



# EARLY EDUCATION AND SUMMER CAMP AT FISHERSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Mission Statement

Fishersville United Methodist Church's Noah's Ark Learning Center (FUMC NALC or "the school and camp") provides a Christian learning environment that assists children in growing spiritually, socially, emotionally and intellectually. The program is biblically based with the goal of sharing Christ with all of the children we serve. Noah's Ark Learning Center provides a developmentally appropriate program that assists children with the readiness skills needed to meet the academic and social challenges of Kindergarten.

We see serving children as a crucial ministry, as Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest." Luke 9:48.

We believe that a developmental approach to learning focuses on the use of learning games and hands-on activities. It is an approach that emphasizes activities that stimulate a child's imagination, curiosity and action. It presents questions to be thought out and problems to be solved. A developmental approach further suggests that the learning activities are appropriately matched to the child's developmental abilities and to an acceptable level of challenge.

Major components of the daily program at FUMC NOAH'S ARK LEARNING CENTER include the following:

- Learning Center Activities—planned activities offering children a choice of participation designed to help them reach the learning goals of the day;
- Music—a combination of singing, clapping, marching and moving;
- Art—activities which encourage creativity, exploration of ideas, and hands-on action;
- Large/Small Group – teacher-led activities designed to develop language skills, problem solving skills, memory skills, and to increase a child's general knowledge; and
- Free Play—times of transition from one segment of the day to another and large blocks of outdoor play offer children freedom of choice to pursue many activities of fun and building of friendships.

FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center believes it is important to introduce preschoolers to the belief that there is a God who loves them and cares about them. Teachers and children are encouraged to express their love and appreciation for God in natural and spontaneous ways as well as at the specific times reserved for the teaching of Bible songs, truths and prayer.

## General Information

FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center Center is a ministry of Fishersville United Methodist Church. In compliance with code of Virginia, the Program is exempt from being licensed and is classified as an "Exempt" child development center. The Code of Virginia, Section 63.0 – 196.3, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensing by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the exemption law.

The number of children cared for in the operation of FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center is not to exceed 130, specified in the Statement of Intent filed with the Virginia Department of Education.

A board of Directors composed of staff members and church members oversees and monitors the activities of the School/Camp. The board is open to any questions, concerns, or suggestions of parents and staff.

FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center utilizes the lower level of Fishersville United Methodist Church at 1600 Jefferson Highway, Fishersville, VA, as well as the Fellowship Hall, playgrounds, Sanctuary, and youth room. Our facilities include child-sized toilets, a sprinkler system and a secure playground that is entered from inside the building.

The Center does not provide any food service.

FUMC and FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center are covered by public liability insurance which exceeds the requirements by the Code of Virginia.

## **Contacting FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center**

The Office phone number is **540-779-0643**. If unable to reach the director/teacher during the school/camp hours, you will always be able to leave a message and a staff member will check the messages before and after school/camp hours. However, you are always welcome to call the church office at 540-779-0640 and the School/Camp will be paged. You may also reach the director via email at [director@fishersvilleumc.org](mailto:director@fishersvilleumc.org).

## **FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center Staff**

The Board of Directors uses the following qualifications for hiring staff members:

- a loving, caring individual who has a personal love of God;
- an individual who loves children and cares for their well-being, development, and self-esteem;
- an individual who works effectively and creates a positive environment while working with preschool age children
- an individual with educational background and experience
  - a college degree in the area of Early Childhood Education is preferred; and
  - previous preschool experience.

Our staff must be certified annually by a practicing physician to be free from any disability that would prevent them from caring for children. Furthermore, staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid, must have passed all state required health exams and have completed all state required background checks. Each staff member completes training on Child Abuse and Neglect yearly.

## **Enrollment and Admission**

FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center admits students of any race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students at the school/camp. FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center reserves the right to select students and/or maintain their enrollment on the basis of the program's ability to meet each child's needs, and the parent(s) commitment to the program's philosophy, objectives and policies, and their willingness and ability to cooperate with the administration and abide by its policies. The FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center Board of Directors will make the final decision for accepting and/or dismissing a student from the program.

The School/Camp reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any child who, after entering, demonstrates developmental needs that cannot be met by this facility. The School/Camp also reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any child whose behaviors or needs put other children at risk.

A discount of 5% is given to the tuition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or third child for families with multiple children attending the school or camp.

## Registration

Registration is for one school year or, in the summer for the entire summer or the weeks registered. Our Enrollment Process begins in February of each year and will be publicized. Registration will be open first to reenrolling students and then to Fishersville United Methodist Church members, and then to the public. All registration fees are non-refundable.

The following **ITEMS** are required for enrollment:

1. **Registration/Enrollment Form** – The form is filled out at the time of registration. This form and the registration fee hold your child's placement in his/her class. It is important that the emergency phone numbers for home and work for parents and other caregivers be **current at all times**. This also includes cell phone and pager numbers. It is also important to keep **current** the names and numbers of your child's doctor and persons authorized to pick-up your child in an emergency.
2. **Birth Certificate**– The School/Camp and the State of Virginia require a copy of every child's **birth certificate** to be in our files before the first day of school/camp. A complete physical is not required.
3. **Childs immunizations records** - The School/Camp and the State of Virginia require a copy of every child's **immunization record** be in our files before the first day of school/camp.
4. **Registration Fee** – amount based on program enrollment (half day/full day)
5. **Discipline Policy** – signed copy indicating that policy has been received and read
6. **Parent Handbook** – signed back page indicating handbook has been received and read.

## Tuition and Fees

Annual Tuition is **a contract for a full year of enrollment** at School. A non-refundable, non-transferable registration fee must be paid at the time your child is enrolled for School. Payments may be made for the full year, by semester, or on a monthly basis. Semester payments can be made at the beginning of school in September and again no later than the first school day in February. Monthly tuition is due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. Checks should be made to FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center and payment should be placed in the locked tuition box in the School/Camp hallway. If payments are not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month, an email will be sent and a late fee of \$25 will be imposed. If no arrangements are made for the remittance of tuition, a letter stating your child's last day will be given.

If the Center is closed during any given month of the school year due to circumstances beyond our control, tuition will not be refunded for that month if students attended at least through the 10<sup>th</sup> of that month. There will be no expectation of further payment of tuition until we reopen. Any prepaid tuition or registration fees will be refunded upon request.

\*Updated 2021: Tuition established by FUMC NALC may be adjusted due to changes that are beyond the control of the Board of Directors; such as state and federal changes to wages, taxes, etc. These changes will not be made without prior notification.

## **Withdrawing from FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center**

Because tuition and fees are the sole income of the program, **if a family wishes to withdraw their child, they are liable for the remainder of the tuition due for either the school year or the summer camp weeks for which they are registered.** Appeals for release from this payment may be made and will be decided entirely at the discretion of the FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center Board of Directors. Voluntary or discretionary withdrawals will not be considered by the Board of Directors as representing the grounds for consideration or release from the payment of the annual balance due.

## **Snack**

A snack time will be provided each day. Please notify the teacher IN WRITING of specific food allergies, needs or prohibitions. If you would like to provide a special snack, please check with your child's teacher in advance for suitability, and please send an adequate amount for the entire class. **PLEASE KEEP ALL SNACKS NUT FREE.**

**Children staying for the After School Program should pack an afternoon snack in their backpacks daily. Do not forget to use an icepack if needed.**

## **Lunch**

For students who are with us past 11:45am, please pack a lunch daily. Lunches should include a drink (water is an appropriate beverage if desired) for your child and consist of a healthy variety of foods. **Lunches will not be stored in a refrigerator or heated.** Each lunchbox should have an icepack with it daily to keep the lunch cool. Please label your child's name clearly on the outside of your child's lunchbox.

## **Attendance**

**\*note changes due to COVID-19 pandemic**

**Traffic has one direction at all times of the day** – entering from the side parking lot next to Rt. 250 and exiting onto Fishersville Rd behind the church. You will want to be careful and note this if you are coming to the church/school, regardless of your reason. Please communicate this with any and all persons who may dropoff or pickup your child.

**Half Day-** FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center's operating hours are 8:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. for half day students. Parents are responsible for insuring adequate supervision/discipline of their children during times of drop-off and pick-up. The staff will not be responsible for children other than during program hours. Drop-off should be no later than 8:55am. \*During this time, drop-off and pickup will be in the car line. For car line instructions, see below. The teachers will finish promptly at 11:45 a.m. All children must be picked up no later than 11:55 a.m. An automatic late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for children picked up just after 11:55 a.m. This fee will be strictly enforced.

**\*Car line:** Between 8:45 and 8:55 you will pull into the car line. This line begins from the Rt. 250 entrance side of the church and lines up along the sidewalk at the back of the building with the first car stopping beside the double glass doors at the Fellowship Hall. Please stay next to your car until a staff member comes to get your child. The same will be true from 11:45-11:55. Please remain at your car and a staff member will bring your child to you. You will need to buckle your child into his/her car seat.

School Day- FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center's operating hours are 8:45 a.m.–3:00p.m. for school day students. If you have early drop-off added to your school day, you will need to ring the doorbell at dropoff. A staff member will then come to the door to get your child. Otherwise you will follow the procedures for half day drop-off in the car line option. When picking up your child, please ring the doorbell and a staff member will bring your child to you. You may pick up your child any time before 3:00pm. Pick up is no later than 3:00.p.m. An automatic late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for children picked up after 3pm. This fee will be strictly enforced.

Full Day- FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center's operating hours are 7:00a.m. – 6:00p.m. for full day students. When you are dropping off a student, please ring the doorbell. A staff member will come to the door to get your child. When picking up your child, please ring the doorbell and once again a staff member will bring your child to you. The school closes promptly at 6:00p.m. Pick up should be no later than 6:00.p.m. An automatic late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for children picked up after 6pm. This fee will be strictly enforced.

Parking is in the lower parking lot of the church. Please do not park in handicapped marked spaces unless the driver has a handicapped condition. **Please do not park beside the School/Camp's entrance.** This will ensure the safety of our children walking in/out of the building.

### **All children must arrive before 9:00am.**

If a child will be late due to an appointment please make arrangements with your child's teacher and the director prior to that day.

Absences: If your child will be absent for one or more days, please call the office or the child's teacher. Remember, if your child is late, activities will have begun.

Clothing: Please send your child in play clothes and **tennis shoes**. School is a time for outdoor play, exploration and movement. We want your child to be comfortable and able to participate. We play outside every day, weather permitting. On rainy days, or on cold/wintery days (freezing or below), we will play with inside toys in the Fellowship Hall. Please dress your child appropriately and have your children's clothes marked. Please send a complete change of weather-appropriate clothing for your child, each item marked, at the beginning of the program. As seasons change, we will send home the children's clothing bags (gallon sized bags are GREAT!)

## **Safety/Security**

In order to have a safe and secure environment for our children to learn and play we must observe the following policies.

- The exterior entrance doors to the School/Camp will always be locked. When the School/Camp is in session and when the School/Camp is not being used, the doors will remain locked. This is for the general safety of our students and staff. You may ring the doorbell when needing to dropoff or pickup your child.

- Children **will not** be released to any person who is not on the approved list provided by the parents. Photo identification may be required. If you have special circumstances, for example, custody or guardianship, a copy of the court order must be placed in your child's personal file. If your child is going home with someone other than those listed, please give the information, in writing, to the teacher or call the teacher/director.
- If a parent or authorized person is picking up a child during morning school/camp hours, they must ring the doorbell and a staff member will bring the child to them.

## Special Activities

**Field Trips** – Both off and on school/camp property.

**Show-n-share** – Teachers and Camp Counselors schedule days for Show-n-Share. You will be informed as to when this will occur by your child's teacher or counselor. Items that will provide a learning experience for all the children are encouraged. Guns of any sort and any gear for war play or items that could be considered dangerous need to be left at home.

**Chapel** – Each week, the children will have scheduled times for Chapel.

**Birthdays** – Sharing this special day with friends is always fun for the children. You may send a special snack that day for each child in the class, provided you have cleared this with the teacher ahead of time. Items must be store bought and adhere to any food related allergies for the children in the class. Please no balloons. Please consider the donation of a book or resource to the School/Camp given in your child's name instead of giving individual treat bags to the children in the class. The Board of Directors and staff request that invitations for parties be given outside the classroom and not be distributed through the school/camp or on the church grounds, unless every child in the class is being invited.

**Conferences** – During the school year, the School will have two days of brief parent/teacher conferences. Please, do not bring your child with you. Conferences are held to discuss your child's development and progress and to address any concerns.

**Fundraisers** – From time-to-time, we provide you with the opportunity to participate in fundraisers to help defray expenses at the School/Camp. Many of these fundraisers are to support a scholarship fund that will assist parents during hardships. You are not obligated to participate but your help is always appreciated!

**Volunteering** – We encourage all parents to become involved in volunteering, to help plan, organize and implement fundraisers and special activities.

## Illness Policy

For the health and safety of other students and teachers, please **DO NOT** bring your child to school/camp if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (a temperature of 99° or higher without medication). Children may return to school 72 hours after being fever/symptom free without medication and with a doctor's note stating the child may return to group care.
  - *Note:* Even if the temperature is caused by a non-contagious illness, the child *cannot* attend school/camp as fever indicates that the body is under stress or is fighting an infection. In this condition, complications can easily arise; therefore, the school cannot assume the responsibility of monitoring sick children/camp.
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours

- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills, repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Abdominal or ear pain
- Unexplained rash
- Pink eye, until 72 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted
- Scabies or head lice. In case of an infection of head lice, children need to be nit free before returning to school/camp and all parents will be informed that a case of head lice has been reported at school/camp.
- Severe coughing
- Signs of illness such as irritability, unusual tiredness, or neediness that compromises the teacher's ability to care for other children.
- **\*\*Has had any contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19; is under investigation for \*COVID-19; or is ill with a respiratory illness in the previous 14 days**

If a child has been contagious, he/she must be non-contagious and have a normal temperature for 24 hours before returning, without fever-reducing medication and with a doctor's note stating the child may return to group care.

If your child becomes sick during the day, we will contact you immediately to come and pick him/her up. Your child will need to be picked up within 30 minutes of contact.

Simple external first aid will be administered when necessary.

## Closings

The School will follow the Augusta County School calendar WITH a few exceptions.

For inclement weather closings and delays, an email will be sent and the private parent Facebook page will be updated with this information.

**\*\*If Augusta County Schools are operating on a one-hour-delay, FUMC NOAH'S ARK LEARNING CENTER will also operate on a one-hour-delay.**

**\*\*\*If Augusta County schools are operating on a two-hour-delay, FUMC NOAH'S ARK LEARNING CENTER will open our Full Day program at 9:00 am.**

The Half Day Program will open at 10:15 with drop off from 10:15-10:25. Preschool will end at 12:15 with the pick-up line being offered from 12:15-12:25.

Children will not need a lunch unless they are part of the School Day and/or Full Day. Our After School program will be open until 6pm as usual.

**\*\*\*\*If Augusta County schools are CLOSED, FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center will be CLOSED.  
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We will follow Augusta County School's calendar closely but not exactly. Please refer to the FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center calendar for any other days in question.

## **Emergency Response Plan**

For the safety of our children, we have put the following emergency procedures in place:

- Evacuation of building due to fire
- Evacuation of building for bomb threat
- Severe Storm/Civil Defense Drill
- Stranger on campus threat
- Shelter in place emergency

The children will be practicing these drills at announced and unannounced times. Their participation will give them valuable information about what to do in the event of an emergency and their fears will be reduced because of this knowledge.

## **Curriculum – Academic Program**

Each month classes will have a specific theme and related bible verse. Each theme will contain concepts that apply to **Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards** are concepts, physical and motor development, and personal and social development. The **Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards** are standards of learning that help prepare children for kindergarten. Many of the activities will be modified for the younger children to meet appropriate developmental levels. Teachers choose activities to help children achieve learning goals within these themes. Depending on the age of the children, the goals and activities will vary.

There will also be units that simultaneously focus on numbers, letters, shapes and colors. Each unit will have a particular number and letter that will be emphasized, along with concepts about the theme. Some units will be related to science, history, season, weather, holidays, etc.

Each day offers the children opportunities for the use of work center activities, including art, puzzles and manipulatives, science and nature, and dramatic play area (blocks and home living). Mini center materials, which foster skills and concepts in the area of language development, math and basic concepts, and perceptual skills, may be used to provide additional mental stimulation.

The provision of a rich environment, coupled with teachers who facilitate the work of the children through guidance and direction, provides valuable learning experiences for young children.

## **Financial Assistance**

Some Financial Assistance is available each year. Families must apply and provide a copy of their most recent 1040 tax form to be considered. Applications are available through the Noah's Ark Learning Center office. Awards are made by the NALC Director based on the financial assistance policy approved by the NALC Board of Directors. Applications need to be received by April 15 each year. Awards are for one FUMC Noah's Ark Learning Center fiscal year (which includes current Academic School year and Summer Camp). You must reapply each fiscal year.



If a child is absent more than 10 times in a semester, the family must reapply for financial assistance. Awards need to be used by families who have an actively attending student.



# Parent Handbook Agreement

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook. I understand that I am expected to adhere to the policies set forth in this Handbook.

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Child's Name Printed

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

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Date