms for special parties and lesson activities. Volunteers must always be in a room with a teacher, assistant teacher, or another Safe Sanctuary trained person if children are in the room.



**Party and Field Trip Calendar**  
**2021 - 2022 School Year**

**All Classes:**

October 4	Field Trip to Gross' Orchard (9am-11:30am) *
October	Preschool Halloween Party **
November 22	Thanksgiving Celebration **
December 17	Preschool Christmas Play **
February	Preschool Valentine Party **
April	Field Trip to Booker T Washington Monument and Farm *

**Pre-K Only:**

January 10	Field Trip to Moneta Library *
February 7	Field Trip to Moneta Post Office *
May 6	Field Trip to SML Airport *
May 26	Pre-K Graduation (7:00-8:00pm) * <i>All Classes Are Welcome to attend</i>

\* Parent/Guardian attendance required

\*\* Preschool-wide Holiday Celebrations will be planned throughout the year and information will be sent home. Parents are welcome to attend, but attendance is not required.

**School Year Calendar  
2021 – 2022 School Year**

*School Year Calendar is subject to change.*

August 25	Back to School Night (parents only)
August 26	Meet the Teachers (parent with child)
September 8	First Day of School
November	Parent-Teacher Conferences for Pre-K
November 24-26	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec. 20 – Dec. 31	Christmas Vacation
January 17	Martin Luther King Day – Preschool is <b>CLOSED</b>
February	Registration begins for 2020-2021 School Year
March 14	Professional Development – Preschool is <b>CLOSED</b>
April 11-15	Spring Break
May	Parent–Teacher Conferences for Pre-K
May 25	Last Day of School for all children
May 26	Pre-K Graduation and Program

# Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

(please print your name on this line)

have read the Parent Handbook for Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool, and any questions I have regarding information, have been answered.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Please sign and return this form to Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool **no later than the first day of preschool**. Thank you, and we look forward to working with you!