

Community requests expansion of drop-in program

Jesus said, "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).

RICHMOND, B.C. -

At Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC), you will find the above verse (along with a wall painting of Jesus with little children) in the nursery. It has been a guiding verse for the congregation's Infant and Toddler Drop-In Program that began in



Trinity Lutheran Church's Infant and Toddler Drop-In Program in action.

April 2003. The program is offered for children (infants to 5-year-olds) and their parents/grandparents, and is run by volunteers on Thursday mornings from September to June each year. Through free-play time, Bible stories, songs, crafts, and volunteers' loving care, the amazing love of Jesus is clearly proclaimed to both the children and their parents

The mission of the drop-in has been three-fold: to share the love of Jesus with little children and their families in the community; to encourage family time and bonding between parent and child; and to create a social environment for the caregivers where they can be supported and encouraged.

From the time the program began, parents requested that TLC open a preschool. They appreciate the quality and variety of the program, the loving care of the volunteers, and the moral values shared through the Christian focus. However, when their children turn three years of age, many of the families leave the drop-in because they enrol their children in a preschool or childcare program. They would continue to bring their children to TLC if a similar program were offered. Through the 11 years the program has been running, the number of children and their parents/grandparents attending has always been abundant (averaging

in the 30s and 40s). Even with the many children leaving to go to childcare or preschool programs, attendance does not decline as other families hear about the program through word of mouth.

Through the guidance of Rev. Wayne Zhang, TLC began looking into opening a preschool as a mission project in the community. With time

it became evident that the needs of the community would be better served by opening a group childcare program, with a Christian preschool curriculum included. It is with this in mind that TLC has prayerfully decided to pursue opening a childcare program. A licensing application has been submitted to Vancouver Coastal Health for a Group Child Care Program with 25 spaces.

A mission project like this requires many gifts that the Lord provides: time, talents and treasures. Trinity Lutheran Church is blessed to have gifted volunteers dedicating their time and talents to serve the Lord with this project. Prayers for God's continued guidance are requested, as TLC moves forward with this mission project, with all glory to Him, through Jesus our Lord and Saviour.