



2022 – 2023
PARENT HANDBOOK

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www.BLPS-TOTS.com

 @BLPreschool

 @blps_tots

Serving God's children and their families since 1959.

2022-2023 BLPS School Calendar

| DATE | EVENT | PARENT PARTICIPATION |
|--|--|---|
| Monday, August 22 | Teachers and staff return to BLPS | |
| Thursday, August 25 Friday, August 26 | 9:00a-1:00p Meet the Teacher appts 9:00a-1:00p Meet the Teacher appts | |
| Monday, August 29 | Elementary Classes Begin | 8:45am - 2:45pm |
| Monday, August 29 | Preschool Classes Begin | 9:00am - 1:00pm |
| Friday - Monday, September 2 - 5 | Labor Day Holiday | No School |
| Friday, September 30 | ME Museum | Early Release @ 12PM noon |
| Monday - Tuesday, October 10 - 11 | Parent/Teacher Conferences | No School |
| Monday, October 31 | Family Day at Nalls Produce | No School |
| Friday, November 11 | Veterans Day | No School |
| Monday - Friday, November 21 - 25 | Thanksgiving Holiday | No School |
| Friday, December 2 | Christmas Event | Early Release @ 12PM noon |
| December 19 - January 2 | Christmas Holiday | No School |
| Monday, January 16 | M. L. King Holiday | No School |
| Friday, January 27 | Staff/Student Holiday | No School |
| Monday, February 20 | President's Day Holiday | No School |
| Friday, March 3 | Teacher Workday | No School |
| Friday, March 31 | Easter Event | Early Release @ 12PM noon |
| Monday - Friday, April 3 - 7 | Spring Break | No School |
| Monday, April 10 | Easter Observed | No School |
| Thursday - Friday, April 20 - 21 | Parent/Teacher Conferences | No School |
| Monday - Friday, May 8 - 12 | Field Trip Days | Preschool on-site Elementary off-site |
| Monday, May 29 | Memorial Day Holiday | No School |
| Friday, June 2 | Last Day of School Summer Bash | Early Release @ 12PM noon |
| Monday - Thursday, June 5 - 8 | Teacher Clean Up Days | Have a great summer break! |
| <i>Monday - Friday, June 5 - 9</i> | <i>Elementary Make-up Days</i> | <i>IF NEEDED (see below)</i> |

CLOSING ALERTS

Non-scheduled days off (snow days, etc.) Days will be made up after 11 missed days.

- If there is another state-mandated lockdown due to COVID-19, the school will be closed until further notice. *All classes will continue with virtual (online) learning from home.*
- If Fairfax County Public Schools have a delayed opening of any length due to emergency weather conditions, Preschool class hours are 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Elementary class hours are 10 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
- If Fairfax County Public Schools have an early closing due to emergency weather conditions, all after-school activities are cancelled. Dismissal will begin at 12:00 noon.

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Serving God's Children and Their Families Since 1959.

PURPOSE

Bethany Lutheran Preschool was founded in 1959 to provide a Christian education for young children and to be an outreach to their families. The school is an extension of the educational ministry of Bethany Lutheran Church, a Missouri Synod congregation. The school includes children of the congregation, children of other congregations, and children whose families have no church affiliation.

The Christian faith is the foundation of Bethany Lutheran. The school program is designed to develop children's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas — spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and intellectual — and to help children become lifelong learners.

Each child is a child of God; our objective is that children come to know God and His love for them. To achieve this, we tell Bible stories about the life of Jesus and hold regular chapel services led by the Pastor.

The concept of individual self-worth is basic to our program. Each child has an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as an individual personality, learning style, and family background.

Curriculum and instruction are responsive to individual differences in ability and interests. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design the curriculum. Children are allowed to move at their own pace in acquiring important skills including language arts, math, science, social studies, art, etc.



ADMISSIONS

Bethany Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational and admission policies.

A completed health form, signed by a physician, and proof of the child's identity and age must be in the school files before a child may attend classes. These documents are required by law.



BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR

The first day of school is very important for both parents and children. Your school staff would like to make the first day the beginning of a growing Christian relationship among parents, teachers, and children. We begin the school year with Meet the Teacher appointments. This will give you and your child the opportunity to see their new classroom and spend some one-on-one time with their new teacher(s).

The week before school starts, you may want to get your child accustomed to the daily schedule to be followed for the school year. Begin by having your child select school clothes and breakfast for the next day. Help your child get to bed early and rise at the time normally set to get up for school. Also, limit nighttime activities if the next day is a school day.

Try to project a calm attitude for your child on the first day. You may want to explain that going to school is important and that learning is interesting and fun.

When you take your child to school, reassure him or her that you will come back. Many children are afraid their parents will not return. Usually children will say goodbye and mingle with the other children. However, some experience separation anxieties.

School may seem scary, even if they attended the year before. When you drop your child off, say that you are leaving and that you will come back after school. Be sure to be on time when you pick up your child. A minute seems like an eternity to a waiting preschooler.

TUITION

Tuition is based on the actual costs of operating the school. The tuition is an **annual** tuition. Tuition may be paid in one of three ways: *in full*, *semi-annual* (two payments made in August and January), or *installments* (ten equal installments made August 2022 – May 2023).

The Installment Tuition Plan begins with the first payment due August 15, 2022 and the final payment due May 15, 2023. A payment record sheet with our tax identification number can be found online at www.mybrightwheel.com. We encourage you to use this sheet to maintain your records for tax purposes.

Making Installment Payments

- Cash payments should be made to the Director or Assistant Director in person so that a receipt may be provided to you.
- Check payments may be placed in the wooden lock box outside of the main office, or mailed to the school. Checks should be made payable to BLPS with the student's name recorded in the memo line.
- Automatic Withdrawals can be set up by editing your billing profile on www.mybrightwheel.com or via the Brightwheel app.
- Electronic payments may be made prior to the 15th of each month at www.mybrightwheel.com or via the Brightwheel app.
 - Please keep in mind: debit and credit card fees are your responsibility. An additional 2.9% of the tuition (or registration fee) will be added to your payment total.
- If monthly tuition is more than 15 days late (or BLPS receives notice of insufficient funds), a late fee of \$25 may be charged. If special payment schedules need to be arranged, please see the preschool office or email preschoolfinance@bethany-lcms.org.



NOTIFICATION OF WITHDRAWAL

If at any time during the school year your child is unable to continue attending preschool, whether due to relocation or other factors, please notify the preschool office in writing, at least 45 days in advance of the child's last day of school. If less than 45 days' notice is given, parents are responsible for tuition for the next monthly installment. There are no refunds or prorating of tuition for withdrawals after May 1, 2023.

The school reserves the right to dismiss a student when ...

- Required documents are incomplete
- Tuition payments are 45 days late
- A child's behavior threatens others
- A child exhibits behaviors of unreadiness such as severe anxiety

Dismissal may occur after a conference with the Director, Assistant Director, child's teachers and child's family.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Teachers and parents greatly enrich the lives of children by sharing ideas and information. Aside from informal contacts, parents receive weekly updates that include a calendar of events, describe learning activities, and share school experiences.

Special days are scheduled for formal parent/teacher conferences. Parents may also speak with their child's teacher over the phone or via the Brightwheel app. Please avoid lengthy discussions during the busy times of drop-off and pick-up.

For more personal conversations at arrival or dismissal, it is best to check with the teacher or the office beforehand concerning the teacher's availability.



Babysitting: We discourage staff members from providing private child care or babysitting services on their own time. If a staff member does provide babysitting services, the staff member is acting in their individual capacity. We will not be responsible for the performance of babysitting services by members of our staff, including transportation of your child(ren).

DRESS

Children will be more comfortable and ready to engage in play if they wear clothing suitable for play. Learning how to manage snaps, belts, zippers, tights, etc. is something to be responsible for at home, as well as at school. It is helpful to dress children in clothes that can be easily pulled down and up by the child in the bathroom. Younger children should wear clothing that makes diaper changes easy and quick.

It is equally important that children's clothing be suitable for mess and fun. Painting and running on the playground can mean spills and dirty clothing. Pretty dresses or dress slacks place a burden on the child to keep clean and reduces their opportunity for playing with their friends.

Appropriate shoes for play are important. Children's shoes should provide support and traction for play. Shoes, such as sneakers, are recommended. Sandals, plastic shoes, or cowboy boots are dangerous on the playground and not safe for climbing.

Clothing and personal belongings, such as a backpack, should be labeled with your child's full name. Coats or sweaters are strongly advised for those "uncertain weather" days.

SNACK AND LUNCH TIME

Time is set aside in the early part of the day for a light snack and during the latter part of the day for lunch. Parents are responsible for providing their child's snack and lunch. Please note: staff are unable to heat up snacks and/or lunches. **Make sure your child's snack is in a labeled Ziploc bag, separate from their lunch, to avoid confusion.** Bethany Lutheran Preschool cannot provide utensils, so make sure your child has everything that they need in their lunchbox each day.

Healthy snacks are often the most popular with children. Please help keep snack and lunch time simple, healthy, and in child-size portions.

Some favorite snacks enjoyed by the children include:

fresh fruit slices, fruit cups, applesauce,
carrots or celery sticks with salad dressing for dipping,
yogurt, cheese and crackers

If your child has a medical condition that impacts dietary needs, please inform your child's teacher. Parents are responsible for providing any special foods for their child. The following are prohibited items at school for snacks or lunch...

NO tree nuts such as walnuts, almonds, macadamia nuts, etc.

NO peanuts or peanut products

This includes, but is not limited to, peanut cookies, peanut butter, trail mixes or granola bars with nuts and products containing peanuts or tree nuts.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

Our mission is to ensure that each child has an equal right and opportunity to receive a quality Christian education in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment. Teachers make every effort to address disruptive and unsafe behaviors through age appropriate behavior management techniques.

Behaviors that interfere with learning or the safety of others will be addressed. Disruptive behaviors impact the child who exhibits the behaviors, the individual who may be directly affected, and the entire class. Disruptive behaviors include, but are not limited to, aggressive behaviors such as hitting, kicking, biting, or attempting to bite, throwing objects at another individual, and severe anxiety such as inconsolable crying.

In the event a child exhibits aggressive behaviors, the following is practice at BLPS:

1. The event is discussed with the teacher and child involved. There will be an age-appropriate discussion of acceptable behavior as well as making good choices.
2. At the judgement of the staff, students may be removed from the room to discuss the event and more appropriate conflict resolution.
3. Parents of all children involved will be made aware of the event.

If there are reoccurrences of aggressive behavior:

1. The parent(s) of the child will be notified and instructed to come get the child as soon as possible.
2. A meeting between parent and staff may be required to better address the issue, to explore positive intervention techniques at school and home, or to discuss continuation in the school program.

It is our desire that both parents and school work in Christian harmony to help the children interact in appropriate ways. Parents may be required to meet with staff to best resolve issues. Resolutions may include, but are not limited to, abbreviated days for the child or parents remaining at school for a period of time.

The school maintains the right to terminate enrollment at any time.



DISCIPLINE POLICY

Bethany's discipline goal is to help children learn self-control and build good habits. Staff will help children learn self-control by treating them in a way that promotes their self-esteem and self-image. We believe that discipline means to teach.

Acceptable discipline techniques include:

1. Guiding children by setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior that are appropriate and understandable to the children
2. Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
3. Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity
4. Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
5. Guiding children to use words to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children to solve their own problems
6. Patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed
7. Arranging equipment in a way that promotes desirable behavior

Discipline techniques DO NOT include:

1. Physical punishment or disciplinary action administered to the body such as spanking or forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position
2. Shaking a child
3. Withholding or forcing snack or punishing toilet accidents
4. Belittling remarks

At no time is physical punishment an option.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is our desire to provide a safe and healthy school in which all of our preschoolers can learn. In order to do this, it is important that we all think of and care for one another. When our preschoolers come to school sick, they are not ready to learn and they can make their friends sick, too! If your child is sick and shows any of the symptoms listed below, please be mindful of the welfare and well-being of your child and of all the children at BLPS. Keep your child home even if they beg to come to school.

It is school policy that children must be symptom-free for a full 24 hours (without medication to reduce fever or other symptoms) before they may return to school. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the health of your child and all of the children at Bethany.

| SIGNS of illness | EXCLUDE until ... |
|---|--|
| Fever over 99.9° | fever disappears for 24 hours without the aid of medication |
| diarrhea or increased number of runny stools | diarrhea has stopped for 24 hours |
| vomiting | vomiting stops for 24 hours |
| lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, etc. | symptoms disappear |
| mouth sores and drooling | doctor determines the condition is non-contagious |
| rash with fever or behavior changes | a doctor determines the condition does not indicate a communicable disease |
| pink or red conjunctivitis | 24 hours after treatment is started |
| scabies, head lice or other infestation | 24 hours after treatment is started |
| impetigo | 24 hours after treatment is started |
| strep throat or other streptococcal infection | 24 hours after treatment is started and no fever is present |
| chicken pox, measles, rubella | 6 days after onset |
| respiratory symptoms which limit the child's comfortable participation in activities or significantly increases the level of necessary care | symptoms disappear |
| Tests positive for COVID-19 | 10 days after positive test result (this includes registered siblings as well) |

Abuse and neglect are serious concerns for everyone. We must, by law, report any suspected cases to Child Protective Services.

All children must have a School Health Form and proof of identity on file. Without these documents, we cannot permit children to attend class.

HEALTH AND SAFETY continued...

The following are standard procedures for the 2022-2023 school year.

- We will continue taking temperatures of staff and children upon entering the facility.

TIP: Take your child's temperature each morning before leaving the house to avoid the inconvenience of having to return home if your child is found to have an elevated temperature.

- Children's and staff's hands will be washed and sanitized first thing in the morning upon arrival and periodically through the day.
- Sick policy for staff and children: Children with a temperature over 99.9 degrees will not be permitted to attend until the temperature is under control for 24 hours (without the use of medication). Staff who are sick cannot return to work unless fever free for at least 24 hours (without the use of medication).
- We will continue to strictly adhere to keeping our small class sizes each day.
- Staff will clean and sanitize frequently used surfaces daily, deep cleaning every Friday.

We hope that these policies and procedures will keep our families comfortable in bringing their children to school with us and their friends. Our main priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of all of our students and staff alike.



ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Keeping a routine and schedule is a vital part of learning at school. Our Elementary program begins at 8:45 a.m. and Preschool begins at 9:00 a.m. when teachers are prepared to assume responsibility for the class and welcome each child. Parents will escort children from their cars to the classroom.

School doors are locked at all times during the day. Late arrivals check in with the school office before entering their classroom. We often do not realize that entering a classroom when friends have settled in can be confusing to some students and disruptive to others. Routine late arrival impacts your child as well as their classmates. Instructions for the day occur in most classrooms within the first 25 minutes of the day.

Preschool classes end at 1:00 p.m. and Elementary classes end at 2:45 p.m. Children are released from the classroom to their parents in an orderly fashion. Names of persons authorized to pick up your child must be kept current on the child's emergency preparedness form and on Brightwheel. No child will be released to a person not authorized by the parent(s). Identification may be required until the staff are familiar with faces. Please inform the school in writing of any changes in pickup routine.

Please pick up your child on time. Children do not have the same understanding of time as adults and five minutes late to a child can seem like an hour. **Children must be picked up no later than 10 minutes** after their scheduled dismissal time. Charges for a late pick up are as follows:

♦\$10.00 for 10 minutes after dismissal.

♦\$30/half hour or any part of the half hour after the first 10 minutes.

According to state guidelines, children whose parents/guardians are one-half hour late and have not communicated with the preschool are considered abandoned.

Virginia law requires the school to report the event to Child Protective Services.



PARKING LOT SAFETY

For the safety of children and parents, please drive slowly and enter the parking lot by driving towards the rear of the lot. A diagram of parking lot travel is included below.

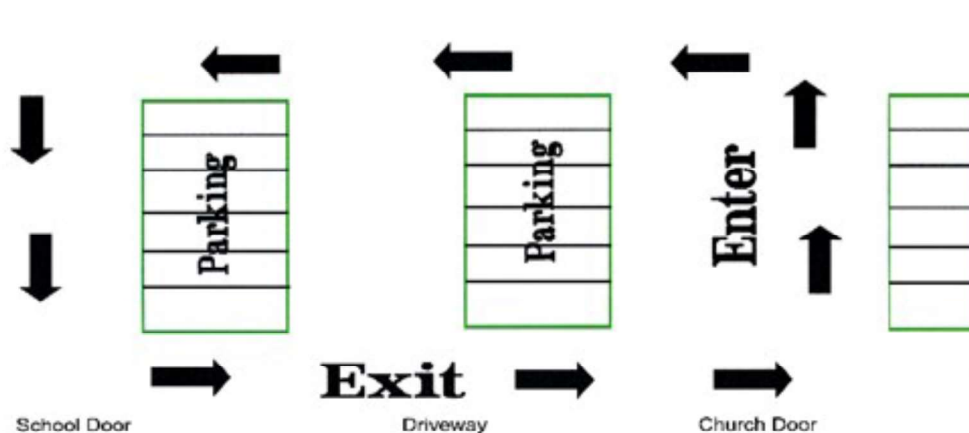
According to the Commonwealth of Virginia, leaving a young child unattended in a vehicle for any length of time is considered abandonment.



RAINY DAY DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

Rainy day / inclement weather drop-offs and pick-ups are conducted curbside. Enter the lot by driving towards the rear of the lot, as usual. Continue across the rear of the lot and form a line beginning at the school door. BLPS staff will escort children from your vehicle into the building.

Elementary Drop-Off begins at 8:40 a.m. and Pick-Up begins at 2:40 p.m.
Preschool Drop-Off begins at 8:50 a.m. and Pick-Up begins at 12:50 p.m.



AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Enrichment classes are an opportunity for children to play and socialize with a variety of Bethany friends or to learn a sport or explore other activities. Offerings have included martial arts classes, cooking classes, soccer classes, etc.

Children must be between the ages of 3 - 6 years old *and be bathroom independent*. Fees for enrichment classes are separate of tuition.

When in session, all after-school activities are 1:00 - 1:45 p.m.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Crisis plans and emergency preparedness have unfortunately become a way of life. In the event that Fairfax County Public Schools (F.C.P.S.) declares Emergency Preparedness mode, Bethany Lutheran Preschool will act as follows:

1. In the event that F.C.P.S. emergency plans go into effect before the start of our school day, Bethany Lutheran Preschool will be closed.
2. If F.C.P.S. emergency plans go into effect during our school day, children will be kept indoors in a safe, secure environment.
3. Parents or a designated adult are expected to pick up their child as soon as possible, unless instructed otherwise.
4. A staff person will remain with children until all children are united with a family member or designated adult.
5. We will communicate via mobile text alert, email, and the Brightwheel app.

In the event that an emergency or unsafe condition occurs at the school which may cause us to close the building, children will be escorted away from the building in fire drill fashion. All classes will assemble at the furthest end of the parking lot. Families will be contacted by mobile text alert informing them to pick up their children. Children will be kept safe and secure with a staff member.

It is important that parents keep their child's emergency information up to date. Please notify the preschool office of any changes in phone numbers, address, or persons with permission to pick up their child, as well as any changes in medical information.



Our school calendar is similar to Fairfax County Public School's calendar. *There are exceptions, so please check the school calendar found at the front of this booklet.*

When Fairfax County Schools (K - 12) close due to inclement weather, BLPS closes. Closings are announced on local radio and television stations. Mobile text alerts (via Brightwheel) are sent out to email addresses and phone numbers on file.

Any late openings for FCPS will delay the opening of all preschool and elementary programs to 10:00 a.m. Dismissal will be at the regularly scheduled time.

If Fairfax County closes early due to any emergency, all after-school activities will be cancelled and pick up will begin at 12:00 p.m.

Regulation Information

Virginia State Law Section 63.1 - 196.3 of the Code of Virginia, allows preschools operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from license by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the exemption law. The statements below have been prepared and distributed to meet requirements of the exemption law.

1. The maximum number of children the preschool can have at any one time is 80.
2. BLPS is located at 2501 Beacon Hill Road, Alexandria, VA. There is more than 3,084 square feet of school space. The enclosed playground is beside the school and contains swings, slides, and preschool size play-ground units. The kitchen is made available for our use, however, we do not provide food services.
3. All staff are certified by a physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. A negative tuberculin skin test is also required.
4. All staff are required to pass a criminal record check.
5. Staff qualifications: The preschool director interviews prospective staff members and makes preliminary hiring recommendations. Final approval for selection must be decided by the Board of Christian Education of Bethany Lutheran Church.

Qualifications for Lead Teachers include:

- (1) a degree in education or early childhood education course work.
- (2) experience with preschool children.
- (3) ability to plan daily and long range activities for preschool children in a Christian environment.
- (4) a tender, caring concern for children.
- (5) a strong desire to work with preschool children.
- (6) an effective ability to interact with adults and children.
- (7) Christian by faith affirmation and example. Members of Bethany Lutheran Church have preference over other applicants if they have equal capabilities in all other areas.

Teaching Assistants are expected to meet the above qualifications for teachers except numbers (1) and (3).

6. Bethany Lutheran Church and Preschool is covered by Public Liability Insurance through Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The agent is National Church Group Insurance Agency, Falls Church, Virginia.

Things to say to PRAISE your child

Wow * Way to go * Super * Outstanding * Excellent * Great * Good * Neat *
Well done * You're sweet * I knew you could do it * I'm proud of you *
Fantastic * Super cool * Nice work * Looking good * Beautiful * You figured it
out * Hurray * Spectacular * You're a darling * How nice * Incredible * You're
talented * What an imagination * God loves you and so do I * You're a good
friend * Awesome * You are a blessing * Big hug * You are precious * What a
great smile * I love you * You're a good learner * That's the best * You made
my day * My buddy * You are a treasure * You're so brave * Terrific * Thank
you for sharing * Jesus loves you * Great try * Super work * You're the best *
You are wonderful * You brighten the room with your smile * Wow, you did it *
You're a precious gift from God *

Preschool Recipes

Bethany's Best Play Dough

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
2 tablespoon oil
4 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 cups water
Food coloring



Mix all the ingredients in a large pot. Cook over medium heat. Stir until it forms a ball in the pot. Knead. Store in an air-tight container.

Note: soak pot immediately!

Bethany Bubbles

2 cups dish washing detergent (Dawn is the best)
6 cups water
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Karo corn syrup (clear) to help bubbles keep their shape

In a bowl or recycled plastic bottle mix all of the ingredients well.
Let sit for thirty (30) minutes.

Use a wand or try a variety of items around the house, such as a flyswatter with holes.

Bethany Lutheran Preschool's Verse of the Year

**And walk in love, as Christ
also has loved us and given
Himself for us, an offering
and a sacrifice to God...
- Ephesians 5:2**

Parent Handbook Agreement

By signing this agreement, I confirm that I have received
a link to the 2022-2023 BLPS Parent Handbook.

www.blps-tots.com/about

Parent Name (printed)

Parent Signature

Child(ren)'s Name(s) (printed)

Child(ren)'s Class(es) (printed)

Please return signed agreement to your child's teacher or the school office.



We have several ways you can see what's happening at Bethany Lutheran Preschool.

You can follow us on social media:



@BLPreschool



@blps_tots

Subscribe to Brightwheel! We use this service for all parent communications and billing, school cancellations, changes to Drop-Off and/or Pick-Up procedures, etc.

Our web address is www.BLPS-TOTS.com

You can also contact the School Office via phone or email

703.765.8687

preschool@bethany-lcms.org

preschoolfinance@bethany-lcms.org

