



Update Noah's Little Ark Preschool

A Ministry of Palmyra First UMC, 520 E. Birch St., Palmyra, PA 17078 www.pfumc.us

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Friends, we introduced our new Noah's Little Ark Preschool Director, Kim Zenyuch, to you back in May. Now we want to give you an update on our preschool. Our hope is to be transparent in all the places possible and actively listen to all who hold a stake in our preschool ministry, while offering the highest quality preschool ministry possible.

For those who like short statements: NLA is poised for a strong transition year, with a capable staff, dedicated leadership from church and our new Director Kim Zenyuch, in spite of some transition bumps. Read on if you'd like a bit more detail.

Our church leaders have been impressed with Kim's skill, dedication and grace as she follows the almost two-decade tenure of our past director. Some of us have been working directly with Kim in conversations and observations. Six of us made a point to be a part of one of Kim's "Coffee and Conversation" gatherings with parents, and our personnel team has been actively involved throughout the transition.

You need to know that everything we hold dear about Noah's Little Ark will remain the same:

- Teacher student ratio will remain low.
- We will remain focused on our Christian values.
- We will provide a top-quality education for children to ensure they're ready for kindergarten.
- We will help children and families strengthen their relationship with God.

Here are some strategic changes that have come from continuous listening in the transition:

- A cleaning person will enhance the work we are already doing and help us regularly care for our space (Previously the teachers did most of the cleaning.).
- The Noah's Little Ark Board will be oriented and re-launched on August 17th.
- The preschool board will be focused on long-term vision, and planning, while supporting the day to day strategies.
- Preschool staff will be paid hourly, instead of per session, to ensure fairness.
- There will be a charge for late pickups.

All of these adjustments support the present goals and quality that have made NLA so rewarding and dependable.

Ever since we learned that our previous director was contemplating retirement, we've been listening and seeking to make adjustments in support of staff and build a strong future ministry for NLA. In that planning we have

- enhanced accounting detail, procedure and reporting,

- raised our lower end of pay and adopted a pay range for teachers and aides to be more equitable and transparent,
- held a teacher appreciation lunch to say thanks and solicit staff feedback,
- gathered staff ideas on curriculum needs, space needs, learning needs and much more,
- combined conversations with the trustees of PFUMC, Discovery Dunes and NLA to work on open conversation about space needs,
- updated documents and procedures to address both needs and quality of care,
- vetted and recruited a new complement of board members that include church members, young adults, parents and a variety of skill sets.

This is only a partial list as we strive for excellence and growth.

Transition is difficult. Despite tireless efforts, many of our previous teaching staff have moved on to other endeavors, and as with all transition, these losses are sad. While we wish some of the individual encounters ended differently, our leadership is confident that we have addressed the losses both individually and on a larger scale. The reasons were varied and personal. Although much of that is confidential personnel information, we can share with confidence that our new director has sought and included input from teachers past and present.

As we anticipated, NLA will be a little different this year, and we are pleased that so many of those little differences are positive. We have hired a team of dedicated, qualified staff who are thrilled to welcome our children into their classrooms this fall. Summer camp had a turnout that exceeded previous camps by about 35 children and operated with a strong, responsible budget. We are also prepared for the school year financially and look forward to engaging the community in a more intentional way than we have previously.

Transition needs communication and toward that goal Kim hosted a family fun night for families to get to know her, ask questions of staff, and strengthen their relationship with the school, staff, director and board. She has piloted at least 3 "Coffee & Conversation" gatherings to answer questions, speak to concerns and share information. Kim initiated an August newsletter to outline progress and expectations. She has also sought and included input from teachers past and present. She has reached out to incoming student families with emails and new school year paperwork, reiterating in those contacts that she welcomes dialogue.

Indeed, we see a stellar fall. We offer you a Noah's Little Ark prepared to surround our children with love and quality learning with fun in age appropriate ways. We are thankful for all of our leaders and staff and board members who have helped bridge the changing time and its challenges.

We all invite you to watch God's love unfold in the coming year. We ask you to hold everything in prayer. We invite you to celebrate the successes and graciously share the joy of what God is doing in our future together.

Pastor Dave, NLA Director Kim Zenyuch, and SPRC Chair Jane Zimmerman