



Can you imagine what life would be without Jesus? Life is just different without Him. However, if you are reading this, your story is different! You have experienced a daily blessed connection with Jesus for yourself and this daily connection with Jesus has shaped your family. In fact, your story is similar to thousands of others who have gotten connected to Jesus in the last 50 years. God has invited Divine Redeemer daily into His mission in Lake Country through our Church and School!

Our story started in a bank basement in 1972. We had so many children hearing about Jesus at DR, we had to hold Sunday School in the hallways, so we moved to accommodate God's blessing! It happened again on Hill St. in 1974. We grew and had to hold Sunday School in stairwells, so we moved to a larger campus so we could accommodate God's blessing.

We're now on our current campus which has grown to disciple over 400 hundred students a year. The amazing growth we've seen in the past, is happening now again as **our Early Childhood Development Center is completely filled!** We are right now educating students every day in old kitchens, newly built classrooms inside existing spaces, and yes – from time to time, you'll even see students connecting to Jesus in our hallways! However, we are blessed with a dilemma: there is no more room to accommodate God's blessings. There is no hallway left to occupy. And still a community of parents are regularly calling to connect their little ones to Jesus daily in our Early Childhood Development Center.

What is happening now, since we no longer have space in our current buildings? Every person that calls because they want their children to be raised in this encouraging, Gospel centered environment is...put on a wait list.

The list of phone calls of interest has grown. We have had 45 prospective inquiries since this summer alone. But **you know what we don't have? Space.** And now, our wait list continues to shrink, daily, as these families find care for their children in other Early Childhood Centers. Only a handful of those centers are centered in Jesus.

Here at DR, we know that children are discipled daily by the most nurturing, caring followers of Jesus who work in Early Childhood in Lake Country. While some are even trained educators from our own church body, all of our teachers and aides love Jesus and show that by loving our students. For every child whose names slips off to another facility, we are losing the opportunity not only with the student but with their family as well. Statistically, our Early Childhood Development Center students comprise many of our baptisms at DR (61%!). Those students are retained from Early Childhood into Elementary AND Middle School. From where do the majority of the new members to our congregation come? They come from our school (60%!). The Lord uses our Early Childhood Development Center and Day School as an incredibly important mission and discipleship effort toward local families!

So, what can we do to stop each day from slipping by where a child in our community doesn't have access to Jesus? The vision of the leadership team at DR is to build a new Early Childhood center that significantly increases our student capacity. Currently, we've reached our capacity of educating 91 full-time students in our existing space. The footprint of our proposed building would allow us to expand up to 226 full-time students! While the building would cost approximately \$6 million according to our potential builder and architect, the capacity of this 23,000 square foot building will greatly accommodate our growth and make way for additional blessings of growth after that. Will it take great faith for God's people to meet this need? Absolutely. However, the ministry efforts that can take place in that space will create an invaluable legacy for generations to come!

Once the Early Childhood would move to their new building, there are renovation opportunities below the Fellowship Hall and below the Sanctuary for storage, small group Bible study space, and a dedicated youth ministry space.

This is step one in our focus to lean most effectively into our community's need for Early Childhood Development. It is a ministry blessing to know, with intense focus, what our community needs and that we can meet that need for the sake of the Gospel with Jesus! I can just see the effect this will have in Lake Country:

Moms will be able to drop off kiddos at the front door and know their child will be safe and nurtured – every day.

Dads will come to pick up their little one and they'll sing "Jesus Loves Me" on the car ride home – every day.

Grandmas and Grandpas will come to read during Bible Story Time and be greeted with the hugs that come only from being connected as a family in Christ – every day.

I see this happening already on our campus and I would love to see this happen with your prayerful support – not just yesterday, not just today, but for each day that the Lord puts in front of us. I can see it, can you?

We will be hosting group meetings to receive your feedback and prayer meetings on our ministry movement plan. Your attendance would be greatly appreciated to speak about this process. Forums will be held at the following times:

Prayer Meeting #1 – December 14 – 730pm (following Advent service)

Prayer Meeting #2 – Jan 11 – 630pm

Forum #1 – Jan 11 – 830am

Forum #2 – Jan 13 – 830am

Forum #3 – Jan 18 – 630pm

Forum #4 – Jan 29 – 915am

Forum #5 – Jan 29 – 1030am

Keep your eyes open to announcements about the upcoming opportunities to speak into this process and, most importantly, to join us to pray that the Lord would continue to guide Divine Redeemer's mission and ministry! God's peace to you and your family!

Pastor Seth