St. Matthias Lutheran Church

Preschool

Welcome to St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool. We are so happy to have your child(ren) enrolled in our program and look forward to working with you.

**Our Vision** is to be a place where young children can “play & learn” in a faith-based environment and where “ordinary can become extraordinary” through age appropriate & stimulating activities.

**Our Purpose** is to provide the highest quality preschool education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool serves the spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of preschool children and their families.

**Our Mission** is to provide a fully integrated preschool program to foster the child’s social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development.

St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool leadership consists of the Preschool Board of Directors including the Pastor, and 5 church members. Director reports to the Pastor.

Pastor Sean-Miller Perez

Marileen Chapman - Director

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**Curriculum**

***New this year***, St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool will be implementing the “Funshine Express Curriculum”. The Funshine Express Curriculum is aligned with each state’s Early Learning Standards. The Butterflies program will be used in PS 1 – PS 3 and Fireflies will be used for PS 3 – 4/5 K. It is a theme & discovery-based learning experience that gives each child the opportunity to move through specially designed learning centers at his or her interest level. The curriculum focuses on learning basic concepts and skills through hands-on experiences and activities. There will be an extra fee charged at enrollment for the Funshine Express Curriculum.

**Goals of the Curriculum**

* To provide a positive sense of identity and emotional well-being
* To gain a deeper understanding of God’s Love
* To develop age-appropriate social, physical, language and literacy skills
* To encourage thinking, reasoning, questioning and experimentation
* To provide exposure to the arts and encourage creative expression
* To demonstrate proper health, safety and nutritional practices
* To respect gender, age and cultural diversity
* Incorporate STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) into preschool lesson plans

**Daily Schedule**

We strive to provide the best preschool experience for you and your child. We offer a center based learning environment. Thematic units are the basis for developing centers, whole class instruction, and enrichment activities for each child.

\*Class Schedules will vary slightly based on individual classrooms.  Please refer to your child’s daily class schedule for more details. Below you will find information on all classes spread out throughout our week here at the preschool. We believe each moment here at our preschool should be fun and engaging. It is our desire to reach our children in their early years while the brain is most rapidly developing.

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**Description of all Classes offered at SMLCPreschool**

***Morning Work and Table Top Manipulatives:*** Each day as our students come into preschool, they will be directed to their spot at the table where in PS-3 and 4/5 K they will have a morning worksheet with their name, letter of the week, and number of the week to trace. 4/5 K eventually will begin to write their last names. In PS-1 and PS-2 there will be a table top manipulative or project for the children to come to the table and participate in.

 ***Circle Time:*** Circle Time is a fun interactive way to start the day. The children will sing songs for the days and months. The children will help place the day of the week onto the calendar, and the class helpers of the day will be assigned. In PS-1 and PS-2 circle time includes letter, shape, and number time as well through fun interactive songs and motions.

***Story Time Theatre:*** This class will include an interactive story that correlates with the theme of the week will be read with children participating in acting, sequencing, and recalling.

***Character Training:***  The children will have fun with interactive stories, songs and lessons that correlate with our verses and virtues. The children will also learn how to show the love of God by being a good friend. Our goal is to reach the child’s heart, not just modify their behavior.

 ***Math and Science Exploration:*** Your little scientist or mathematician will love this class. Anything from naming the planets to graphing activities and all in between will be conducted here. This class is design for a daily activity in PS3 and 4/5K.

 ***Movin’ and Shakin’ Music Class:*** Children who are consistently exposed to musical experiences gain neural connections that help with brain development and cognitive thinking. It has been proven that this exposure helps them do better in areas such as reading and math, helps them gain better control of their bodies, aids in focusing, promotes higher self-esteem and emphasizes teamwork.

***STEM:*** Our planis to gradually incorporate the *STEM (*Science, Technology, Electronics, and Math) teaching method into our preschool curriculum.

***Funshine Express Curriculum*** : All children will participate in daily “Funshine Express Curriculum”. There is a small fee for this program.

***Social Studies:*** All PS3 and 4/5 K children participate in this during class time. The activities will always correlate with the thematic unit of the week. All activities are fun and interactive.

 ***Fine Motor Skills:***

All PS-1 and PS-2 students participate daily in activities that promote fine motor skills. Water droppers, tweezer pick up, and much more are offered.

 ***Bible Lesson Time: Faith Based Focus***

Your child will participate in the A, B, and C’s of the bible curriculum. This curriculum promotes a different biblical story each week & is strictly a bible story based & represents all Christian denominations. Our PS-3 and 4/5K children will be taught a different bible verse each week.

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**SMLC PS POLICIES & DAILY PROCEDURES**

**Arrival/Departure – We follow Social Distancing Protocol**

**CDC guidelines state that children 2 & under are not required to wear masks. We do suggest that children ages 3 – 5 years old wear a mask at our Preschool. All parents/adults *who are not vaccinated against Covid-19 are required to wear a mask when dropping off & picking up their child for* the safety of our staff and other parents. Staff that are not vaccinated will be required to wear masks until further notice. Subject to change as needed.**

Our school operates Monday through Friday from the hours of 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. Children should NOT be dropped off prior to 9:00 am, and no later than 9:15 a.m. Instruction and the classroom days begin promptly at 9:20 am.

For safety reasons, Parents are required to park their car and escort their child to the front door of the Preschool. Our staff will take your child’s temperature prior to entrance into the Preschool. We will then escort your child to his or her classroom. For Departure, Parents are again asked to park their car and will pick up their child from the front entrance. Our staff will meet you at the front door to pick up your child. This policy is subject to change as necessary.

Afternoon pick-up is between 12:45 p.m. and 1:00 pm. All students should be picked up by their designated care giver NO LATER than 1:00. A late charge of $1.00 per minute will be charged for any student picked up later than this time. Repeated late pick-ups could result in termination. It is important that anyone picking up your child has written permission and is listed on the enrollment form. Your child will not be released to anyone not listed on the enrollment form or given written permission to do so.

**Disaster Preparedness**

SMLC Preschool has an emergency disaster plan in place. Staff members are will be First Aid/CPR certified & have taken Blood Borne Pathogen training to be prepared to handle an emergency.

**Class Size**

Preschool class size will meet or be below student teacher ratios of all state appointed ratios.  We are currently following social distancing which requires smaller group sizes than normal.

**Dismissal Authorization**

Please inform us with a note or phone call if someone other than those you have originally authorized will be picking up your child. The authorized person must be over 18 years of age and present a photo ID. Your child(ren)’s safety is our main concern. On your registration forms, you will find a place to put any and all person(s) who you deem able to pick up your child(ren) in your absence.

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**Field Trips**

We will have two Field Trips during our school year for the 3PS and 4/5 K students. In order to provide an optimum level of safety, we require that a parent attend the field trip and transport their child to the field trip location. This makes for a more family friendly field trip, and ensures that all of our children are well supervised. Field trips are for St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool children only. If you choose not to have your child participate in scheduled Field Trips, he or she must remain at home that day as the classroom will be closed.

**Discipline Policies**

Our classes have a positive reinforcement policy and use redirection as our method of managing positive behavior. If a child is having a hard time following the classroom guidelines, we may use “time away” from the activity to allow for the child to calm themselves so that they can rejoin the group. Our goal is to show love and forgiveness at all times.

Our PS-1 and PS-2 classes have daily communication sheets that keeps parents informed as to class participation and behavior.

To make certain that every child is treated with respect and care; our teachers adhere by the following guidelines when disciplining a child.

* No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment, handled roughly, or confined in any way.
* Discipline shall never be delegated to another child.
* Discipline shall never be exercised for a child not eating or for a lapse in potty training.
* Withholding food or drinks is never used as a discipline procedure.
* Harsh language or belittling children is never tolerated.
* Redirection is our first option for helping a child to calm down.

**Biting**

As with any behavior, how biting is dealt with depends on the ages of the children involved, the reason for the biting (if it can be determined), frequency of the biting and many other specific circumstances. General guidelines for biting include:

* Helping calm the child who was bitten & give lots of love
* Clean the area and apply a cold compress
* Completing an incident report for the parent of the bitten child.
* Discussing the situation with the biter's parent.

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Depending on the ages and circumstances involved, additional actions might include:

* Discussing a better solution with all children involved.
* Separation of involved children.
* Showing/giving the biter something appropriate to bite (teething ring).
* Ensuring that the environment provides enough challenging activities.
* Carefully observing the involved child to identify precipitating events and prevent recurrences.
* Maintaining a log to track when the behavior occurs.
* Conferences with parents to discuss the child's actions at home, parental discipline techniques, search for outside resources, etc.

Just as any other behavior issue regarding a child is confidential, the name of the child that has bitten is also confidential, in order to ensure the privacy of the child and family and prevent bias from others enrolled in the center. We will keep you informed as to what steps are being taken and if bites are from the same or a different child. Informative handouts are given to parents regarding biting.

Biting is often a common behavioral action of frustration in young children; however, it is our responsibility to ensure the safety of our preschool children. We will follow the Parental notification Policy below after 2 bites; this policy will also be followed for other behavioral Issues.

**Parental Notification Policy for Behavioral Issues**

Parents will be notified when our methods are not adequate to help the child calm down, or if excessive behavior issues occur. We will work with our staff to correct the situation in the best interest of the child and still maintain an orderly and loving class. The following will occur when notifying the parents does not solve the problem:

1. Conference between parents, teachers, and Director
2. “Time Away” from Preschool for a reasonable amount of time. This sometimes help break the cycle or biting. Tuition fees will be required to hold your child’s spot.
3. An individual behavior plan will be put in place to accommodate the child’s individual needs
4. If all of the above has failed, the school will have no alternative but to dismiss the child from the program.

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**Labeling Items**

Please label all items of personal property. We will make every attempt to locate and return lost items. This task is much easier if your child's name is on the items. We cannot be responsible for any personal items that your child may bring to school.

**Toy Policy**

Please do not send toys or other items from home unless requested by the teacher. Please remove all toys from your child before entering the Preschool. The staff at the SMLC Preschool takes the approach of starting each day on a positive note, when we are forced to take toys away from children in the morning this sets a negative tone for the day.

**No Weapon or Rough Play Policy**

Our students are not allowed to play guns, swords, or any weapon oriented game. Our students will be reminded of this and redirected if needed. We also have a “hands are for helping, not for hurting” slogan that encourages our children to not handle their friends in a rough manner. Please help your child understand this policy.

**ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT**

**Registration and Enrollment**

St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool opens enrollment for the upcoming school year in January to current students and siblings as well as church members. In February, enrollment is open to the public. All current students that enroll in January are guaranteed a spot, however after the exclusive January enrollment for in house students, enrollment becomes first come serve to those who submit form and payment. When registering your child, you must provide a completed enrollment form, and current immunization record that must be on file prior to start of school year.  An annual registration fee and materials fee is due upon enrollment. “At meet the teacher” or when your child is enrolled in our program you will need to sign acknowledging that you received a copy of the handbook and that you will abide by all policies in it.

**Photo Release**

At the beginning of each school year, parents will be asked to complete a photo release form for your child. The release is used to gain parent permission for the purpose of promoting services at St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool only. Names of students or preschool information will not be released.

**Preparing for the First Day of School**

In an effort to prepare and welcome you to St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool, we will schedule an Open House/ “Meet & Greet” from 5:30 – 6:30 pm prior to Preschool opening. Date to be announced. Our first day of school is Tuesday after Labor Day. All schedules are subject to change and you will be notified.

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**Separation from the Parent**

The process of separation from the parent as the child enters and attends preschool is one of the most important accomplishments of the preschool child.

At each age level, a child will react differently. As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities. In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning:

* To develop an interest in the activities of the preschool
* To feel comfortable with others at preschool
* To understand that his/her parent will come back and pick him/her up
* To understand that all parents leave their children and come back for them
* To understand that parents often must concentrate on their own interests and duties which are separate and different from those of a child
* To develop an acceptance and willingness to allow the parent an open-door policy

**Tuition Policy**

St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool tuition is calculated on an annual basis and then is divided in to nine equal payments and is paid monthly. **Tuition is due by the first of each month. A service charge of $25.00 will be added to your account for tuition that is late.**

St. Matthias Lutheran Church is going green. We are in the process of offering automatic tuition withdrawal for tuition payments and you will be notified & given an “Automatic Tuition Withdrawal” form as soon as the process is set up. (You will need to attach a blank voided check with the form). This will be a full month’s tuition and will be the first installment payment of 9 total payments for the year. Checks, Cash, or Money orders made payable to SMLC Preschool will be accepted until further notice.

If there is insufficient funds in your account when the withdrawal is scheduled you will be assessed an additional fee of $35.00. Enrollment may be terminated for accounts that are 15 days past due.

**A fee of $1.00 per minute will be applied for children who are picked up after 1:00 p.m. See Arrival/Departure for additional information.**

Should any extenuating circumstances arise that would prevent you from paying on a timely basis, please discuss this with the preschool Director immediately.

Please refer to the first page of the Registration Packet for fees. New rates will be applied to enrollments after May 1, 2021.

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**Fun Friday**

We offer “Fun Fridays” each week. The hours of operation are the same as our normal preschool hours; however, this is not a core preschool curriculum day. Curriculum instruction is not taught on this day; however quality educational activities will take place. Please refer to the Registration Packet for details. **Reminder**: There is an extra fee for Fun Friday.

**Termination of Service by St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool**

St. Matthias Lutheran Preschool may terminate services in a time frame determined by the Director under any of the following conditions:

* The child’s account is 2 weeks past due. On the Friday of a past due account the child will be withdrawn by the preschool. The spot will be given to any child on the waiting list. If there are any available spots and the family wishes for the child to continue to attend SMLC Preschool, the family will need to re-enroll by paying the registration fee, all past due balances, and all current monthly dues in order to re-enroll.
* St. Matthias Preschool cannot appropriately provide for the child.
* Continual negligence by the parents of policies and procedures
* Child becomes chronically unmanageable and cannot participate effectively in classroom activities, or interferes with the participation of other children, and teachers conclude that it is the best interest of the class.
* Your child has missed 2 continuous weeks of school in which the school has not been notified.

**Termination of Service by Parents**

Parents may withdraw a child from the program with an advanced 2 week written notice to the Director. The Date of withdrawal will be effective 2 weeks after the advanced written notice was received. St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool is always interested in knowing the reason a child leaves the program; parents may be contacted by the Director for feedback. No refunds will be made as all fees collected by the preschool are non-refundable.

**Schedule Deviations**

St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool generally follows the School District of Pickens County schedule, however our schedule may differ. Make sure to keep a copy of our preschool calendar. We have already scheduled several fun events and special days.  Also, look for information in our weekly newsletter about upcoming holidays and school closings.

For all inclement weather closings please stay connected to your local news stations, Facebook, remind 101, & email for all information regarding school closings, delays, or early dismissal. If Pickens county schools are closed then we will be closed. If Pickens county schools are on a 2 hour delay then we will open at 10:30 a.m. Subject to change if necessary.

**We will not make-up any days that we are closed.**

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**Toilet Training**

St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool accepts children that are not yet potty trained in our PS1 - PS2 program. Children may not move up to a K3 class, regardless of age until he/she is completely potty trained. Our PS2 staff and preschool Director may offer suggestions with potty training. We ask that parents send disposable pull-ups and wipes for our K2 class. Please be sure there is a change of clothes for your child in his/her classroom and send appropriate replacements and extras and label everything.

Please feel free to speak with the preschool Director about extenuating circumstances. We want to provide the best program for your child and some modifications may need to be made.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

With the ongoing threat of Covid-19, volunteer opportunities will be limited this year. Hopefully, we will back to normal in the near future.

Some things you may want to consider for future opportunities.

We believe that a strong correlation and working relationship between the teachers and parents is essential in maximizing your student’s education. Please consider how you can help our children and teachers by participating in fundraisers, class parties, or other special days.  You could benefit the school by becoming a part of the Parent Panel Organization, volunteering to read to your child’s class, or helping during small group learning.  If you have any ideas or suggestions on ways you would like to help, please let the preschool Director know.

Please look for volunteer opportunities in upcoming communications.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES**

**Nutrition**

Please send a nutritious lunch with your child each day along with a drink box & two-8 oz. water bottles. We also ask that you provide your child with a nutritious breakfast prior to coming to Preschool as we offer a snack around 9:45 am, but not breakfast. If your child has special medical concerns and/or allergies, please be sure that information is on file**. Please do not send any food with peanuts, peanut oil, or peanut butter. All bags, bottles, etc., need your child’s name written on the items.**

**Illness**

**With the spread of Covid-19, please be aware that we will take your child’s temperature until further notice, prior to entrance into the center. If he or she has a fever of over 99.0 degrees, we ask that you do not come to Preschool. Again, we will follow CDC Protocols. We need to know, immediately, if your child or family has been in contact with anyone who tested positive for Covid-19.**

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**Other Diseases & Protocols:**

Colds, flu and other contagious diseases spread easily among preschool and toddler children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagious spread at Preschool, please keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

* Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
* Complaints of ear pain
* Productive cough
* Severe sore throat
* Eyes that are pink, burning or itching or producing discharge
* Diarrhea or vomiting
* Fever

If these symptoms of possibly contagious conditions are observed in your child during the day, you will be called to pick up your child immediately. As a preventive measure, if your child has more than 2 loose bowel movements in the day, you will be called to pick your child up. The stomach virus seems to be the most contagious.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home an additional 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without the use of fever reducing medication. This will help to ensure that the illness has actually passed and that your child will be well enough to resume school activities.

**Medication**

Prescription and Non-prescription medications will not be administered by the staff at St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool.  We ask that you administer your child’s medication before arrival at Preschool. Please contact the Director if you have questions about this. The only exception may be the use of Ora-Gel for teething.

**Health and Immunization Forms**

A report of a current physical exam and current immunizations are required for entry in the preschool program.  We must have a copy of this form by the first day of class.

 **Clothing**

Please dress children in simple and comfortable clothing.  This will make restroom breaks and “playing” easier.  Rompers and overalls are often very frustrating to children learning to potty train. Also, please dress your child appropriately for the outdoors.  We will be playing outside each day that we are able.

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**Changes of Clothing**

Please send a change of clothes labeled with your child’s name in a zip-lock bag at the beginning of school. This change of clothes should include a seasonal friendly outfit. Pants and a t-shirt are recommended. Also include underwear and a pair of socks.

**Accident or Injury**

Safety is the top priority at St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool Program; however, in the event of an accident we have outlined several procedures and guidelines. Our staff is required to take Blood Borne Pathogen training and current CPR/First Aide training.

Occasionally, a child will become injured due to a fall or bump. When this occurs, parents receive a written incident report about how it happened and the first aid treatment.

In the event of a life threatening injury or emergency, CPR will be administered, 911 will be called and parents will be notified immediately.

For a non-emergency injury or any sign of blood, basic first aid will be administered by preschool staff and the parents will be notified.  At this time, arrangements to stay at school or to make plans for the child to be picked up will be made.

Minor injuries will be washed, cleaned and covered with a bandage.  Parents will be notified during dismissal.

Any and all injuries will be kept in a file and will be recorded in the student’s school file.

Family physician and medical information will also be kept on file for each child at the school in addition to a current emergency contact information sheet.

**COMMUNICATION**

We want there to be a direct line of communication between our dedicated parents and our school.

**Preschool Bags**

Each child will need to purchase a preschool tote bag to use for the school year. Please use this bag to keep the daily folder, lunch bag, and any other materials in. Please do not send book bags or any other bag that is not a designated preschool bag. We have found that the simple preschool bags are easy for the children to drop their belongings in, and also easy for the teacher to find correspondence by preventing the teacher from unzipping 10 different compartments to find necessary items. In turn, this allows the teacher to spend more time teaching. Preschool bags are available for $10.00.

**Daily Folder**

Each child will have a folder that will be sent home with pertinent information, notes, and/or student work. This is to be returned to school the next school day. All notes, payments, or changes that need to be noted should be sent to school in this folder. Payment should be sent in an envelope marked with the child’s name and payment type. e.g. “Field Trip”

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**Website**

You can access the website at [www.stmatthiaspreschool.com](http://www.stmatthiaspreschool.com/). On the website you will find up-to-date information on our preschool program and your child’s class. An electronic copy of this preschool handbook is found there and there is also a tab that includes upcoming events. Registration and pertinent forms will also be available for download. Be sure to check this site often.

We also have a Facebook page. On this page, friends and family can be kept up-to-date with preschool events, happenings, and special information. We will also post pictures of St. Matthias events and activities. We hope this will be a great tool of communication between our preschool, families, and the community. Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search St. Matthias Lutheran Preschool.

**Contacting Us**

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any member of our staff.  We are always here to help you out or answer questions. You may call text, email or write a note to us.

**We appreciate your help in advance and look forward to having a wonderful working relationship with you.**

**Welcome to the St. Matthias family…we’re so glad you’re here!**



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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARENT HANDBOOK**

**St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool**

This parent handbook outlines the policies and procedures of the St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool. An understanding of and adherence to the policies and procedures will ensure positive parent-school relations and that the children's needs are being adequately met. Therefore, the preschool requires that all parents and/or guardians of children enrolled at SMLC Preschool read, sign, and return to the Preschool Director the statement that follows.

1. I have read and studied the Preschool Parent Handbook.

2. I will read and study any additions to, or revisions of, the parent policies.

3. I will adhere to the parent policies explained in this handbook.

4. I understand that lack of adherence to these policies may result in termination of the child care arrangement.

I understand that the policies in this handbook and communicated to me in any fashion are subject to interpretation, review and change by the Preschool Board.

Failure to sign this form does not excuse anyone from the policies outline by the St. Matthias Lutheran Church Preschool.

Parent/Guardian Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Child’s Name (please print):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Goes By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_