

# Early Childhood Open Forum

OCTOBER 27, 2024



# Why Early Childhood Ministry?

"Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)

"Start a child off on the way they should go" (Proverbs 22:6)

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14)

# Some History

- The Objective of exploring the possibility of an Early Childhood Ministry has been one of Morrison Zion's School Board Objectives for several years (up to 10 years or more).
- Since Immanuel Shirley closed their school and built on a fellowship hall there have been discussions about Immanuel Shirley having an Early Childhood Ministry (around 10 years as well).
- Until this year there has been no discussions between the two churches and the school on how we can make this possibility a reality.

# Some History

- Past thoughts about an ECM were that we were not losing students and families because we didn't have an Early Childhood Ministry. New evidence has shown that people are choosing different schools because those schools can meet the needs of their 3-year-olds. Often if a family gets started with a 3-year-old program at a school they stay with that school.

# Early Childhood Committee

- Pastor Enderle
- Pastor Ruddat
- Alec Otto
- Nick Dobberpuhl
- Mike Zirbel
- Andrea Lemke
- Kelly Sullivan
- Danielle Ripp
- Jeremy Wittig
- Hillary Geidel
- Jake Geidel
- Ann Potter (WELS Advisor / Consultant)

# Ann Potter



- Over 23 Years at 5 star childcare center
- Blessed with gifts in financial planning, thinking outside the box, passion for sharing Jesus with Children and families, helping other congregations start or strengthen ministries, trusting in God's perfect plan
- WELS consultant for 4 years
- Has been doing extended consulting for 2 years

# Blessings of an ECM?

- Don't have to knock on doors to do outreach in your community
- No better way to earn trust
- Building relationships
- Earning the privilege to share Jesus with children and families
- Opens doors for baptisms, BIC classes, memberships and getting families into worship
- Can be a financial blessing with enables other ministries to grow
- Most importantly CHILDREN ARE HEARING ABOUT JESUS
  - Children will share with each other and with their families
  - Families will want to continue Christian Education
  - Families will want to continue hearing about Jesus too

# What is needed for an ECM?

- Facility
- Staff
- Cost
- Equipment



# The Past Difficulties to Start

- Facilities: All classroom space at Morrison Zion Lutheran School is currently utilized. An Early Childhood Ministry would require an expensive construction project.
- Staffing: Currently, Mrs. Geidel teaches 4K and 5K. Another teacher would have to be called in order to add a 3K program. It is hard to call a new teacher for a new program that doesn't already exist. The WELS has a teacher shortage.

# What has changed? Why pursue this now?

Thanks to increased partnership with Immanuel Shirley, we have been able to overcome some of the challenges that we faced:

- Facilities: Immanuel Shirley has two rooms that served as classrooms when they operated a Christian Day School which are available for use.
- Staffing: Danielle Ripp, a member at Zion, is currently taking Early Childhood Education classes with Martin Luther College. Danielle also has experience, having covered for St. John's in Wrightstown when their 3K teachers were on maternity leave last school year. Danielle will be eligible to receive a call in 2025.

# What has changed? Why pursue this now?

Thanks to increased partnership with Immanuel Shirley, we have been able to answer some of the questions that we faced:

- Cost: We have done some preliminary budget work and have concluded that it will cost up to \$25,000 for start up costs. This includes - Director salary before opening, consultant fees, classroom supplies and materials. Does not include signage, health insurance, other ??
- Equipment: Budget amount \$8,500. Options: member donations, giving tree, WELS childcares, purchasing
- Can be self sufficient once operating
- Balancing the Trilemma

# Potential Plans

- ECM located at Immanuel Shirley but would operate under the umbrella of Morrison Zion Lutheran School.
- Target Opening of an ECM to coincide with the start of the 2025/2026 school year
- Enrolling children age 30 months (2 ½ years old) up to 4K.
  - This age range would allow up to 18 students under the care of the director and an aide.

# Potential Timeline

- Seek approval by both congregations in January
- Place call for director after approval
- Opening to coincide with the start of the school year in August 2025.
- Establish a plan to expand the current 4K program from 3 days per week to 5 days per week starting with the school year beginning in August of 2026.