



**Cathy C. Thacker, Pastor**  
**Denise Dunn, Director**

# Parent Handbook

## 2022-2023

### **Preschool Office Hours**

Monday through Thursday: 8:00  
am to 1:00 pm  
Friday:  
By Appointment Only

Office number and voice mail are available any time: (407) 892-6884

### **Our Staff**

Denise Dunn - Director  
Sue Donnelly- VPK Pre-K Teacher  
Barbara Knapp – Co-Teacher/Assistant to Ms. Sue  
Cassandra Collings – VPK Pre-K Teacher  
Jessica Wiskey – Classroom Assistant to Ms. Cassandra  
Edith Solano – VPK Pre-K Teacher  
Gillian Biggers-Miller – Classroom Assistant to Ms. Edith  
Jan Baldwin – Preschool Teacher  
Judi Patino – Classroom Assistant to Ms. Jan

### **Church Information**

Cathy C. Thacker- Pastor  
Worship – 10:00 am Sundays  
1000 Ohio Ave.  
Phone: (407) 892-3128

First Church St. Cloud is part of the United Methodist Church. Our Vision is to LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS, and SERVE THE WORLD. The Church is a community that worships together, a community that is learning to love each other, and a community that is primarily concerned with serving others outside its four walls. At First United Methodist Preschool, our hearts and doors are open to *everyone* regardless of religious background or church affiliation. Parents are not required to join our church but are always encouraged and welcome to attend in support of their child's Christian education and discipleship.

## ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

### Hours:

School hours are 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. **Late pick-up fines will be assessed** at \$20.00 for the first 15 minutes and increasing by \$20.00 for every additional 15 minutes or any portion there-of.

### Drive-Thru Procedures:

Please review the Drive Thru Procedures video that will be emailed prior to school starting. Children access the property for drop off and pick up through our drive-thru line. The car line may begin lining up at 8:00 am. If you are the first car to arrive, please stop on 11<sup>th</sup> Street just before the entrance to the alley. **PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK THE ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCH PARKING LOT.** Kindly leave a gap for vehicles to enter or exit. Other drivers will line up behind the first car in line on 11<sup>th</sup> Street wrapping around to Ohio Avenue. Overflow line up will begin in the parking lot across the street from the front office on 10<sup>th</sup> and Ohio. Please check to see if there is an overflow line prior to joining the line at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> and Ohio. Cars will line up in the first row of the parking lot. Please do not enter the alley until you are signaled to do so by a staff member and please do not pass any other cars in the alley. There is **NO** entrance to the drive thru line from the Florida Avenue side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street. For the best clarification, please make sure you view the Drive-thru instructional video that was emailed to you.

Once you are signaled to pull up, a staff member will take your child's temperature by using a touchless thermometer. If they are fever free (99.9 or under), you will proceed to the unload/load area and a staff member will unbuckle/buckle your child and escort him/her to/from the classroom. **Please do not get out of your car in the drive thru.** Please have the sign that was given to you by your child's teacher clearly visible on the right side of your dashboard or hanging from your review mirror (preferred place, pants hanger works perfectly). This way, a staff member will know which classroom to bring your child to or retrieve your child from. Please place your child's car seat in the rear passenger side seat for ease of entering and exiting during drop off and pick up.

**\*\*FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL, PLEASE DO NOT PASS OTHER CARS WHILE IN THE LOADING/UNLOADING AREA.**

### Late Arrival/Early Pick-Up:

If you arrive late, please call the school or contact your child's teacher. Pull up to the drive thru unloading area and someone will be out to retrieve your child.

If your child will need to be picked up early, please send a note in to your child's teacher so that they can do their best to have your child ready. Pull up to the drive thru unloading area and let your child's teacher know that you have arrived. Someone will bring your child out to you.

### Gates:

For the safety of the children and staff, the gates will always be locked except for the drive-thru gate. This will be open during arrival and dismissal times.

### Preschool Office Building:

The front door will be locked while children are on campus.

### **SAFETY** **\*\* (Reference COVID Addendum)**

Safety is a top priority of our school. Our facility is inspected regularly by the Department of Children and Family Services, the Osceola County Health Department and by the City Fire Marshall. We maintain an acceptable ratio of staff to children as approved by the Department of Children and Family Services and by the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Standards (VPK). The playground and classroom equipment are inspected daily for safety. Children are under constant supervision throughout the day by a trained teacher or staff member. We have installed 16 security cameras around the campus. All cameras are visible to the Director from their office. In addition, the entire facility is securely fenced in, and gates are kept locked while students are on property. The staff have participated in Active Shooter Training and CPR/First Aid/Bloodborne Pathogen Training. In addition, all staff is on radio communication throughout the day.

Should an EXTREME emergency arise where all children must leave the area for safety reasons, **our safe meeting spot is The Saint Cloud Library**. You would be contacted by staff immediately. A copy of our Emergency Response Plan is available upon written request.

### Authorized Pick-Up List:

Parents are required to supply a list of people who are authorized to pick up their child in their absence. **NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON.** If someone will be picking up your child who is NOT on the authorized list, we must receive a note or in an emergency, a telephone call before the child will be released. **Anyone picking up other than the parent will be required to show a Photo ID prior to the child being released into their care.** Until everyone becomes familiar with each other, you may be asked to show ID to pick up your child.

### Accident & Incident Reports:

State licensing standards require that we record and keep on file an Accident or Incident Report for anything that may occur to your child while in our care. If your child does have an accident or incident while in our care, first aid will be administered, and you will be asked to read and sign the report. If deemed necessary, the parent may be notified immediately following the accident or incident. According to Florida State Law Chapter 415, Section 415.504, childcare providers are also required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services. Please notify us if your child sustains any noticeable injuries while not in our care so that we will not have to fill out an Accident or Incident Report.

### Weapons:

First United Methodist Church Preschool has a **ZERO tolerance policy** for any weapons on the premises. This includes, but is not limited to, guns of any type, including toy, knives, swords, or anything that is deemed prohibited by the Osceola County School District. Immediate action will be taken based on the severity of the offense. Please make sure there are no weapons visible when picking up or dropping off your child.

## TUITION PAYMENT PROCESS

Tuition is due on the first of each month beginning August 1<sup>st</sup> and last payment will be May 1<sup>st</sup>. Preschool Registration Fees are due May 1<sup>st</sup>. The regular amount is due each month regardless of absences. Tuition has been calculated based on the total number of days school is in session for the year and is broken down into ten monthly payments for convenience. You will be provided with a Tuition Payment Schedule upon registration.

Tuition payments made by cash, check, money order, or electronic banking are the approved methods of payment. Payments should be made payable to First United Methodist Preschool (FUMP). To make a payment by cash, check, money order or electronic banking, you may do one of the following:

- Send your cash, check or money order in an envelope placed in your child's classroom folder in the backpack. The teacher will record receipt of payment and bring the payment to the Preschool Office for processing. A written receipt will be sent home within 24 hours of making your payment.
- Mail your check or money order to First United Methodist Preschool, 1001 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Cloud, Florida 34769. Upon receipt of payment, a written receipt will be sent home within 24 hours. Please allow ample time for your check to be received by the due date.
- Make your payment through electronic banking payable to First United Methodist Preschool, 1001 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Cloud, Florida 34769. Your child's name would be the account number. Upon receipt of payment, a written receipt will be sent home within 24 hours.

Any payments returned by the bank for insufficient funds will be charged a \$20.00 fee and you will be responsible to pay any additional bank fees in addition to the original amount of the check. Any family that has two returned checks will be placed on a cash-only basis.

A **\$20.00 late fee** will be added to any tuition or fees not paid by the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the month and an additional \$20.00 fee for every week thereafter until paid. **Unpaid tuition or fees thirty days over-due are cause for possible termination of enrollment.** If for some reason you are experiencing a financial hardship, please contact the Director so payment arrangements may be discussed. Confidentiality is respected.

Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) funds are provided monthly by the State through the Early Learning Coalition. It is vital that VPK parents sign their Monthly Attendance Forms provided by their child's teacher at the end of each month. Excessive absences or unsigned Attendance Forms will alter the funds that are received so the Attendance Policy will be strictly enforced. Non-compliance may result in the parent having to pay any additional fees accrued.

VPK funds cover a 4-day program for 4 hours a day. Any additional services or late fees are the monetary responsibility of the parent. Failure to comply could result in your child being removed from the program.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS **\*\* (Reference COVID Addendum)****

As a Christian preschool, we recognize, promote, and celebrate the positive and the Godly in all holidays and special occasions. Parents are welcome to send in special treats to celebrate their child's birthday at snack time or whenever is deemed appropriate by the teacher and parent. Please check with your child's teacher for best day, time and if there are any special food restrictions due to food allergies. Please save gifts or other items for any party outside of school. In fairness to all, party invitations distributed at school must include all the children in the class (or all girls, or all boys).

Parents will be invited to special activities including onsite fieldtrips when appropriate. There may be times that space is limited, and younger siblings will be restricted from attending the event. There will also be opportunities for parents to volunteer throughout the year for special activities.

## **CURRICULUM**

Our Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) classes currently use the Frog Street curriculum which is an approved curriculum for the state VPK program. Our Preschool classes currently use the Frog Street Preschool curriculum. Our classrooms are center-based, active learning classrooms which meet the developmental needs of the whole child; Social & Emotional, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Cognitive, Language, Self-Help and Spiritual. In addition, monthly themes and Bible stories are incorporated into the curriculum as well.

## **CHAPEL **\*\* (Reference COVID Addendum)****

Chapel is held in the Traditional sanctuary and will be led by the Director and/or Pastor. Chapel will include the monthly Bible story, songs, and prayer.

## **DRESS CODE**

Uniforms are not required at First United Methodist Preschool. School t-shirts are available on a first-come, first-served basis. For playground safety, children are required to wear sneakers or other rubber-soled, closed-toed shoes to school. Cowboy boots, crocs, sandals, flip flops, etc. are not approved school shoes. Girls wearing dresses should wear shorts or leggings underneath for privacy. Hats will not be permitted in class except for pre-announced unique events.

## **POTTY TRAINED**

**It is the policy of First United Methodist Preschool that all children be completely potty trained.** After the first month of school (adjustment time), more than one accident per month is not considered potty trained. You may be asked to remove your child from the program until they are potty trained completely. We do not have changing facilities and time spent attending to accidents of any kind takes away from other children in our care. **PULL-UPS are NOT PERMITTED** in class.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

A signed/notarized Photo Release Authorization is required for any photographs taken of your child. If we do not have a signed authorization, we cannot take their photo. This would include any classroom activities, school professional photos, Star Student, etc. If you would like to request no Social Media you can write that on the form.

## **ILLNESS/ABSENCES **\*\* (Reference COVID Addendum)****

First United Methodist Preschool is an active learning center. We are not a daycare and consequently, we cannot accept your child for class if they exhibit any of the symptoms on the Health Policy given to you at registration. If your child becomes ill during class or is unable to participate, you will be phoned and asked to pick them up as soon as possible.

**If your child will be absent, YOU MUST CALL our office at 407-892-6884 and leave a message (24 hours a day). You may also send an email to [director.firstumcpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:director.firstumcpreschool@gmail.com) or to the classroom teacher through the REMIND App prior to 8:45 AM.** If you will be away for vacation, we ask that you let your child's teacher know in advance. **Your child is important to us!**

## **VPK ABSENCES/TARDINESS**

First United Methodist Preschool will be operating our Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) for 4 hours a day, 4 days a week for 135 days. All enrolled families will receive a calendar showing the scheduled days off during the school year, beginning in August and ending in May. Attendance during the scheduled instructional days is of utmost importance to remain in the VPK program. You will be required to sign and comply with an Attendance and Tardiness Policy upon enrollment. VPK students are allowed only (3) absences per month to remain in compliance. While we understand at times vacations are scheduled, only ONE 5-day absence during the school year will be accepted. Documentation will need to be submitted in advance, explanation of why the absence is requested and be dated and signed by the child's parent.

Our classes begin at 8:30 am and end at 12:30 pm. The instructional day begins at 8:30 am and all children are expected to be in place and ready to start the day. Arrivals after 8:45 am are disruptive to the group in progress and difficult for the arriving child as well. We understand that it is occasionally unavoidable to be "running late," but more than twice a month will not be acceptable and could be cause for termination from the VPK program.

## **SUPPLIES**

Your child will need to bring/wear the following to school:

- A backpack (large enough to fit an 8 ½ x 11 size folder) clearly labeled with your child's name on the outside of it.
- A snack\* (see suggestions below) in a brown bag, lunch bag or lunch box
- An extra change of clothing in a large Ziploc bag in case of spills or accidents. These will be stored in your child's backpack.
- Play clothes comfortable enough for them to move around in and use the bathroom independently. Girls wearing dresses should have shorts underneath.
- Rubber soled shoes – tennis shoes/sneakers are best. Please no cowboy boots, sandals, or Crocs.
- Some of the classrooms may be chilly so you may want to keep a light sweater or jacket in your child's backpack.
- Any clothing (jackets, sweaters, etc.) should be clearly labeled with your child's name.
- Each teacher will provide you with a Wish List of additional items they may want for the classroom. Wish List items are not mandatory but are greatly appreciated!
- Our classrooms are always in need of tissues and baby wipe donations if you so desire.

## SNACKS

Snacks are provided daily by the parents. Please pack your child a nutritious snack including a juice box or small water bottle. Some snack suggestions include a sandwich, applesauce, cheese stick, fruit or veggies, or a granola bar. Candy and soda are NOT permitted at school. Snacks that should be refrigerated need to include a freezer pack due to limited space in the refrigerator. **If there is a student with a peanut allergy or any other severe food allergy, the whole class will become a PEANUT FREE (or other) classroom and NO ONE will be permitted to have anything with peanuts (Nutella, Peanut Butter, etc.). The same is true for eggs, etc.**

## POLICIES\*\***(Reference COVID Addendum)**

You were provided with copies of our Health Policy, Nutrition and Food Allergy Policy, Expulsion Policy, Attendance/Tardiness Policy, Field Trip Authorization, Photo Consent Release, COVID Policy and Discipline Policy at enrollment.

Per DCF Licensing guidelines, we are required to give you a pamphlet regarding the Influenza vaccine. We are required to have your signature confirming that the pamphlet was provided to you. It does NOT mean you have to get your child the vaccine. You will be given the paper to sign on the first day of classes. We appreciate your assistance with signing it for us. This pamphlet can only be signed in August or September.

We are also required to give you a pamphlet regarding Distracted Driver guidelines. This is a campaign initiated to help prevent children from being left behind in locked cars. Per DCF Licensing guidelines, this pamphlet needs to be signed in September and April. We appreciate your assistance in signing it when it is presented to you.

You have been given a copy of the COVID-19 Addendum to sign. This Addendum has especially important information that we need to make sure everyone receives and reads.

All signed pamphlets are required to be a part of your child's enrollment file in the office.

Thank you for enrolling your child in our program!