

From: Little Lambs Preschool of Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Date: April 9, 2020  
To:  
Subject: Little Lambs Preschool of Immanuel Lutheran Church Lifestyle Press Release

### **Press Release**

For Publication: Immediate release  
Event Date: General

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### **Little Lambs Preschool Suspends April Tuition Due to COVID-19 and Continues Learn at Home Options**

DeKalb, IL—Due to the Illinois statewide “shelter at home” order, Little Lambs Preschool of Immanuel Lutheran Church announced this week that they have cancelled electronic tuition payments for April and will be refunding any April payments already received.

According to Pastor Marty Marks, it was something the church could do to help their student's families get through the current pandemic.

“As a ministry, we do not feel it is right to charge tuition for classes that are not taking place in the manner expected,” he said. “As a church, we also feel a responsibility to care for our staff. As a church body, we are at this time, and plan to continue, to make every effort to pay our preschool staff for what would have been their regular hours.” To that end, Marks reports, “The congregation and preschool families have been generous, with several preschool families donating back their tuition and church offerings remaining strong.”

Even as tuition is being suspended, and the preschool children are staying safely at home, teachers and aides are working hard to make sure preschool learning continues. Office manager Darlene Hillman shares a quote she recently heard, “An unexpected crisis can lead to unprecedented opportunities.” Hillman says, “I think this really applies in so many areas today, this is so hard and tragic, and yet I am really awed at how hard our entire staff has stepped up to the challenge to pull together and make this a valuable learning experience for all of us.”

The five-day-a-week class is getting weekly packets of worksheets, projects and activities to keep the students on track for starting kindergarten in the fall. Preschool director Carolyn Panozzo described the most recent packet as Easter themed. The packets go out through email and postal mail and include such things as skills sheets, art projects, Bible stories, small motor skill sheets and the letter of the week.

Teacher Theresa Kraiss is doing recorded stories for the children to watch on YouTube and includes resources to continue “circle time” at home, where the children practice the days of the week, weather, spelling their names, plus stating birthdays and addresses. Kraiss wrote to her students, “We truly miss being at school together, but we know everyone will keep up the hard work, and fun, at home!”

Teacher Kim Moncrief meets weekly with each of her classes in a “Zoom Meeting.” She sends out a video at the beginning of the week so students can prepare for the lesson. Moncrief says, “The zoom meetings are pretty successful. I used strict settings to ensure a safe experience and my online teaching has given me experience with screen sharing and dual monitors, so that helps.” Moncrief enjoys seeing what her students bring back to the next “class” as she gives assignments for them to search things. They are currently doing an “ABC scavenger hunt, as well as a “Star Student of the Day.” Other activities include finding an object of a particular color or getting a “show and share” item ready to present at the next zoom class.

Music teacher, Erin Grych records a weekly music lesson for families to view and participate on Facebook, while Rev. Marty Marks invites everyone to join him on Facebook Live for the weekly Chapel talk each Tuesday morning at 10:00.

The “at home” program, has been well received by families. Parent Todd Beavers says, “Julie and I both agree, this is a fantastic program and have faith it will continue strong for many years and generations to come 😊! It is so important to a little ones foundation!”

Little Lambs Preschool strives to fill their student's days with fun, educational, spiritual activities. There is time for discovery, group work, worship, music, art, academics, motor activities, and snacks.

Using the guidelines of the area school districts, the school concentrates on the children's kindergarten readiness skills. Little Lambs Preschool is licensed by the State of Illinois, and chosen as one of DeKalb County's Finest for 2019 in the category of Preschool.

Parents of preschoolers interested in learning more about Little Lambs Preschool or who would like to schedule a virtual or socially “distance correct tour,” can call the school at 815-756-6669. Registration for fall is currently ongoing.