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PARENT HANDBOOK

OUR MISSION

Our Mission is to provide a *safe and affordable pre-kindergarten program (Pre-K)*, as well as **before and after school care program (BASCP)**. All Stars Learning Center is committed to teaching Christian fundamentals and to providing a quality education within each program. As an outreach of *Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church*, All Stars Learning Center is *dedicated to serving the Lord by serving the community in Christian love*.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF CARE

The goal of All Stars Learning Center is to help each child succeed in becoming a complete and individual person through increased experiences and challenges to help each child develop and/or improve their social behavior, cognitive skills, and self-efficiency. We provide a safe and loving environment, welcoming of all children.

Our staff is committed to providing children with a *developmentally appropriate environment* by continually evaluating, improving and enriching our teaching skills and techniques. We offer a range of child initiated and teacher directed experiences through *math, science, social studies, literature, language development, pre-reading and pre-writing skills, music and art*. We work with *social skills, behavior management techniques, and understanding feelings and emotions*. In doing so, taking pride in and nurturing each child's interests, home language, and culture to help them become accomplished in a diverse social community where they will become strong, successful children and adults.

The All Stars Learning Center at Hope Lutheran Church strives to be a leading childcare center in the community. We look forward to serving you and your family.

With all God's love and blessings,
The Learning Center's Staff, Board of Directors and
Members of Hope Lutheran Church

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thank you for choosing All Stars Learning Center	1
Center Hours and Holidays	1
The Pre-Kindergarten Program	2
The Before and After School Program	3
The Summer Program.....	3
Admissions Procedures.....	3
Enrolling Your Child	3
Waiting List	4
Enrollment Agreement Contract.....	4
Medical Examinations	4
Emergency Form.....	4
Withdrawing Your Child.....	4
Transitions.....	5
Enrollment and Payment Terms.....	5
Registration Fee	5
Re-enrollment	5
Advance Tuition-Security Deposit.....	5
Payment Policies for Learning Center Services	6
Tuition Rates and Fee Increases	6
Additional Fees	6
Failure to arrive by 6:00 PM.....	6
Returned Check Fees	7
BCPS Early Dismissal and Opening Delay.....	7
Inclement Weather Closings.....	7
Arrival and Departure Procedures.....	7
Morning Drop-Off	7
Afternoon Pick-Up.....	7
Drop-off and Pick-up Safety.....	7
Custody Agreements.....	8
Parents' Responsibilities.....	8
Absences	8
Meals and Snacks.....	8

Health and Safety Procedures	9
Illness	9
Administering Medications.....	9
Emergencies	10
Emergency Evacuation	10
Inclusion Policy	10
Non-Discrimination Statement.....	11
Discipline Philosophy and Procedures	11
Home and School Connection	12
Stay Connected.....	12
Parent Visitations	12
Field Trips	12
Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse.....	12
Fundraisers	12
Resources for Parents.....	13
General Information	13
Leaving the Building.....	13
Publicity	13
Outside Consultations	13
Pets	14
Screen Time Policy.....	14
Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church.....	14
Worship Services	14
Hope Lutheran Church Ministries	14
Hope Lutheran Church's Mission.....	15

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING ALL STARS LEARNING CENTER

Thank you for entrusting our staff members to care for your child on a daily basis. It is truly our honor to teach and guide your children. During your child's time at All Stars, we will ensure your child's safety by securing the perimeters and creating a child-friendly learning environment. We will help children to know and understand they are loved by the Lord and our staff members, and that they are never alone no matter what they do. Our staff members provide a minimum of 60 minutes per day of large motor play-outdoor play (weather permitting) or in classroom recess-to encourage physical development. Finally, we strive to hire staff members that believe in and share our mission, who set high goals for themselves, and challenge themselves to m their teaching potential. We are a Maryland Excels participating program. We implement high quality practices in an effort to provide the best environment for your child to grow and learn.

PLEASE NOTE: When the words “parent” or “parents” are used in this document, they are intended to include guardian or guardians.

CENTER HOURS AND CLOSINGS

The Center operates Monday through Friday.

The Pre-K hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

- Except when Baltimore County Public Schools open late or close early for inclement weather. Should the Center remain open, childcare services will be available.

Before school care is available from 6:30 am to 9:00 am.

After-school care is available from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

The Center is closed on:

- Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day, when observed.

The Center offers childcare services when public schools are scheduled closed. This will include Christmas and Easter breaks, provided at least 5 children are signed up for each day.

A list of closure dates for the current school year will be provided in a separate document. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

THE PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

All Stars Learning Center (ASCLC) provides a Pre-K program designed for the growth and development of children ages 3 to 5. The program builds on providing diverse experiences that meet each child's developmental needs. Our daily schedule will include quiet time and active play, in addition to individual and group activities that challenge each child to progress to the next learning level. Per Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the child to adult ratio is 10 children to 1 staff member. Children are required to be potty trained.

Chapel

Chapel will be held once a week with the pastor or another representative of Hope Lutheran Church. The Chapel experience will include Bible stories, music, songs, puppetry, and prayer.

Lessons

Lesson units are based on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Early Learning Standards. These standards are designed to support the child's learning in eight domains of development: language and literacy; mathematics; social studies; science; health; physical education; fine arts; and social foundations. Reading books provided to the children are rotated monthly and seasonally, as well as for holidays and special occasions. Daily devotions, Bible lessons, worship music, and character development are key components of our program.

Observations and Assessments

Our well-trained staff members observe children on a daily basis, through anecdotal notes and collecting work samples, to provide data on their developmental progress and ongoing assessments. Each child will be assessed using the ASQ- 3 assessment tool within 90 calendar days of enrollment, and again 90 calendar days before the end of the school year. Our staff members also utilize an age-appropriate CDC developmental checklist throughout the year to ensure each child is on a healthy developmental track. This information will be shared during family conferences.

THE BEFORE & AFTER CARE PROGRAM (BASCP)

All Stars Learning Center provides care for school-age children enrolled in Middleborough Elementary School and to those who can be transported to the Center. BASCP services are also available for children enrolled in the All Stars Pre-K program.

Children enrolled in the BASCP who attend Middleborough Elementary School will be escorted to and from the Center by staff members.

Your child will be supervised at all times while in our care. There are a variety of activities in which your child can participate.

Children enrolled in the after-school program will be encouraged to start his/her homework. Parents are responsible for reviewing the assignments. The Center shall not be held responsible for incorrect answers or incomplete homework. Additionally, the Center does not accept responsibility for broken or lost toys or other items brought from home and/or school.

Per MSDE, the child to adult ratio is 15 children to 1 staff member.

THE SUMMER CARE PROGRAM

All Stars Learning Center provides a summer care program with weekly themes and learning activities. The program details will be distributed in the spring of each year.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES (for all programs)

The maximum number of children permitted in the Center at one time is 43 children. This capacity has been determined by the MSDE Office of Childcare and is specified on the license issued to All Stars Learning Center.

Enrolling Your Child

An initial interview will be conducted to determine whether or not our program will meet your child's needs. A tour of the Center will be conducted at this time.

To enroll your child in our program, a completed Registration Form must be submitted with the non-refundable registration fee and security deposit. All other required forms, as well as a copy of each parent's driver's license, must be submitted no later than the child's start date. Failure to submit these documents on or before the start date could result in forfeiture of the space. All forms must be updated whenever information changes or when the Center makes such a request.

Waiting List

In the event there is no space available in our program, you may elect to put your child's name on a waiting list. If a parent wishes to reserve a space for a start time more than two weeks into the future, it may be necessary to pay the weekly fee for that space until the child starts.

When a space becomes available the parent at the top of the waiting list will be notified. The registration packet and payments due must be submitted within two (2) business days.

Enrollment Agreement Contract

An "Enrollment Agreement Contract" must be completed and signed by the child's parents and the Center's Director. The contract states the important aspects of the relationship between the Center and the parent(s).

Medical Examinations

The Health Inventory for physical exams, lead test results and immunizations must be completed by a physician and submitted to the Center **before your child may attend**. If you re-enroll your child for the following school year, an updated immunization report must be submitted.

Emergency Form

The Emergency Form is of utmost importance. You must complete, sign and return the Emergency Form with the registration packet. It is the responsibility of every parent to notify the Center of any changes with regard to the required information. The form must be updated once a year, as requested by the Center. We must be able to reach a parent or designated person at all times and in the event of an emergency.

Withdrawing Your Child

When withdrawing your child, written notice is required to be made no later than two weeks prior to the child's last day. If notice is submitted less than two weeks before the child's last day, the security deposit will

be used to fulfill this obligation. Any monies owed in excess of the security deposit must be paid immediately. Any balance owed to the parent will be refunded.

Transitions

We understand that transitions can be difficult for children, so our program offers many transition opportunities. When the child is transitioning from home to our Center, we offer a shadow period for the child to acclimate to the classroom environment, and if needed, daily nurturing to assist during the transition period. Within the program, we support your child through the transition from our Pre-K program to our Before and After School Care Program with afternoon visits. If your child leaves our program, we will discuss your child's developmental progress and all assessment outcomes with you, so that you can share their progress as needed. We take into account individualization for all children, especially those with disabilities and special health care needs. If an enrolled child(ren) may require an individualized transition plan because of an IEP/IFSP, then our staff members (with parental consent) would schedule a tour or appointment with the child's new school. Should a tour be unavailable, our staff would then request a conference call with the child's new teacher, parent(s), specialist, and any other person involved in the transition process, to discuss their progress thus far. This cooperative effort between Center, school, and parents will successfully address the child's needs, in turn setting the child up for success as they prepare to learn in a new environment.

ENROLLMENT and PAYMENT TERMS

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee is required each school year. The fee is discounted for the second child and for subsequent years.

Re-enrollment

In the event you re-enroll your child for another year, it will be necessary to pay the non-refundable re-registration fee. The registration fee is paid only one time per calendar year.

Advance Tuition – Security Deposit

A security deposit, equal to one week's tuition, is required for children enrolled in the **Pre-K** program. A security deposit for children enrolled in the **BASCP** is determined at the beginning of each school year.

The security deposit must be paid prior to your child’s start date at the Center.

Payment Policies for Learning Center Services

Pre-K tuition payments shall be made weekly, unless an alternative payment schedule is approved. Payments are made in advance and are due every Friday, according to the schedule that will be provided to you. Tuition is due by 6:00 pm on Friday.

BASCP payments shall be made weekly and are due the Friday **prior to** services rendered. Tuition is due by 6:00 pm on Friday.

A late charge, in the amount of \$5.00, per day will be charged to your account for any payment received after the date it is due. If the payment is more than three (3) days overdue, your child will not be allowed to attend the Center, until the payment has been made.

Childcare during Christmas and Easter breaks and when BCPS are closed will entail advance sign-up and pre-payment. A notice will be provided to parents approximately two weeks before the scheduled BCPS closed day(s) for parents to indicate whether or not they will need care. Payment must be submitted when this form is returned to the Center.

Payment may be made with cash, check, or money order. For security reasons, we ask that cash payments be limited. If payment must be made with cash, please enclose it in an envelope with your child’s name and the payment date written on the outside of the envelope. You and a staff member will count the cash and initial the envelope to indicate that the appropriate payment is enclosed.

Tuition Rates and Fee Increases

Pre-K and BASCP tuition rates are determined at the beginning of the school year. However, the rates and fees charged by the Center are subject to change. You will be given one (1) months’ notice, should rates and/or fees change during the course of the school year.

ADDITIONAL FEES

Failure to arrive by 6:00 PM

If your child is picked up after 6:00 pm, a late pick up fee of \$1.00 per minute will accrue. Late payment is expected to be paid in cash, at time of pick up. Please make every effort to notify the Center, if you know you will arrive later than 6:00 pm.

Returned Check Fees

If a check is returned from the bank, you will be charged the check fee as charged by the bank. If a second check does not clear the bank, we require all future payments to be made with cash or money order.

BCPS Early Dismissal and Opening Delay

Additional fees will apply when children enrolled in the Before and After School Program attend All Stars when BCPS is dismissed early, opens late or closed.

Inclement Weather Closings

Our Center will be open, when possible, during inclement weather. Announcements will be made over WBAL TV and posted to our Facebook page, by 6:00 am. When bad weather begins during the school day and reaches a point where it becomes necessary to close the Center, we will notify the radio stations and post it on our Facebook page. It is not possible to notify all parents by telephone, so please keep abreast of the weather reports and check the sources we will use. Please arrange for prompt pick up.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Morning Drop-Off

All children must be escorted into the building by an adult. The adult must “sign-in” electronically on the tablet located near the entrance/exit door.

Afternoon Pick-Up

An authorized adult must “sign-out” electronically on the tablet located near the entrance/exit door. Children will only be released to people who are on the child’s emergency card. We will check identification of those picking up a child until we recognize that person. Please notify the center in writing if anyone other than the designated pick-up person will be coming.

Drop-off and Pick-up Safety

Do not leave children unattended in your vehicle or the parking lot while bringing another child into the building. **PLEASE** turn off the vehicle motor when you exit your vehicle. There are potential hazards associated with leaving an unattended vehicle with its motor running. For everyone’s safety, **PLEASE** use a slow speed when entering and exiting the parking lot.

Custody Agreements

All changes in parental or guardianship custody must be reported to the Center. It may be necessary for you to provide a copy of the appropriate legal documentation and court order forms. The Center will not become involved in any parental or guardian dispute or disagreement.

Parents' Responsibilities Regarding Notifications to the Center

- ***Pre-K:***
Please notify the Center as soon as possible, should your child be unable to attend on a regularly scheduled day.
- ***Before School Care:***
When your child will not arrive at the Center by 8:30 am, you must contact the Center and advise the Staff.
- ***After School Care:***
If your child will not attend as contracted, please be sure to notify the Center and your child's school, as soon as possible.

Absences

You are required to pay for days that your child is scheduled to be at the Center, regardless of whether or not they attend. When a vacation is planned, the parent must notify the Center in writing when the vacation will begin and the date the child will return to the Center. The weekly fee for the vacation week(s) must be paid before your vacation begins.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Children need healthy meals to learn. All Stars Learning Center offers a healthy breakfast and morning and afternoon snacks daily. Those meals consist of whole grains, fresh fruits and/or vegetables at least 4 times per week. We limit fats, sugars and salts, and will monitor meals provided from home, supplementing as necessary to ensure that children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals and snacks.

Although all children receive the breakfast and snacks at no charge, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funds that support our nutrition program based on your child's eligibility. Parents are asked to complete the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Application to assist our food service program. The meals that are available to your child are noted below.

Breakfast: Breakfast, including milk, will be served until 8:15 am.

Snacks: Children will be served a light nutritious snack in the morning and in the afternoon with milk.

Lunch: Parents are responsible for providing their child with a nutritious lunch. Milk will be provided by the Center.

Lactose Intolerant: Parents are required to provide written documentation from the physician and to provide a container of lactose-reduced/free milk to be served to their child.

Food allergies: All food allergies and medical conditions related to food which are reported to the Center and are accompanied by a doctor's note, will be honored.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Illness

Illness is defined by, but not limited to, communicable diseases, fever in excess of **100.4** degrees, open lesions on the body, unknown rashes, active head lice, unusual excretions such as vomiting, diarrhea, yellow or green mucus, excessive coughing and sneezing, sore throat, headache, etc. The Center cannot and will not permit any sick child to attend. If your child becomes ill while at the Center, you will be notified immediately.

Arrangements must be made to pick up your child within (1) one hour of this notification. If your child is absent for a period of three (3) days or more due to illness, a physician's note will be required for your child to return. Payment is due and payable even while your child is absent due to illness.

Any child who leaves the Center due to illness will not be permitted to return until 24 hours after these symptoms have subsided, without the use of medication.

If a child is found to have head lice while at the Center, the parent will be notified, and the child must be picked up immediately. The child may not return to the Center until there is no evidence of active lice cells. The Center reserves the right to examine the child's head before being admitted back to care.

Administering Medications

Maryland State Law requires medication be administered to children only upon written order of the parent or guardian **and** by physician's order. Forms are provided by the Center. The medicine and signed form must be handed directly to the Director or Teacher.

Prescription Medications: When a prescription medication must be administered by the Center staff, the medication must be brought to the Center in the original container(s) with the original label attached. We will follow

only those instructions that are on the label. Any deviations from those instructions must be authorized by the child's physician. No prescription medication will be administered without a signed physician's order.

Non-Prescription Over the Counter (OTC) Medications: In accordance with Health Department guidelines, OTC medications may be administered by the Center as follows: one (1) dose, one (1) time per day with signed parent consent. The Center may administer additional doses of non-prescription medications only when a signed prescription from the child's physician is provided to the Center along with the signed form.

Emergencies

If your child is seriously injured or becomes seriously ill while at the Center, the child will be taken to Franklin Square Hospital by ambulance (under normal conditions and situations). A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital.

Emergency Evacuation

The MSDE Office of Child Care requires childcare providers to maintain a written Emergency and Disaster Plan that includes evacuation procedures, a posted copy of the emergency escape route floor plan, and a shelter in the event evacuation is not feasible.

The written Emergency Evacuation Plan Procedures and the Emergency Escape Route Floor Plan for All Stars Learning Center are posted on the wall adjacent to the sign in/sign out desk at the entrance to the Center. An area within the Center, which meets the criteria set forth by MSDE, has been designated as the shelter.

INCLUSION POLICY

All Stars Learning Center is inclusive of all children with disability and health care needs. We request a child's IFSP/IEP so that staff can work with the child, family, and early intervention specialists to support child and family outcome. The Center promotes inclusive practices in order to accommodate the special needs of children in attendance. The accommodations we make include displaying sign language posters, maintaining a list of children with allergies for meal time purposes, providing ramp access to the building and playground area for wheelchair accessibility, contacting Baltimore County Child Find for assessment and assistance with developmentally delayed children, and providing wheelchair accessible bathrooms. Picture labels are displayed throughout the classrooms identifying toys, teaching materials, and other items.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

All Stars Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, *disability, marital status, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

*Reasonable accommodation will be provided for qualified children with disabilities upon request, as specified under the American with Disabilities Act.

DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY AND PROCEDURES

Our staff members are trained to continually observe a large group of children, as well as accommodate the individual needs of each child. Our classroom settings are designed to meet the needs of all children and to help alleviate conflict. In addition, our staff members work with the children to create classroom expectations.

In the case of challenging behavior, the child is redirected into a positive activity. If the behavior continues, it will be handled in the following manner:

1. A verbal warning is given. The teacher discusses the behavior with the child and provides alternative choices.
2. A second reminder is given, and the teacher assists the child in reflecting upon the behavior and encourages feedback to help problem solve.
3. If the behavior continues, the behavior will be documented and the parents notified, and if necessary, a parent conference.
4. In cases of extreme misbehavior that negatively impacts the safety or welfare of the child, other children or staff, the child may need to leave the Center and /or miss the next scheduled day of care.
5. If the behavior continues, dismissal from the program may be necessary.

**Each case is handled on an individual basis, depending on the severity of the behavior.*

NOTE: “Bullying” is not an acceptable behavior. If a child continuously bullies other children, the above guidelines will apply.

HOME AND SCHOOL CONNECTION

Stay Connected

Parents are welcome to call the Center to speak with staff members at any time. Conferences are available upon request. Parents are encouraged to read announcements and information located in our “Parent Corner”. Be sure to check your child’s folder for further information. We also encourage you to participate in our many parent engagement opportunities.

Family Conferences

Family conferences for our Pre-K Program will be held during the months of November/December and April/May. A reminder will be sent home prior to the conference dates and a sign-up sheet will be located in the “Parent Corner”.

Parent Visitations

Parents are welcome to visit the Center, at any time!

Parent Volunteers

Parent involvement is an important element of the growth and development of your child, within the Center. Volunteers are encouraged to help with field trips, parties and special events.

Field Trips

Written notice, for all field trips, will be provided to the parent at least two (2) weeks in advance. A parent or designated adult must be available to transport a child to and from the field trip location.

Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse

The Center is required by law to report any suspicion or evidence of child abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate authorities. We will make such a report to the Baltimore County Child Protective Services.

Fundraisers

We may occasionally have a fundraiser. While you are not required to participate, any support that you can provide would be greatly appreciated. All proceeds will go directly back to the Center for needed supplies or special events.

Resources for Parents

Many resources are available to assist parents with parenting challenges and to answer questions regarding their child's care. Listed below are a few resources and the contact phone numbers:

Maryland Office of Child Care.....	410-583-6200
Code of Maryland Regulations website: https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations	
Baltimore County Department of Social Services.....	410-853-3000
Child Find – Baltimore County	443-809-3017
Child Care Scholarship Program	877-227-0125
LOCATE: Child Care	877-261-0060
Maryland Family Network	410-752-7588
Abilities Network/Project ACT	410-828-7700
Poison Control.....	410-706-7701
USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program	410-767-0214

GENERAL INFORMATION

Leaving the Building

While most of our activities are conducted within the Learning Center building and the enclosed play yard, at times we will use other areas of the church premises. These will include activities such as fire drills, practices for various programs, etc. In addition, from time to time, we will take the children to the Middleborough Elementary School field and playground when the school is not in session.

Publicity

There may be an occasion when a television station, radio station, newspapers, and/or other media source visit the Center in order to photograph and/or interview children and/or parents. These photographs and interviews may be distributed or broadcasted to the general public through brochures, newspapers, pamphlets, our web site, or email.

Outside Consultations

The Baltimore County Health Department technicians may hold vision and hearing screenings with the Center's Pre-K children. The results of the screenings will be reported directly to parents by U.S. mail. In the event the Center schedules a screening, a permission slip will be sent home.

Pets

While certain approved classroom pets may be allowed in All Stars Learning Center, personal family pets are not permitted around the children, in the building, play yard and near entrance/exit doors.

Screen Time Policy

Television, computers and/or other media devices are only used when directly related to facilitated learning experiences. Screen time activities will not exceed 30 minutes per week, and no screen time will be allotted for any child under the age of two. Exceptions on occasion.

HOPE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Worship Services

Worship services are offered weekly on Sunday mornings and on Holy Days, Festivals, and Wednesday evenings during Lent.

Sundays -10:00 am: Services with Holy Communion

Please contact the church office at 410-686-7587 or visit the church on Facebook@hopemiddleborough for changes in church services or the website www.hopeelca.org.

***New Members are always welcome to join us at Hope Lutheran Church.
Please consult with the Pastor regarding New Member meetings.***

Hope Lutheran Church Ministries

Sunday School (Kidz Bible Zone) meets each Sunday morning from September through May from 10:00 am to 11:00 am during Sunday worship service. Classes are provided for children age 3 through Senior High School. Please check with the pastor if you are interested in participating with one of our adult Bible Study groups.

Adult Bible Study Groups held several times a week. Please check with the pastor if you are interested in participating in one of our Bible Study Groups.

Vacation Bible School is held for one week during the summer. VBS is intended for Children in Pre-K through the 5th grade. VBS also offers opportunities for youth in the 6th and higher-grade levels to earn service hours by serving as teacher assistants.

Prayer Requests: Prayers for people in time of need. Please call the church office with your request at 410-686-7587 or send an email to hopeLsecretary@outlook.com.

Hope Lutheran Church also offers many other fun ministries and activities, including Community Outreach, Confirmation and First Holy Communion, Baptism, Youth Group, Prayer Quilt Ministry, and Fellowship Events. Please contact the pastor for more information on any or all of these ministries and activities.



HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH's MISSION

"REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH CHRIST,
OPENLY SHARING OUR FAITH, OUR LOVE, AND CARE WITH
ALL GOD'S PEOPLE."

Revised March 2026