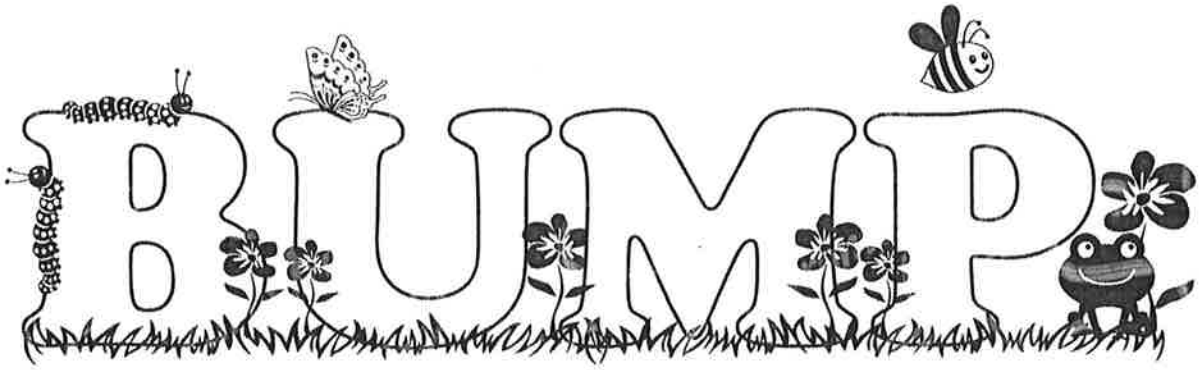

Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool

Growing God's Children

Parent Handbook

2026-2027 School Year

Bethlehem United Methodist Church

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Moneta, VA 24121

Phone: 540-297-7957

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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

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.

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 2:00 p.m., and Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Teachers and Preschool Directors will use a combination of Email and Brightwheel as the main forms of communication with families. Bethlehem preschool encourages families to use the Brightwheel App to communicate directly with Teachers and Preschool Directors.

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 Education and undergoes a renewal process annually. A copy of the Religious Exemption 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 prepare them for kindergarten. Our program encourages 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, music, art, and snack or lunch time. Additionally, children participate in chapel each week led by the pastor, teaching staff, and family minister.

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 motor 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 Department of Education Early Childhood Standards, Curriculum, and Instruction.

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.

Prek-3

Prek-3 curriculum has been adapted with age-appropriate skills, social, and motor development lessons.

The Prek-3 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
- Daily Bible stories

Pre-K

Pre-K curriculum incorporates the 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
- Daily Bible stories
- 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

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 Prek-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.

**Chapel and music are also provided on a weekly basis starting in October.

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 Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 classes must be toilet trained by the beginning of the school year.

Enrollment Procedures

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

1. Registration form (Provided on Brightwheel App or in the Church Office)
2. Photocopy of child's state birth certificate (required by DOE).
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 $125 (non-refundable). Please make check payable to Bethlehem United Methodist Preschool.
5. We encourage registration forms and payments be made using the Brightwheel App. You may also 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 or are running a fever of 100 degrees or higher 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 within the hour. Please keep this information updated. Children sent home due to illness will be unable to return to school for a full 24 hours.

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 ensure it does not spread. (For example, head lice, flu, Covid19, hand-foot-and-mouth, 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 $35 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 payments are due monthly by the **1st of the month.** A $10 late fee per child will be added to tuition amount if tuition is not submitted by close of business day on the 5th of each month. Tuition for Sept 2026 is due on back-to-school night, September 2st, 2026. **You are encouraged to make tuition payments online with the Brightwheel App or via check. 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. If you choose to pay cash, please place it in the provided envelope and obtain a written receipt.

Preschool staff are not authorized to receive tuition and fees of any kind. Please submit all payments to the front office. Bethlehem Preschool will not be responsible for any payments or fees lost due to being left in backpacks, given to teachers, or submitted in any way outside of the Brightwheel App or Church/Directors' Office.

Monthly Tuition:

7:30am-8:00am (Early Drop Off) - $125/month

8:00am -12:00pm - $408.25/month for 5 days/week

8:00am - 4:00pm - $632.50 for 5 days/week

Tuition may be paid in advance for a year at a 5% discount.

Monthly Tuition for a second child (and subsequent children) enrolled in Bethlehem preschool is reduced by 10% when they are enrolled during the same year.

Tuition Assistance: Scholarships, provided by Bethlehem Church, are available to families in need that qualify. Contact the Preschool Director for a scholarship application.

Schedules

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

School Hours

7:30am – 8:00am for early drop off.

8:00am – 12:00pm for half days.

8:00am – 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 after dismissal 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,

Early Drop Off will come at 9:30am, 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. The school welcomes communications between teachers and parents in person, using the Brightwheel App, and through email.

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

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 to the check in area outside of 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 Pre-K3 Classes

When you arrive, please park in the main parking lot to the left of the sanctuary, walk your child through the main doors through the fellowship hall (big room) to check in inside the gathering area outside of the classroom. Adults need to sign in child before dropping off.

At dismissal you will walk through the main doors to pick up child and check out in the gathering area outside of the classroom. Please Park and walk into the church to pick up your child, there will be no pick-up car line.

Pre-K4 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-K4 entrance. Adults need to sign in child before dropping off.

At dismissal, please park in the parking lot to the right of the sanctuary, near the preschool playground. Please walk in through the playground entrance and sign student out at the double wooden doors/Pre-K4 entrance.

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.

If staff are out and substitutes are in the classroom, all adults picking up will be asked for identification to ensure children are picked up by 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. Please do not send candy, gum, or soda.

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. We cannot heat up meals at lunch time so please plan accordingly. Please do not send candy, gum, or soda.

Early Drop Off:

Students can bring a breakfast item to eat during early drop off time. Please pack simple, easy to eat and clean up items for breakfast such as granola bars, banana, fruit cup, etc. Please do not send food items that require assistance eating or cleaning up, such as cereal and milk. Please do not send candy, gum, or soda.

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/guardian.

Toys

Please do not allow your child to bring toys or other belongings to school unless asked to do so (for example: Show and Tell)

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.

VALLS PreK Assessments

We will be assessing all PreK children using the VALLS PreK Assessment in the fall and again in the spring. 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.

Field Trips

Bethlehem Preschool offers school wide field trips in the fall and spring. Parents attendance and transportation is required for each student. On site Preschool classes will not be offered on field trip dates. Trip sites and dates TBD.

2026– 2027 School Year Calendar

School Year Calendar is subject to change.

Sept. 2	Back to School Night 6-8:30
Sept. 3	Preschool Meet and Greet/Open House: 10:00am-12noon Families welcome to pack a picnic lunch.
Sept. 9	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
Sept. 29	**Teacher Work Day (School Closed for Students)**
Oct. 19	**Teacher Work Day (School Closed for Students)**
Oct. 29	**Teacher Work Day/Conferences (School Closed for Students)**
Nov. 2	**Professional Development Day (School Closed for Students)**
Nov. 3	**Election Day** (School Closed)
Nov. 25-27	**Thanksgiving Break** (School Closed)
Dec. 18	Preschool Christmas Pageant and Parent Reception (**Early Dismissal**, All Students Dismiss at Noon)
Dec. 21 – Jan 1	**Christmas Break** (School Closed)
Jan 4	**Teacher Work Day** (School Closed for Students)
Jan. 5	First Day of School - 2027
Jan. 18	**Martin Luther King Holiday** (School Closed)
Feb. 15	**Professional Development Day** (School Closed for Students)
Mar.12	Teacher Work Day **(Closed for Students)**
Mar 29- April 2	**Easter/Spring Break** (School Closed)
May. 2	Easter Sunday
May 26	Preschool Graduation 10AM, Spring Program and Parent Reception - ***Last Day of School***

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!

rev. 6/17/2026