

## Welcoming New Life To Our Building

Dear Friends,

There are moments in congregational life when the path forward reveals itself with a clarity that can only be described as grace. I believe we are in one of those moments.

When we made the difficult decision to pause our beloved Presbyterian Preschool, we did so trusting that God was preparing something good for this space and for the ministry of caring for children that is such an important part of who we are. I am overjoyed to share that our hopes have been fulfilled and surpassed: North Bay Children's Center is coming to our church.

NBCC has served the North Bay community for 38 years, providing high-quality, affordable childcare to families who need it most. They serve over 650 families annually across 14 sites in Marin and Sonoma Counties, offering programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in before- and after-school care. I have witnessed firsthand the warmth, professionalism, and genuine love for children that defines this organization. When our Building Discernment Committee visited NBCC's facilities, what struck me most wasn't the thoughtful, expertly designed learning environments or even the award-winning programs. It was the way the teachers interacted with the children. There was a way of deeply seeing, loving, and meeting children where they're at that felt familiar. It felt like Jesus, and it felt like us.

NBCC is committed to serving families from diverse backgrounds, providing high-quality, affordable childcare to working parents and single-parent households who might otherwise have no access to excellent early education. Their mission to assure optimal development for every child resonates deeply with our own calling as the church. Our Presbyterian tradition understands the mission of the Church as participating in God's redeeming work in the world. We see that work wherever lives are nurtured, dignity is honored, and communities are strengthened. In NBCC's care for children and support for families, we recognize a living expression of that same redemptive purpose.

This partnership is not simply about shared values in the abstract, but about a shared participation in what God is already doing: bringing wholeness, hope, and opportunity to the lives of children and their families. It is a way for us, together, to embody the good news through acts of welcome, nurture, and service.

NBCC has also expressed deep respect for the history of the Presbyterian Preschool that preceded them. They want to honor that legacy, not erase it – a posture that speaks volumes about the kind of partners they will be. Because of that, I'm especially hopeful about what lies ahead. In the weeks ahead, you'll have opportunities to meet the NBCC team, learn more about their programs, and discover ways to support and volunteer. I hope you'll embrace them wholeheartedly. These families and these children are exactly the kind of neighbors Jesus calls us to love. By God's providence, they will now be our neighbors, our partners, and I believe, our friends.

I am especially grateful to the Building Discernment Committee, whose careful, prayerful work and steady leadership guided this process with wisdom and grace. Their discernment, diligence, and deep love for this church have been a gift to us all. And I am so thankful for the prayers, the patience, and the faith you have shown throughout this process.

The Lord has been faithful! Let's celebrate that together.

With joy and anticipation,

Pastor Aeryn

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## **From the Building Discernment Committee**

Dear Church Family,

North Bay Children's Center is coming to our campus — and everything we have learned about this organization in the months we have spent getting to know them has left us moved, encouraged, and excited about what is ahead.

### **WHO IS NBCC?**

Founded in 1988, North Bay Children's Center has spent 38 years doing exactly what their name promises: centering children. Their approach to early childhood education is rooted in the conviction that every child — especially the most vulnerable — deserves a strong, joyful start in life. The result: one hundred percent of their graduates enter kindergarten with the proficiencies they need to succeed.

### **THE GARDEN OF EATIN'® — SOMETHING TRULY SPECIAL**

One of NBCC's most celebrated programs is their award-winning Garden of Eatin'® Living Curriculum — a nationally recognized, garden-based approach to health, nutrition, and environmental education woven throughout every aspect of their program. Children grow food, prepare meals in a Kids' Kitchen, and discover that what they eat matters. The program serves over 303,000 healthy meals to children every year across their sites, and is now gaining statewide attention. This innovative, joyful program is coming to our church campus.

### **A MISSION THAT MIRRORS OUR OWN**

NBCC is committed to serving families from diverse backgrounds, providing high-quality, affordable childcare to working parents and single-parent households who might otherwise have no access to excellent early education. Their mission to assure optimal development for every child is the same spirit that lives in the church's mission to join in with God's renewing, redeeming work in the world.

When our committee toured two of their facilities, we witnessed it directly: teachers kneeling to a child's level, welcoming classrooms and outdoor spaces, a culture of warmth that you feel the moment you walk in. This will be their first time housed in a church facility; their other locations

are in local schools. They see our partnership as the beginning of a relationship, not just an address. They have also expressed sincere respect for the history of the Presbyterian Preschool, and a genuine desire to honor it, potentially through a plaque or photographs.

### **HOW WE GOT HERE**

When the decision was made to pause the Presbyterian Preschool, our committee — Gary McLeod, Tim Bowen, Kelly Murphy, and Elaine Carlson — spent five months in careful, prayerful work: consulting with other churches who had brought in outside programs, walking the rooms, organizing the preschool's legacy inventory alongside former Board members, working with a commercial real estate advisor, and staying closely aligned with Pastor Aeryn and Session throughout. Two prospective groups were seriously considered; NBCC was not only the right fit — it was, we believe, the answer we had been praying for.

### **WHAT COMES NEXT**

Beginning in August, young families will be on our campus every school day. Children will fill rooms that were built for children. Room improvements are already underway, with costs shared between NBCC and our church using funds from the preschool's now-closed account.

Very soon, you will have the opportunity to meet the NBCC team, learn more about their programs, and discover ways to support and volunteer. We encourage you to visit [nbcc.net](http://nbcc.net) in the meantime — and prepare to be impressed.

We began this process asking God to lead us to something that would honor our values, serve our community, and bring new life to this space. With full hearts, we believe God has provided beyond our hopes.

With gratitude and great excitement,

The Building Discernment Committee

*Gary McLeod, Chair | Tim Bowen | Kelly Murphy | Elaine Carlson*