

Dear Friends in Christ,

At its last regularly called meeting on Thursday, April 11, 2019, the Resurrection Lutheran Church Congregation Council, the governing board for the church, after prayerful consideration voted unanimously to close the Resurrection Lutheran Church Preschool at the end of this school year. All classes and programs will proceed, uninterrupted, for the remainder of this school year, but after the spring semester ends on May 24, 2019 the preschool will not reopen.

This decision did not come easily to the council. Several are educators who fully understand the importance of Early Childhood Education, and all know the positive, Christian impact the school has had on hundreds of children over its 20+ year history. Yet, the changes in society and in our church and preschool communities have made it impossible to fully support the preschool as well as the other missions and ministries that we as a church are involved in.

Early in its development, the preschool served over 60 young people and was able to support the programs and personnel necessary to run its vibrant ministry. As time has progressed, the demographics of the church and the surrounding community have changed. The church no longer has a cadre of young families that need a great preschool. The need for low cost, quality Early Childhood Education in the community is being met by ever more community providers. As a result, the enrollment in our preschool program has been steadily falling for a decade. Fall enrollment this year was in the mid 20's, far too few to support the ministry. And although it has risen to 34 throughout the school year, 10 of those students will be graduating this May and we will find ourselves back in an unsustainable situation.

Ms. Shannon and the entire Preschool Staff and volunteers have worked hard to try to make the Preschool viable. They have made the hard decisions to accept lower wages and reduced hours. They have been flexible arranging their schedules to cover all the needs with a reduced staff. We thank them for their efforts, but it is not enough. The preschool cannot continue on its own income stream and the church at large cannot support it at the level necessary to maintain its high level of service to the community.

The General Funds of the church contributed over \$40,000.00 to the preschool last year to subsidize the program. At the same time, the church had to borrow from dedicated accounts to keep its other programs going because giving had not kept up with needs. That cannot continue.

We know this is disappointing news to all of you. But the reality is that our mission dollars, our facility, and the limited time and talents of our members can be better used in other areas of mission. The council plans to move Sunday School back into the main church building next year. Several of the classrooms will be furnished for adult use, allowing more adult Sunday School opportunities and use by outside community groups during the week. Initial conversations have been held about housing a Parish Nurse in the present offices to help members and the wider community with health screenings, medical questions, immunizations, etc. Things like adult literacy classes, ESL, support groups, and fellowship gatherings will all be made possible by freeing up space and resources. The council is open to any and all ideas for exciting new missions and ministries.

It is never easy to close a ministry of the church, especially one that has been a part of the congregation for over twenty years. But we have hope for the future that God holds in front of us, trusting that he will lead us along pathways yet unseen and to ministries that will give Him the Glory.

Thank you to all who have supported the preschool over the years. Thank you to Shannon McGee, the teachers and staff who have helped shape countless young lives over the decades. Blessings on your future endeavors.

*Let us pray.... God our Wisdom, we commend to you the decisions we have made in hope, in sorrow, and in love, that as we place our whole trust in you, our choices and our actions may be encompassed by your grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

Yours in Christ's Service,

Bruce Fisher  
Congregation Council President

Rev. William Jon Irons  
Pastor