



# Notes from Cheryl

I am writing this the week before Thanksgiving, so even though it's the December newsletter, I want to tell you what I'm thankful for this year – our Little Ark Daycare and Preschool! Last year about this time, some members of the Administrative Council and I began discussing a suggestion regarding liability insurance and whether we should include Little Ark in our policy or ask them to provide their own policy. Through the North Texas Conference, we consulted an attorney to seek her advice on how to proceed. We met to discuss what to ask the attorney and all of us seemed to be in agreement that we would go ahead with separating legally and having Little Ark form its own Board, have its own tax number, etc. Come to find out, the license from the State of Texas had the church's name on it. Would we have to change that? How long would it take?

In the meantime, someone from the Conference office called me and said, "Wait! Don't separate legally from your daycare! Instead do a 180 and embrace the daycare as an extension of your church's children's ministry!"

By the time we got together on a phone call with the attorney, we all were feeling hesitant to cut Little Ark loose from our church as its own legal entity. The attorney spelled out the pros and cons of each path, and when the phone call was over we took a vote and were in 100 percent agreement that we should integrate Little Ark, pull them in closer rather than pushing them away. No other explanation can be made for this unanimous change of heart except the Holy Spirit dangling the tree with low-hanging fruit for children's ministry right in front of us.

Of the 66 families represented by Little Ark students, only one family attends our services with any amount of regularity. Some families are involved with other churches in town, but the vast majority are unchurched.

We are integrating Little Ark as a major ministry of our church. This comes at an opportune time for our church since our member giving is down, a phenomenon happening in churches all over, not just ours. Finding ways to finance ministry other than member giving is a Wesleyan idea. Back in the 1700s, he bought his own printing press and prolifically wrote articles, flyers, brochures, and circulars about theology and scripture but also about health matters and human interest features that would appeal to working class Methodists. He sold them for a penny each and used the money to finance the Methodist preachers' retirement pension fund!

God is already ahead of us providing us with Little Ark as a ministry and as a way to fund ministry.

# Notes From Cheryl Cont.

There being no separate entity meaning another governing board for Little Ark, we are forming a new Ministry Team to report to the church's Administrative Council and help with the governance of Little Ark as a subset ministry of FUMC Commerce. We will form a committee with 9-12 members to meet quarterly. We will strive to include an attorney, a CPA, a certified teacher, parents, daycare director, church children's director, finance director, and representative of the church Trustees, plus the pastor and any others submitted by the Nominating Committee and voted on by the Administrative Council. Net reimbursement amount from Little Ark to the church is approximately 2,800 monthly or \$33,500 annually for the 2025 calendar year.

As long-time church members or as newer faces, I know that you appreciate the thriving ministry of Little Ark. Elementary school teachers from Commerce ISD are always pleased to recognize children who In the name of Jesus who welcomed children into his kingdom, Pastor Cheryl



First United Methodist Church  
1709 State Hwy 50, Commerce TX

## CHRISTMAS PARENT'S NIGHT OUT


- Chicken nugget dinner provided
- Christmas themed activities and crafts
- Polar Express Themed- Come in PJs

DEC 14  
2024

5:30-8:00PM

6weeks-3years...\$15  
4-11years...\$10

Scan to register  
Payments can be paid via Venmo @Ashlyn\_Woods or cash the night of



All proceeds go to youth church camp

