



# My PALS Preschool

A MINISTRY OF CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH  
121 SOUTH COLLEGE STREET • MYERSTOWN, PA 17067

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## PARENT HANBOOK

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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# INTRODUCTION

## ***WELCOME!***

We're so glad you've chosen *My PALS Preschool* for your child's earliest learning experiences. Scripture says "Children are a gift from the Lord..." (Psalm 127:3a) and here at PALS, we truly believe that! We consider it a privilege to be your son or daughter's first teachers, carefully nurturing the gift you have entrusted to us. It is our greatest desire to welcome your child into a loving learning environment that is centered on Christ. Here at PALS, we understand that no two children learn or grow in identical ways or at the same rate. We therefore seek to provide a variety of discovery opportunities that encourage unhurried exploration in a supportive community.

## **PURPOSE**

PALS exists to foster not only the mental formation of preschoolers, but their spiritual, emotional and social development as well. We do this with a blend of child-led and teacher-directed activities, incorporating input from Elco kindergarten teachers, in an atmosphere that seeks to honor Jesus.

## **STAFF INFORMATION**

PALS was formed by Sharon Wenger in 2017 and moved to Christ Community Church in 2025. Mrs. Wenger is a former faculty member of Sunrise Academy Preschool, Lebanon, started by Cornerstone Christian Fellowship. She taught both the 3-year-old program and pre-k classes on alternate years, as well as music for all classes. Mrs. Wenger has degrees from Houghton University in Educational Ministries, Bible, and a minor in music. She is thrilled to combine her background in each of these areas to educate little ones holistically.

Each class at PALS includes a Lead Teacher and Assistant. All staff are followers of Jesus and have passed required background clearances

# ADMISSION AND TUITION

## ADMISSION POLICY

- All children, regardless of race, creed or color, may enroll in PALS.
- Children must be the correct age for their class by 9/1 of the school year in question (age 3 for Wee 3's; age 4 for Pre-k).
- Each student must be toilet trained. For health and safety issues, a parent or guardian will be called in to assist if a child heavily soils themselves.
- To apply, parents complete an application and submit a non-refundable registration fee.
- Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- A student's spot will be reserved only when both application & payment are received.
- Upon acceptance, a welcome confirmation will be sent that includes directions on setting up a Brightwheel account.

### PLEASE NOTE:

**\*\*\*My PALS Preschool is not equipped to serve students who require specialized services or one-on-one supervision and reserves the right to determine the eligibility of any child.\*\*\***

## WAIT-LIST

If a class reaches maximum capacity, applicants may be added to the wait-list. No registration fee would be due until the student is moved to actual enrollment.

## TUITION AND FEES

- Tuition is an annual fee which may be paid in one lump sum or 10 monthly installments. Yearly payment or the first installment is due August 1.
- Wee 3's Class: \$1150 total for the year, or 10 monthly installments of \$115.
- Pre-k Class: \$1650 for the year, or 10 monthly installments of \$165.
- All tuition payments are due the first business day of each month, August through May.
- LATE PAYMENTS: A late fee of \$15 will be incurred for late payments.
- RETURNED CHECKS: A \$25 fee will be charged to cover costs incurred by returned checks.
- Please make checks payable to: Christ Community Church. Convenient online tuition payments may be made through the Brightwheel app or on the Christ Community Church website.
- Any account delinquent by 30 days may result in termination of the student's enrollment.

PLEASE NOTE: Because tuition is an annual fee, no refunds are given for illness, vacation, or snow days.

## WITHDRAWAL

If you should need to withdraw your child from the program during the year, please give a 2-week notice to the director. This allows PALS to enroll a child from the wait-list. In the case of immediate removal, the current monthly tuition payment will be due. All tuition payments are non-refundable.

## TERMINATION OF SERVICES

My PALS Preschool reserves the right to remove a student from the program due to:

- Parents' refusal to follow preschool policy or failure to make tuition payments
- Theft or destruction of property
- Injury to self, classmates or staff
- Unresolved behavioral issues
- Excessive, unexplained absence

## WEE 3'S CLASS DESCRIPTION

Our 3 year-old students may be cautious learners or carefree explorers! No matter your child's personality, we welcome them to our Wee 3's class where we are honored to be their first teachers.

- Class Time: Tuesday / Thursday... 9:30am-12:00pm
- Ages 3-4
- Maximum Class Size: 12 Students / 2 Teachers
- WEE 3'S SAMPLE CLASS SCHEDULE
  - 9:30 am Arrival / free play discovery time
  - 10:00 Class Meeting #1
  - 10:10 Music & movement / potty breaks
  - 10:25 Snack
  - 10:45 Outdoor time or further free play
  - 11:10 Class Meeting #2: Story with Scruffy
  - 11:20 Small Group Rotations
  - 11:45 Class Meeting #3: Ending Activity
  - 12pm Dismissal
- Special Activities: To provide opportunities for fellowship and celebration, family events will be planned over the course of the year. They will be noted on the class calendar given in August.

### LEARNING GOALS FOR THE WEE 3'S STUDENT

#### Social & Emotional Development

- Learn to follow directions
- Seek out playmates & join in positive play
- Practice raising hand to speak
- Clean up as asked
- Love our neighbors and respect others' feelings
- Learn to communicate & cooperate with others
- Share & take turns
- Develop self-control
- Use materials responsibly
- Learn to transition through activities
- Use manners and speak as God would have us to
- Grow in attention span

#### Language & Literacy Development

- Memorization of Bible songs & Scripture verses
- Learn about print & the format of a book
- Identify letters in first name
- Grow in receptive & expressive vocabulary
- Recognition of names, colors, shapes
- Introduction to the alphabet

#### Mathematical Thinking & Expression

- Introduction to numbers 1-10
- Introduction to basic 2-dimensional shapes
- Patterning, making sets, sorting
- Rote count to 10
- One-to-one correspondence counting

#### Scientific Thinking

- Stories about the animals, birds, plants & bugs God has made
- Sort items according to color or shape
- Fire safety
- Nature walks & discussion of God's creation
- Exploration of weather & seasons
- Hands-on experimentation

#### Fine Motor Skills

- Learning to use scissors, glue, markers, crayons, play doh
- Use of legos, puzzles & other manipulative activities
- Proper use of writing tools
- Tracing, coloring, cutting, gluing activities

#### Creative Thinking & Expression

- Participate in music & movement activities
- Sing familiar songs, chants & finger plays
- Engage in dramatic roleplay
- Explore rhythm instruments
- Use a variety of art materials & tools
- Open ended art discovery

## PRE-K CLASS DESCRIPTION

Our pre-kindergarten students are ready to explore. No longer toddlers, they are more mature; their abilities now allow them to engage in hands-on discovery experiences. What a joyful time to introduce our young friends to the world around us that God has created!

- Class Time: Monday / Wednesday / Friday... 9:00am-12:00pm
- Ages 4-5
- Maximum Class Size: 15 Students / 2 Teachers
- PRE-K SAMPLE CLASS SCHEDULE
  - 9:00am Arrival / free play discovery time
  - 9:30 Class Meeting #1
  - 9:45 Music & movement / potty breaks
  - 10:05 Snack
  - 10:25 Outdoor time or further free play
  - 10:55 Class Meeting #2: Story with Scruffy
  - 11:10 Small Group Rotations
  - 11:45 Class Meeting #3: Ending Activity
  - 12pm Dismissal
- LUNCH BUNCH: Lunch Bunch is an optional add-on program for our pre-kindergarten students. Children are invited to bring a packed lunch from home one day per week and stay for an extended time. Eating lunch at school helps practice important life skills that will be emphasized in all-day kindergarten. More info will be sent home after school begins.
- Special Activities: To provide opportunities for fellowship and celebration, family events will be planned over the course of the year. They will be noted on the class calendar given in August.

### LEARNING GOALS FOR THE PRE-K STUDENT

#### Social & Emotional Development

- Use senses to explore and learn from the environment
- Demonstrate interest in new materials and experiences
- Watch others play and ask to join in
- Play cooperatively with friends
- cooperate
- Recognize and express feelings appropriately
- Share & take turns
- Learn to transition to the next activity
- Respond with empathy to others who are upset
- Self-care skills
- Show interest and interact with others
- Ask questions to understand something
- Engage in simple games with rules
- Learn to negotiate, problem-solve &
- Love our neighbors
- Learn about choices & responsibility
- Use manners/speak as God would have us to
- Respect the feelings and belongings of others
- Able to advocate for one's needs/ask for help

#### Language & Literacy Development

- Memorization of Bible songs & Scripture verses
- Learn about print & the format of a book
- Recognize and name some upper & lowercase letters
- Recognize beginning sounds of words
- Use details from the text to answer questions
- Grow in receptive & expressive language skills
- meaning
- Hold conversations and share verbally
- Differentiate between numbers and letters
- Identify and make rhymes
- Count syllables
- Retell a story in sequential order
- Use illustration & dictation to convey

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### Mathematical Thinking & Expression

- Name numerals up to 10
- Number formation
- Compare groups (greater than, less than, or equal to)
- Identify 2-dimensional shapes
- Rote count to 20
- One-to-one correspondence counting
- Patterns, sets, sorting
- Measure and classify objects

### Scientific Thinking

- Enjoy nature walks in God's creation
- Sort items according to shape, color or other attributes
- Make predictions and compare observations
- Collect objects on a nature walk
- Use the 5 senses to gather data
- Hands-on exploration in simple experiments

### Fine Motor Skills

- Learning to use scissors, glue, markers, crayons, play doh
- Use of legos, puzzles & other manipulative activities
- Printing basic shapes, pictures, letters & numbers
- Proper use of writing tools
- Age-appropriate pencil grasp
- Write first name (uppercase first letter only)

### Creative Thinking & Expression

- Participate in music & movement activities
- Sing familiar songs, chants & finger plays
- Engage in dramatic roleplay
- Explore rhythm instruments
- Use a variety of art materials & tools
- Open ended art discovery

### Health, Wellness & Physical Development

- Identify some body parts and functions
- Practice basic hygiene routines
- Engage in gross motor movement
- Recognize healthy and unhealthy foods
- Discuss emergency prevention
- Grasp we are each uniquely made by God

## DAILY PROCEDURES

### PARENT COMMUNICATION

In August, parents receive a mailing with information for the upcoming year including the school calendar. Once school begins, monthly class newsletters are sent home as well as daily class reports. Parents are invited to reach out at any time with questions.

BRIGHTWHEEL: Upon enrollment acceptance, parents will be given instructions on creating an account in Brightwheel. This is a teacher/parent app that not only enhances communication, but also provides also insight into your child's learning activities as well as the option to pay tuition online.

### WHAT TO WEAR AND BRING EACH DAY

CLOTHING: Due to hands-on learning experiences, play clothes and sneakers are the best attire for class. (Leave flip-flops, clogs and other open-type shoes at home so they don't fall off during movement at school.) Children will also explore washable art supplies while they are at school.

BACKPACK: Please provide your child with a full-size backpack that has:

- ✓ space to hold a 9 x 12 folder
- ✓ a second zippered compartment to hold an extra outfit in a ziploc bag (in case of accidents)
- ✓ an exterior pocket for leak-proof bottle

DRINK: Please send a non-carbonated beverage for your child each day in a labeled, leak-proof bottle.

### TOYS FROM HOME

For the first 2 weeks of class, students may bring a stuffed animal from home to keep in their backpack in case of separation anxiety. We also provide a family photo necklace to help children who may miss mom or dad. After 2 weeks, toys from home should remain there or in the vehicle at drop off time.

### BIRTHDAYS

Each student's birthday will be celebrated in class...summer birthdays too! Detailed info will come home approximately 2 weeks prior to your child's special day. Students will be invited to participate in Show and Tell and also provide snack for their celebration.

### DISCIPLINE

To help little learners, we use the tools of redirection, positive reinforcement and communication of appropriate choices. We have three rules at school: walking feet, helping hands, and listening ears. From time to time, however, situations arise when redirection and reinforcement do not bring about the desired change in a child's behavior. Repeated uncontrollable behavior, or the need for direct one-on-one attention, may mean a child needs to exit the program.

PALS also reserves the right to dismiss a student immediately in the case of drastic behavior. This behavior may include but is not limited to theft, destruction of property, and injury to self or others.

### PARKING

Please use the parking that is available behind the church. (The small lot parallel to route 501 is off-limits to PALS families as it does not accommodate the number of families we serve. Nor is it easy to navigate, or turn around in, when families are walking there or all spaces are full.)

Please drive slowly on the premises. We also ask that you stay close to your child, holding their hand if necessary, and enforce our WALKING FEET rule upon entering/exiting to ensure student safety.

## **ARRIVAL**

Families enter the door off the small parking lot along route 501. The classroom wing is on the second floor and can be accessed either by stairs or elevator. Children will be welcomed into the classroom at the designated class start time; they may not be dropped off early. Likewise, students may not remain in the classroom after school ends.

[Wee 3's Class: students arrive at 9:30am / Pre-k Class: students arrive at 9:00am]

## **DISMISSAL**

We require parents to return promptly for their child. When parents are late, it causes anxiety in some students as they fear they will be left at school. Our staff also experiences stress, as they fear they may miss appointments and events they have planned for themselves or family members after class.

Unplanned overtime is not fair to our teachers, who already work very hard, so we take tardiness very seriously.

We therefore require adults to be ready and waiting for us so that dismissal is immediate at noon. This means parents must plan to return a few minutes before class ends so there is time to find a parking spot, exit your vehicle, enter the church, etc. (For families with toddlers or infants in tow, you may wish to return even earlier so you are not rushed.) We also remind parents that Myerstown is notorious for traffic delays from horse & buggies, tractors, and road construction. Please plan accordingly.

[All Classes End at 12:00pm / Please Plan to Return at 11:55am]

## **LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

- If an emergency prevents a prompt pick-up, please message the teacher through Brightwheel.
- A late fee may be charged to parents; this compensates PALS staff for overtime.
- If no one comes to retrieve a student at dismissal and no parent communication has been made, we attempt to reach all emergency contacts. If none can be reached, we are legally required to notify Lebanon County Children and Youth Services (CYS).

PLEASE NOTE: If a parent develops a pattern of lateness, the child may be removed from the program without refund.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

PALS follows the Elco school district. If Elco has a 2-hour delay due to inclement weather, we will operate on a modified schedule. If Elco closes due to inclement weather, PALS will also close. Changes in schedule will be communicated through email and Brightwheel message.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## ILLNESS

Students are required to stay home when they have any of the following symptoms:

- fever<sup>^</sup> or chills
- loss of taste or smell
- any unexplained rash
- pink eye\*
- diarrhea, nausea or vomiting
- sore throat or excessive cough
- head lice
- ear infection\*
- headache
- congestion or runny nose
- uncharacteristic lethargy
- draining wounds

### PLEASE NOTE:

\*pink eye & \*ear infection: antibiotics must be taken for 24 hours before returning to class.

<sup>^</sup>fever: students must be fever-free without medicine for 24 hours before returning to class.

Parents will be called to pick up any child displaying symptoms of illness at school.

## PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents or guardians interested in volunteering in the classroom or during special events will be required to obtain federal and state background checks as well as child abuse clearances.

We are required by law to report any suspected signs of child abuse.

## SNACK TIME

Students are asked to take turns providing snack for the class in rotation, about a handful of times over the year. An approved snack list will be provided with the summer informational mailing.

## FOOD ALLERGIES

PLEASE NOTE: The classroom is not a peanut-free facility. While we can gladly limit foods with certain allergens, we are not able to guarantee an environment free of cross-contamination.

If food allergies are present, the student in question may be required to provide their own snack daily for sake of safety.

## MEDICATION: BASIC FIRST AID

Students may be provided basic first aid by the teachers. Parents will note on the registration form their permission or refusal for staff to administer basic first aid.

## EPI-PENS

My PALS Preschool reserves the right to determine the eligibility of any child who needs specialized medical provisions since there is no nurse or medical team on staff. A meeting with the parents of the child in question will be scheduled to discuss physical needs in detail and staff will be trained in the administration of epi-pens on a case-by-case basis.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The stairway next to the classroom will be used in case of emergency evacuation, leading staff and students out the front door (facing W. Park Ave). In the case of emergency, we will gather in the large open area along West Park Avenue and notify parents as soon as possible.

In the case of medical emergency, every effort will be made to contact a parent or guardian prior to obtaining treatment for the child in question.

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

My PALS Preschool subscribes to the following beliefs:

- **God:** We believe that there is one true and living God, revealed in Scripture as the Almighty, all-knowing, and all-everywhere God, eternally co-existent as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—yet there is only one gracious and loving God.
- **Revelation:** We believe that God has made himself known to the world through his written word, the Scriptures; through his natural word, the creation; and supremely through his living word, Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of God in bodily form.
- **Creation:** We believe that God created the world and everything in it “good” as a reflection of his own power, glory, and gracious character, and now he loves, sustains, and rules over it for all time and eternity.
- **Humanity:** We believe that human beings, both men and women, are created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore possess intrinsic significance, dignity, and value as God’s highest order of creation.
- **Sin:** We believe that sin has fractured and spoiled all things in God’s good world, alienating human beings from God, creation, each other, and themselves, leaving the world in desperate need of spiritual rescue.
- **Salvation:** We believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, who has reversed the alienations caused by sin, and now is restoring humanity and creation to its original intended beauty in Christ.
- **Church:** We believe that the Christian faith is best nurtured in a community of gospel-centered believers, where worship and witness are embodied through the spiritual gifts and graces of its members, all of whom are on mission in Christ’s work of restoration.
- **Formation:** We believe that the Holy Spirit, who graciously indwells believers, gives the followers of Christ a growing ability and desire to follow the ways of the Lord in their personal lives and in society, such that all might flourish in this life and the next.
- **Eternity:** We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, ascended back to the Father, and will come again to the world in power and great glory to inaugurate the final judgment and restore all things in his eternal kingdom.

My PALS Preschool is a non-profit ministry of Christ Community Church. All parents and friends of the preschool are welcome to join with us in any of our worship services:

Sunday School...	9:00am
Sunday Worship...	10:30am
Wednesday Prayer...	7:00pm

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My PALS Preschool reserves the right to change, modify, or update the information in the Parent Handbook as needed.