

LENEXA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL/CDO NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2019

As the holiday season approaches, we have been as busy as Santa's elves while preparing for a fun and festive month. Our classrooms will be filled with all the sights, smells and songs of this glorious holiday as we anxiously prepare to say, "Happy Birthday Jesus!"

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Our winter break will be observed December 18 through January 3. Classes will resume their regular schedule on Monday, January 6.

SNOW DAYS

With the possibility of snow and ice during the winter months, please remember that we will be closed when Shawnee Mission Schools are closed for inclement weather. An alert will be sent out if we are closed. TV, radio, and social media also broadcasts when Shawnee Mission schools are closed. The office phone will not be manned on snow days. If the weather deteriorates during a school day while your child is here and we decide to close school early, we will use our "alert system" and phone calls to give you as much advance notice as possible.

O CHRISTMAS TREE

We have a tree in the lobby of the preschool building and need your help to decorate it! All school families are invited to make ornaments to adorn our tree. Any and all creations are welcome. Children are welcome to hang the ornaments themselves. We want them to feel like this is "their" tree. Please take your ornament off by Dec. 17th if you wish to keep it. Thanks for making our Christmas tree sparkle and shine!

LETTERS TO SANTA

We will have a North Pole "magic mailbox" located in the preschool lobby. You may have your child mail a Santa letter by placing in the mailbox. Participants will receive a form letter via US mail with your child's name **IF YOU CLEARLY PRINT YOUR CHILD'S NAME AND ADDRESS ON THE BACK OF THE LETTER by Thursday, December 12.** We will have simple fill in the blank letters for Santa on the black table outside the preschool office.

REGISTRATION FOR FALL 2019

Registration for next fall for all families with a child currently enrolled in LUMC will be January 23-30th. Please mark these dates on your calendars now. Returning families will be able to register on the afternoon of Jan. 30, and families new to LUMC will be able to register beginning January 31. If you have questions about or would like to have a tour of the room your child could go to next year, talk with Lori now. January gets booked with new family tours very early. Watch for more information in registration packets that will come home via backpacks in early January.

COATS, HATS, AND MITTENS

Please remember to label coats and each mitten, hat, scarf, etc. that your child wears to school. Ms. Lori always collects a wide array of unmarked items every winter. When items are clearly marked with names on them, we can return them to their rightful owner. Thanks so much for marking your help. We have Sharpies in the preschool office if you need to use one!

FOOD DONATIONS

Thanks to ALL who donated to the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Our school families donated a large amount of much needed food to the Johnson County Multi-Service Center. What a great way to teach our children about the value of giving!

T-K NEWS

It's Christmas time! Snow, sleds, reindeer and snowmen galore, then the big day...Jesus Birthday! The T-K class is busy learning letters and their sounds as well as recognition of numbers 1-20. Thank you for continuing to work with your children on these skills at home. Your help is vital in helping them succeed! Also, don't forget to read, read, read to your children! There are so many wonderful children's Christmas stories that I'm sure the whole family would enjoy. Have a Merry Christmas!

PRE-K NEWS

December is a special time in Pre-K. Throughout the month, we will be celebrating the birth of Jesus and the reason for the season. We will be making a class Gingerbread Man. We hope he doesn't run off! Together we will count down the days until Christmas. Our dramatic play area will be transformed into a Manger where the children can act out the story of the birth of Baby Jesus. The children will have many opportunities to work on problem solving and fine motor skills when we make paper chains and set up our gift-wrapping center. They will all have fun giving "pretend" gifts to their friends. We also will be making a special gift for our parents. We hope you enjoy seeing all the wonderful things your child will be learning and sharing with you this month. Have a wonderful holiday season!

MONDAY & WEDNESDAY ENRICHMENT

We are so excited to experience the season of Christmas with our Enrichment friends! In class we will be exploring jingle bells and magnets, talking about Christmas, singing Christmas songs, and playing reindeer games! Just a reminder that if it is warm enough (above 40 degrees) outside, we will try to have an outdoor recess in the afternoon to help the kids get some fresh air and outdoor play time, please remember to send them with their coat. We wish you and your family a VERY Merry Christmas!

3-YR.-OLD PRESCHOOL NEWS

The month of December, though short in number of school days, is action-packed with learning, growing and celebrating the holiday season. The beautiful story of the Nativity will be shared, and our dramatic play areas will be transformed to manger scenes complete with shepherd, angel and king costumes, and of course, precious baby Jesus. Why do we have Christmas trees in our homes during the holiday season? We will learn about evergreen trees and use a pine branch paintbrush as we paint with pine-scented paint. Throughout December, we will be discussing our own family's traditions and talk about what they mean to us. As always, we will continue to work on size & weight discrimination, counting and quantity activities, shape & color recognition, letter & sound activities, gross and fine motor development and practical life skills. You can help us and your child by reading our "Daily News Notes" and reinforcing at home the things we learn in school. We wish you a safe, restful and blessed holiday!

TUESDAY/THURSDAY ENRICHMENT

During the month of December, we will focus on the Christmas story and all the fun and magic of the holiday season. Our art projects will include a marble art candy cane and a Christmas tree. We will continue exploring science concepts by doing an experiment with candy canes, mixing colors together, and using jingle bells with magnets. To finish out the month, we will practice words that rhyme with colors to help Rudolph guide Santa's sleigh. Our first half of the school year has gone so fast! We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Enjoy all your family time over the break! We look forward to seeing you in 2020!

OLDER 2'S AND 3'S CDO NEWS

December has arrived, and the holiday spirit is in the air! We have so much fun planned for this short month. As we talk about the fun and joy that surrounds Christmas, we will be exploring our senses...seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. It's going to be amazing.

Week 1- The Gingerbread Boy
Week 2- Christmas Time

Our shape this month is the triangle and our colors will be red and green. We will also be working on the letters in our names. Have a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

TODDLER NEWS

Toddlers enjoy ringing the bells at circle time and even more so in December. They will be ringing them "to tell the children everywhere that Christmas time is near". We will also be enjoying songs about Santa, reindeer, and of course, Jingle Bells. During circle time, we will be talking about the season's most joyous gift and birthday and reading "Christmas in the Manger". The children will be busy decorating gift bags and making a very special surprise gift. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

FRIDAY ENRICHMENT & FANTASTIC FRIDAYS

As the holidays draw near, we will be working on a special "Christmas Surprise." We will explore the sweet smells of Christmas using our senses. There will be fun games such as "Jingle Bell Toss". We will be working on our math concepts this month. The children will be painting a Christmas wreath using a variety of materials. Have a very Merry Christmas, and a wonderful winter break!

PRESCHOOL MUSIC AND MOVEMENT NEWS

It's the most wonderful time of the year! You can look forward to hearing lots of jingle bells and songs about baby Jesus in the next couple of weeks. (What did the sheep say when Mary laid Jesus in the hay?) There will also be a twist on "Baby Shark"; with Santa, elves, and reindeer, oh MY! But perhaps my favorite activity of all, we will be learning a little bit of ASL to a treasured Christmas hymn. Don't forget to come see your little angels sing at Songfest! (T-K and Pre-K only) You won't want to miss it!

Play dough is a great way to relieve stress and anxiety during this hectic time of year. Added plus - this recipe smells yummy! How about making some with your child and enjoy some fun play time together.

SPARKLING PEPPERMINT PLAY DOUGH

2 Cups Water	4 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 Cups Flour	4 tablespoons oil
1 Cup Salt	4 tablespoons peppermint extract

Combine ingredients in heavy saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with wooden spoon, until mixture thickens and pulls away from sides of pan. Remove from heat and stir in some glitter. Form dough into a ball, place on waxed paper to cool – then have fun with your child!

Ideas for Elves

As you are shopping for your little ones this holiday, please give the following items consideration on your list.....

Books (get the matching small stuffed animal and act out the book. Be sure there are fact-based books in your child's library about their latest interest. Purchase the series of a book your child loves, and plan family read alouds.)

Watercolors, finger paint, crayons, colored pencils, diverse sizes of markers (children need to hold and learn to maneuver tools in their hands while they learn to make marks, draw pictures, trace and write lines, shapes, and letters on paper and/or easels. This is a different skill than is used by swiping an ipad screen or touching a phone screen) A pair of child safety scissors, construction paper strips, and a few paint sample strips would make a great stocking stuffer!

Dress up clothes (don't have to be fancy or expensive – shop thrift stores or your own closet! Hats, gloves, ties, jewelry, shoes – any item that can add a touch of fantasy and encourages creativity and imagination.) Play dress up with your child and you will both reap rewards.

Preschool Board/Card Games (teaches patience, taking turns, math skills, and problem solving). Great opportunity to model social skills for your child and a great way to make time for parent/child interaction since these kinds of games aren't meant to be played alone. Schedule a regular "family game night" instead of family movie night. Fun for everyone!

Blocks (basic wooden unit blocks, bristle blocks, textured blocks, colored blocks – great for imagination and creative/divergent thinking, problem solving skills, math concepts (size, length, width, spatial dimension), science concepts (balance, stability, cause and effect). Some evidence supports that block play can potentially increase advanced math capabilities later in life. Magna Tiles and Tegu blocks are a favorite of our preschool students!

Sensory Items (sand, scented play dough, water beads, soapy water, slime) are naturally intriguing and lend themselves to exploration and problem solving in diverse ways. Try adding sensory play to your child's daily schedule.

Dolls (for both boys and girls) Dolls allow children to practice the myriad care taking skills they see their mommies and daddies do every day. They are also a great way to practice and talk about empathy, the use of “gentle hands”, etc., as well as role play social situations like turn taking, self-calming, and more.

These are just a few ideas. Ask if you want more specific examples. Your child’s teacher will be able to give you ideas as to the kinds of items your child is most drawn to working with here at school. Put the electronics and gadgets away for awhile this holiday and engage in lots of cuddle time and play time with your wonderful children!!!

My best to you all,
Lori