



## 2020–2022 MISSION GRANT DEVOTION

### #4 EQUIPING AND STRENGTHENING THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES — HOT SPRINGS

**Leader:** *See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. For the Son of Man came to save the lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish (Matthew 18: 10-14).*

**R1:** Bethesda Lutheran Church and School in Hot Springs, South Dakota began its school ministry in 1980. Its program ran four days each week for half of the day. In 2018, it started an **Early Learning Center** that now is open five days per week for 10.5 hours each day. The increase in hours and staff plus the change in the responsibilities of the **Early Learning Center** made the added expenses a burden for the new Center.

**All: I am Jesus little lamb, ever glad at heart I am;  
For my Shepherd gently guides me, Knows my needs and well provides me,  
Loves me every day the same, Even calls me by my name.**

**R2:** The mission statement of the **Bethesda Lutheran School and Early Learning center** is "Partnering with families to share the Gospel and love of Jesus Christ and provide an excellent Christ-centered education". This is the guiding statement for all that they do. Through this ministry, three families have joined the church family at Bethesda, more than doubling their member enrollment.

**All: Day by day, at home, away, Jesus is my staff and stay.  
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me, Into pleasant pastures leads me;  
When I thirst, He bids me go Where the quiet waters flow.**

**R3:** The population of Hot Springs has many low-income young families that struggle to make ends meet. In order to serve the needs of this community with child care and Good News of the Gospel, the **Early Learning Center** has strived to keep tuition as low as possible, yet still maintain the highest standards of learning for their little ones. The South Dakota LWML has given them a mission grant of \$4,000 for new equipment for not only the staff, but also for the parents to use when dropping off their children and for the children to use throughout the day.

**All: Who so happy as I am, Even now the Shepherd's lamb?  
And when my short life is ended, By His angel hosts attended,  
He shall fold me to His breast, There within His arms to rest. LSB #740**

**Leader: Sweet Jesus, as your angels watch over these precious little ones, we pray that your grace and mercy will continue to lead them throughout their lives. Keep them in the knowledge of you that has begun in this early learning center. Bless the efforts of the staff and their parents in leading them into the wonderful knowledge of your love for them. In your powerful name we pray. Amen.**