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December 8, 2025

Dear Friends –

Today I need to share some difficult news. After more than a year of prayerful discernment and careful study, the Board of Directors of Medford Methodist Pre-K has reached the heartbreaking decision to close our beloved school at the end of the 2025–26 session.

As many of you know, the introduction of free public preschool in Medford Township, now mandated by the State of New Jersey, has dramatically reduced our enrollment. As we reviewed these trends and prayerfully considered the future, it became clear that the Pre-K was no longer financially sustainable. The Church Council affirmed this decision at its December 1 meeting, and we shared the news with parents on December 5. There were more than a few tears shed around the table as we took that vote—tears that spoke to the love and investment this church has poured into this ministry for more than half a century.

We know this news is painful for our staff, our families, and our church community. For over 50 years, this preschool has been a place where children were nurtured—mind, heart, and spirit. Generations of little ones have learned their letters, made their first friendships, and developed the early habits of empathy and cooperation in these classrooms. Some of those children even grew up to become teachers themselves. When my own daughter went to kindergarten here in Medford, she was taught by a Medford Methodist Pre-K alumna. Years later, we welcomed that same teacher's child into our preschool. These are the kinds of full-circle blessings this ministry has made possible.

Fifty years of impact. Hundreds and hundreds of lives shaped. And it all began with a couple of church moms, a vision for meeting a need in the community, and a small classroom under Bowker Hall with just a few children. From that humble beginning, God has done immeasurably more than any of us could have asked or imagined. We have cherished the privilege of walking alongside these families. Every day, I watched the staff pour love, patience, creativity, and joy into their work. We laughed, sang, play, learned, and prayed together. Their dedication has been a blessing to this community—and one of the great joys of my ministry.

Although this is not the outcome we hoped for, we end this chapter with deep gratitude and pride for what has been accomplished. I am especially thankful for the steady, compassionate leadership of our Board and our extraordinary staff, both present and past, who have made this legacy possible. During this difficult season, I am most grateful for our director, Kaitlin Thornton, who continues to ensure our program is the very best it can be.

Over the coming months, we will be discerning meaningful ways to honor and celebrate the legacy of our Pre-K. We look forward to sharing those plans with you in Spring 2026. In the meantime, please join me in holding our staff, our students, and their families in prayer as we close out the school year.

In everything, we trust that God still walks with us.

With hope and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a cursive "oe".

Rev. Joe Monahan