

## Helping Children 'shine' in Austin

### Let It Shine for Children with Autism

Our Lord Jesus has instructed parents to bring up their children in the way of the Lord and has asked that the little children be brought to Him and not hinder them. Let It Shine Enrichment Academy, located at Bethany Lutheran Church, Austin, has taken this instruction to heart and created a place for children with special needs.

Two years ago, Bethany members partnered with Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM) to begin a ministry and preschool that addresses special needs for children. This program is an answer for parents who have children who are unsuccessful in other preschools. They provide a Christ-centered learning environment with self-regulation, mindfulness, positive reinforcement, self-confidence, and the sharing of Jesus' love along with individual therapies and education plans.

The parents and staff of Let It Shine are very appreciative of LWML Texas District for the first installment of the mission grant for 2018-2020. Let It Shine staff were able to purchase many age and skill appropriate materials to help with children's development and further their relationship with Jesus.

By focusing on the child's development and individualizing each child's care, Let It Shine is able to meet the child where he or she is at rather than forcing a square peg in a round hole.

Many of the children at Let It Shine have been kicked out of other preschools. Families do not know where to go and do not have many options. Let It Shine supports both the family and the child to create a nurturing and accepting environment. One Let It Shine family would get called daily at their previous school to pick up their child early because of "poor behaviors". Let It Shine sees the behaviors as a form of communication and gives the child the tools to communicate appropriately, self-regulate, and succeed.

It is exciting to see where the Lord will take this program and these children in the years to come. They wish to give a big thank you to the Texas District for the support and help.