

Second Presbyterian Preschool

Newsletter

February 2021



Dear Second Presbyterian Preschool Parents,

The temporary shutdown of the preschool presents a significant challenge to most every one of you. I also realize the need to keep your preschooler's mind and body engaged in learning. Closing the school temporarily due to a COVID-19 case is the realization of my worst fear over the last 11 months.

Fortunately, my COVID-19 symptoms have been mild and very manageable. I suspect that the first dose of the vaccine I got on January 22nd has helped with that. While the preschool staff has followed strict protocols laid out and updated by the COVID-19 Task Force, when I tested positive, we were unable to isolate the exposure to only a few classrooms. The reason for this is during the 48 hours prior to the onset of my symptoms on Thursday of last week, I was in 6 of the 8 preschool classrooms and in close proximity to a teacher(s) or a small group of students for 15 minutes or longer.

The preschool has been short-staffed since the beginning of the school year. We have struggled to find teachers and substitute teachers as our enrollment has grown. Therefore, I have had to be in classrooms to fill in the gaps - subbing for teachers, teacher assistants, and aftercare workers. Last Tuesday and Wednesday, I was subbing in several classrooms as well as participating in a few learning activities with small groups of students. To reassure you, I was always wearing a mask covering my nose and mouth and I was washing my hands in between classrooms and throughout the day.

Once we re-open, I will no longer be in classrooms with teachers or students. I will communicate with them from the hallway or outdoors on the playground only. If we are unable to find subs when needed, we will unfortunately have to cancel school or aftercare for that classroom.

Good News

- This month, June Brunk will be joining our team as an aftercare teacher in the infant room 5 afternoons each week.
- Bobbie Black, our recently retired Preschool Assistant Director, is coming back this month to substitute teach.

- Staff vaccinations will be completed by mid-month so the teachers will be protected, and, in turn, your children will be even less likely to contract the virus from their teachers or give it to them.



Parents, if there is **any way you can carve a few hours out of your morning schedule**, please consider volunteering to sub! You will have a great time and be showered in smiles and laughter.

Summer Program

In years past, the preschool typically offered 3 one-week camps (science, art, and music) for rising threes, rising fours and kindergarten children. Last summer, the Preschool Task Force proposed to the Church a pilot, Year-Round program for one class of each of the following age groups: Infants, Ones, and Young Twos. This pilot program would run for 11 weeks during June, July, and August and would offer before and aftercare. The Church enthusiastically approved the proposal.

Currently enrolled students in our Infants, Ones, and Young Twos classes will receive, via email, a Summer Program Registration Form in the next week or so. Parents should select the weeks they would like to enroll their child and return the completed form and a check made payable to Second Presbyterian Preschool for the non-refundable \$150 deposit that will be applied to your child's first week. Space is limited and community interest is high, so please do not delay in returning your child's form and payment.

During the last 7 months, parents of Twos+(Bees), Threes (Bears), and, Fours (Owls) have expressed significant interest in having their preschoolers in a summer program for more weeks and hours than our typical camps have provided. I appreciate the interest, and I am exploring that possibility of expanding the summer pilot program to include our older students for this summer. I cannot yet say whether plans will be approved to move forward, but I hope to be in touch with an update later this month. Thanks for your patience!

Summer Program Fast Facts

- 11 Weeks
 - June 7 through August 20
 - Parents may select specific weeks to allow for family vacations
 - Payment for Summer Programming due 30 days in advance May 1st, June 1st, and July 1st.
- Hours 9-1
- Wrap Around Care
 - Early Care 8-9
 - Aftercare 1 1-2
 - Aftercare 2 2-5:30



Our first summer as a year-round preschool program will be fantastic! I appreciate your patience as we get all the right pieces in place.

Another Preschool Family Joins Second Presbyterian Church

Written by Executive Pastor and preschool parent Elizabeth Link

Like parents the world over, I wondered how the school year would go. Would our children be safe? Would their teachers be safe? We are still in the thick of pandemic life, but thanks to the diligent work of Dr. Sally and our wonderful teachers, this school year has been nothing short of a gift for our family. Our 2's+ daughter is loving life at Second Presbyterian Preschool. She dons her mask without hesitation each new morning when she hops out of her car seat to throw on her backpack. Here, she found a second home with friends and teachers she loves.

Like pastors the world over, I wondered how ministry would continue on. Would people continue to worship online? Would believers still be interested in belonging to a community that couldn't physically gather? I am one of the lucky ones. Twice a month, I get to meet with small congregations in our church preschool. I travel from room to room and share the good news with your two, three, and four-year-olds.

It is amazing to me what can still be communicated through the half-faces I see over cartooned, colorful masks. Today, I shared the story of Jesus calling the disciples to fish for people. Your little

people watched and listened with eagerness and attention. They laughed at the amazing catch of fish, and they wondered that the fishermen would leave their nets and follow Jesus.

So much remains possible and remarkable. God's mercies surprise me time and again. God has given us the right leadership, the best teachers, and the most devoted families for this difficult season in our lives. And God's work continues in the midst of pandemic stress and isolation.

A few weeks ago, the Morrow family joined our church. First introduced to Second through the preschool, they have blessed this church in declaring they want to call Second not only their preschool home, but their church home. What a gift to this community of faith. We are so delighted to welcome the Morrrows.

We want you to know, whether member or not, we consider your precious children a part of our fold. Know we pray for their health and wholeness as they grow, and we pray for your family in these difficult days. You are always welcome to reach out to me, and we hope you, too, can sense the ways God is working and on the move. God has good things in store for this bright new year. Thanks be to God!

Fantastic Fall Enrollment

Thank you for getting your registration forms and fees in on time. We already have over 80 students registered to attend in Fall 2021! Please spread the word in your circle of friends and let them know we have room for children ages 12 weeks to four years old by September 30th.



February is Black History Month

Please see the attached article from the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) [Culturally Responsive Classroom](#) to learn more about ways we can all teach our preschoolers how to recognize and appreciate our unique and special differences. Look for more information coming soon on our race related teaching practices (RRTP).

The Ones and Fours are Moving

If you have a child in the Ones class with Ms. Maria and Ms. Stacey, please begin having short conversations with your child about what fun he or she will have in their new, bigger classroom. Please do your best to keep these interactions positive and low key. Once the Owls have migrated to their new nest by mid-month, we will take the Ones downstairs to their new classroom to get them used to the space before you drop them off for the first time at their new classroom door.

If you have a student in Mrs. Taylor's and Ms. Bala's Fours class, please have a couple of brief conversations with your child about the move to their new classroom on the 3rd floor. You may want to share that it will have new cubbies, a new rug, new storage cabinets, and more. The children will use separate boy and girl restrooms located just down the hall from their new classroom.



ONLY 6 more weeks of winter! Let's enjoy the fluffy snow and cool temps while they last.

Faithfully,
Dr. Sally