



# St. Mary's Catholic School December 2023 Newsletter

[stmary@shaw.ca](mailto:stmary@shaw.ca) / [www.stmarysschool.ca](http://www.stmarysschool.ca)



"Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed. Each of us is loved. Each of us is necessary."

~ Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI



## Advent



This Advent we will be celebrating our weekly advent themes for the four weeks leading up to Christmas. Each class has an advent wreath and will be discussing the weekly theme. You may also want to do the same as a family at home. We have 3 different activities that will run alongside our advent celebrations and reflection time:

Individual student intentions: Each student is asked to decide on an action to help another person. This can take the form of a silent prayer, positive intentional thoughts toward another, or a simple act of kindness. The person this is done for may or may not be aware of it being done. Students will share what they decide to do within their class.

Class missions/intentions: Each class discusses what they would like to do as Christian outreach to meet a need outside of our school community. This can take many forms: shoveling driveways for seniors, writing joke books, or doing prayer cards for those struggling with health or emotional challenges, and so on.

School Advent initiative: (Class food wagons) As a school, each class is going to create their own themed wagon for food collection to the food bank. Each week students will bring their class wagon, loaded with food for donation, to the Advent assembly and candle lighting. This food will be stored under our Advent bulletin board. We will take photos of the amount of food each class collects. All the food will be donated to the Cranbrook Food Bank. This initiative starts December 4th. It is our hope that each class will have something to bring to each assembly. Thank you for helping us with this!

Weekly food collection themes:



**HOPE** – December 4th: **Dry Pasta**

#1 Advent assembly = **Tuesday**, December 5<sup>th</sup> (9:00 AM)

**PEACE** - December 11th: **Dry Cereal**



# 2 Advent assembly = **Tuesday**, December 12<sup>th</sup> (9:00 AM)

\*Mass **Thursday**, December 14<sup>th</sup> (9:00 AM)

**JOY** – December 18th: **Cookies & Crackers**



3<sup>rd</sup> Advent assembly = **Tuesday**, December 19<sup>th</sup> (9:00 AM)

4<sup>th</sup> Advent assembly = **Wednesday**, December 20<sup>th</sup> (9:00 AM)

**All are welcome to attend our Advent assemblies and Mass !**

### **Explaining the season of Advent**

The season of Advent is celebrated by Christians all over the world. Advent encompasses the four weeks leading up to December 25 when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Advent is a time of waiting and of reflection. The symbol of advent is the advent wreath. This is a circular garland of evergreen branches that represents eternity or eternal life. The wreath has four candles including three purple and one pink. Each Sunday of Advent a new candle is lit, with each representing a different aspect of spiritual preparation for the coming of the Lord.

### **Advent Wreath Candles**

Set within the center of the branches of the wreath is a white candle. As a whole, these candles represent the coming of the light of Christ into the world.

*On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the 'Prophecy' candle in remembrance of the prophets who foretold the birth of Christ. This candle represents **hope** or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.*

*On the second Sunday the second purple candle is lit. This candle represents **peace**. This is known as the 'Bethlehem' candle as it symbolizes Christ's manger.*

*On the third Sunday the pink candle, known as the 'Shepherd's' candle is lit. This candle represents **joy**.*

*On the fourth Sunday, the last purple candle is lit. This candle is known as the 'Angel's' candle. This candle represents **love**.*

On Christmas Eve, the **white center candle** is traditionally lit. This candle is called the 'Christ' candle and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. The color white represents purity and joy.

We would encourage families to celebrate this liturgical season with an Advent wreath during the weeks prior to Christmas. It is a great way for children learn that Christmas is much more than the commercialization we are surrounded with in today's society at this time of year. It is a great way to initiate a discussion on the true meaning of Christmas. In our classrooms at St. Mary's School, our students lead Advent celebrations. Merry Christmas and may you be blessed with love, peace, and health!





# Outdoor Education



Students at St. Mary's this fall have been taking math, literacy and science outdoors. Through sharing Wild ideas with story stones, inviting local knowledge keepers, like retired teacher Mr. Stewart Wilson to share knowledge of water and conservation and measuring natural items at our classroom, students have been taking the learning outside.







# Remembrance Day



On November 8th our school held a Remembrance Day Assembly. We had 4 special guests. Students read stories, poetry, sang several songs, laid classroom wreaths and led prayers. A variety of artwork was displayed on the walls.



We will have a **nativity display** in the library at our Christmas Spirit night. If you would like to bring your nativity, please bring it into the office or the library that week. PLEASE include a paper with your child's name and anything special about the Nativity scene. Please label the box or container as well.



Mrs. Quinn will arrange them for Thursday and you can bring it home at the end of the evening.

## St Mary's School Family Christmas Spirit Night

**Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

Location: St Mary's school gym

### **6:30 PM – 7:10 PM**

- Grade 6 will perform the skit "The Little Drummer Boy"
- K-5 classes will sing and play instruments



### **7:15 PM – 8:00 PM**

Families are welcome to enjoy the evening festivities held in each classroom.

**Crafts \* Christmas photo room**

**Cookies & Hot Chocolate**



# **Field Trip Requirements for All Volunteers and Drivers of St. Mary's Catholic School**

## **Reference CISND POLICY#5200**

When volunteer drivers are used, the following documentation must be on file in the school office 2 days before the trip. Kindly scan and send proof of the following to [stmary@shaw.ca](mailto:stmary@shaw.ca) or the secretary will copy it at the school office for you. Your information will be confidentially retained until the end of the school year when it will then be shredded. Required proof of the following include:

1. Drivers \$3,000,000 Insurance Liability
2. Valid Driver's License Driver Abstract
3. Valid Drivers's License
4. Valid Criminal Record Check
5. Current Safe Environment Training (If you have completed #4 and #5 the school has it on file)

**CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK (CRC): DO NOT GET A CRC AT THE RCMP!**  
**CRC's for the school must be done through our process only and at NO COST!**

Insert the following link in your browser and follow the directions.

<https://justice.gov.bc.ca/eCRC/>

ACCESS CODE: 8RJ8BJCMYC

If you can't do this process online, you must ask for a hard copy at the office.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING: Must be scheduled through the school office [stmary@shaw.ca](mailto:stmary@shaw.ca) or see Mrs. Green. This process may take a few weeks to be approved by CISND.**

## **Request a Driver's License Abstract as follows:**

<https://onlinebusiness.icbc.com/cliio/> Copy and paste this into your web browser

- >Enter your information
- >Click "***Personal Driving Record***" on the options page
- >Enter your personal email
- >Submit

## **Final Steps:**

- Forward email results to [stmary@shaw.ca](mailto:stmary@shaw.ca), OR
- Print and provide a copy to the school office, OR
- Screen Shot and email to [stmary@shaw.ca](mailto:stmary@shaw.ca)

***\*Driver's Abstract's are usually returned to your email within a few hours and are very fast to complete online***

Thank you for your due diligence. It is appreciated !



## **St. Mary's PSG Update – December 2023**

And just like that, 'tis the season! December is always a busy and fun month at St. Mary's School. And we are counting on our parent community to make it a great success!

The **annual Christmas Bake Sale** is coming up on **Thursday, December 7th**.



This is always an exciting event for the kids! Bake some home-made goodies or save the time and purchase store-bought sweets – we appreciate it either way! Parents should drop off their treats on the morning of December 7th in the school kitchen. **Please ensure that all baking is nut-free.** Students can purchase the treats for **\$1 each**. If you are available to help with the bake sale, we need volunteers at both recess and lunchtime. Sign up will be on the PSG Facebook page.

Our last **Hot Lunch** of 2023 will be on **Friday, December 15th** and we will be serving **Boston Pizza and Domino's Pizza**. We are requesting that parents of Grade 2/3 students volunteer to help serve. If you can assist, please arrive at the school kitchen at 12:10pm.

The last day of school before Christmas Break is **Friday, December 22nd**. And as tradition dictates, it is also **Pajama Day** and our **annual school Christmas Pancake Breakfast**. This is another hugely popular event and will require several parents (8 individuals) to help serve up hot cakes and sausage for our students and teachers all morning long. Stay tuned for more details on our Facebook page.

Thank you again to **Jenna Simoes** for organizing the Poinsettia and Wreath Fundraiser. We raised **\$1800** for our school! **Delivery will be on Tuesday, December 5th**. And thank you to **Kerry Stanley** for organizing the delicious BC Fresh Produce Bundles. PSG raised **\$877** through that initiative.

Our next PSG meeting will be in the new year on **Tuesday, January 16th at 6:30pm in the Community Room at St. Mary's**. As always, we LOVE having parents join us!

Wishing everyone a very healthy and joyful Christmas!

**Courtney Magro**  
**PSG Chair**



## Save-On Foods

If you buy your groceries at Save-On Foods please tell the cashier that you are from St. Mary's School and they will record your total sales in a binder. The school receives a percentage of all sales quarterly!

Thanks for supporting our school!



## Student Mental Initiative:

Did you know: Schools across the province, including St. Mary's, have been given access to a Mental Health resource called Open Parachute. Open Parachute is used all over Canada to help teach students how to deal with mental health challenges by teaching strategies through mini videos. Teachers and teacher's assistant's have access to this resource and the feedback on this resource is excellent.



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### ...Thoughts during Christmas:

What is that gift worth? The hardworking middle-class family had 6 amazing children. What they lacked in finances, they made up for in family life. Good parents and a loving home is what their children enjoyed. Ray was 11 and had recently found a new friend in classmate Billy. Billy was a boy from a broken home with lots of freedom.

Through this friendship Ray learned many things he otherwise would not have been exposed to. One morning in the kitchen, Ray found himself alone with his mother. "Oh no, here it comes", he thought. Ray braced himself for an inevitable lecture about Billy. "Your friend Billy doesn't have a lot does he Ray? Billy doesn't seem to have any rules. I think his parents may not be able to spend much time with him," pondered his mother. "That's true", said Ray. "Well," said Mom, "I want you to go and tell Billy that he is welcome in our house anytime. You see Ray, we have been blessed with a wonderful family and we have a responsibility to share this with others who, through no fault of their own, do not have the same".

This story is true. It happened in the late 1930's. It is a gift that lasted a lifetime...well beyond the life of Ray's mother... as it was keynote speaker, Father Ray Carey, who told the story to a group of educators at a recent meeting.

Will your gifts this Christmas create Shalom in the years ahead? Or will your gifts seek to instill entitlement and division between the haves and the have nots? Could one small, seemingly simple action or gesture bring Shalom to your descendants? The power of the spoken word is awesome.

*"In a happy family you don't receive in proportion to your input. You receive in relation to your needs." – Desmond Tutu*

#### THIS CHRISTMAS

Mend a quarrel.

Seek out a forgotten friend.

Write a love letter.

Share some treasure.

Give a soft answer.

Encourage a young person.

Keep a promise.

Find the time.

Forgive an enemy.

Listen.

Apologize if you were wrong.



from the Staff at St. Mary's

