

# St. Ann School Newsletter

Nov. 24, 2009

Volume 17, Issue 5

## *Slow Down and Let God In*

**“I, the Lord, your God...lead you on the way you should go. Isaiah 48:17**

AM I READY TO BE LED by God? This question leaps up in me when I read the passage from Isaiah. I'd like to think that I want to go where God leads me, but sometimes my life indicates the opposite. When I allow my days and nights to be so completely filled with commitments and activities that I stop leaving space to listen to God, then I am in trouble. If I ignore those nudges to reach out and help someone, if I forego my prayer time, if I let myself grow irritable or recalcitrant, then I have slammed the door on God's leadership.

During Advent, the Church urges us to be especially attentive to how Christ comes to us. Yet, our Advent lives often contain an unusual amount of pressured hustle and bustle. Awareness is vital if we are to welcome Christ in our midst. Let's slow down our pace so we can be led to where the Holy One Dwells.

~ Sr. Joyce Rupp, O.S.M.

## Elizabeth House Collection



During the month of December we would like the families of St. Ann School to support Elizabeth House, a Christian residential program for women undergoing an unplanned pregnancy. Elizabeth House provides a home as well as prenatal care, parenting classes and assistance in finding a job and a future residence.

We would invite each family to contribute any of the following items for the residents of Elizabeth House: new or gently used baby clothes, Baby Wipes/ Wet Ones, newborn diapers, bathroom towels, kitchen towels or small kitchen items. **We will be collecting items now through the December 16.** Thank you for your generosity to this program.

## St. Ann School Advent Program

St. Ann School will hold an Advent Program presenting students, (K—6) on **Tuesday, December 15 at 6:30 PM** in the Church. Dress for our concert will be the same as last year: best dress clothes in red, white, green and/or black. Students should arrive no later than 6:15 PM.

There will be a reception in the gym following the program. **Please provide one or two dozen bars & cookies or other healthy snacks** for the reception following the concert event.



As a reminder, **all items are to be free of nuts or nut products.** These items can be dropped off at the school kitchen anytime on Tuesday, December 15th before the concert. We look forward to seeing you at the concert.

***Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)***

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# News From The Principal's Desk

## How Times Have Changed

An elderly woman from the parish stopped me as I was walking Buddy over the weekend. We stood and chatted about the fact that the month of November has flown by and that Advent will be upon us very soon. The woman started reminiscing about what the Advent season and Christmas was like when she was young. Life was much simpler when she was a child. People couldn't dash out and buy gifts at the mall. Instead the gifts were homemade. Plus expensive gifts were never expected, nor did people equate Christmas with receiving expensive gifts. The most important gift at Christmas was being together with family and enjoying the special moments as family. She never imagined a time when children and entire families would forget about preparing for the coming of Jesus because of the anticipation of toys and other treasures being placed under the tree. How times have changed!

Advent is a time of joyous anticipation. It is a season that offers each of us four weeks in which to reflect, to pray and to prepare for Jesus' coming. Advent is a time for "active waiting". As the first week of Advent unfolds, I challenge each of you and myself to take a few minutes to examine our attitudes about Advent and Christmas. Have we let gift giving, card writing, cookie baking and tree decorating replace "active waiting" for Jesus in our every day activities and in our hearts? How do we prepare for the coming of Jesus into our hearts, our homes, our lives? As we "actively wait" during these four special weeks of Advent, I pray that each of us will realize and truly believe that Jesus, Emmanuel, god with us, is why we celebrate Christmas.

May you and your family be blessed in a special way this Advent and holiday season! May you be brought closer to each other and to our Lord this Advent. May you realize what a special gift you are to those who love you. God be with you, as you continue to prepare and wait for the gift of Jesus, born on Christmas Day.

*Joan Leonard*



### **Feast of the Immaculate Conception**

Please join us for Mass on Tuesday, December 8 at 8:10 AM for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Students will be attending Mass on this feast day instead of our usual Friday morning Mass that week.



### **School Advent/ Christmas Party and Prayer Service**

There will be a Christmas Party for students in grades K—6 in the afternoon of December 22. Special activities will be planned and refreshments will be served in the classrooms starting around 1 PM. The students will come together for an Advent Prayer Service and caroling in the church at 2:00 PM.

## Preparing Children for Advent

### Preparing Ourselves First

The first, and most important thing we can do to prepare our children for Advent is to prepare ourselves first. After all, if we are impatient and crabby - pressured by all the busyness of this season - we won't be very good at teaching our children anything about quiet, expectant waiting. If they never hear us talk about what we long for from the Lord, how will they learn about this kind of longing? And, if they hear "the coming of Jesus" talked about at church, and perhaps at school, but never hear us talk about the meaning of the coming of Jesus for us, what kind of message will we be giving them?

Of course, our children will be watching us and listening to us - what we say and do, and what we fail to say and do. So, the first thing we can give our children is our own commitment to enter Advent as deeply as we can. We want to clear our own spirits so that we can be present to theirs. The graces we receive can be the graces we share with them.

### Advent Activities

It would be great to create a Nativity "place" in our home. Before we just put a nativity scene there, we can let it be an empty space for a while. We can prepare for setting it up, by putting things in that place which represent the longing, the desire, the emptiness. Perhaps that place can begin with a basket. Children can place notes in the basket that express what they hope for, for each member in the family, for their friends, for people in the world.



They can write special prayers for loved ones who are sick, for children in their school who are difficult. We can keep telling the children that it is into this special place of our longing and faith that Jesus comes. Then, when we set up the Nativity scene in that place, it can become a special place for the children.

We can involve children in preparing food for others.

If there is a pre-Christmas party with friends or family, or even a "pot-luck" event we have to go to, we can involve the children in preparing something for the party. And, for Christmas dinner itself, we can tutor the children in making food for others to be happy and full and grateful. We can show them recipes they can make, and let them "in" on the big plans for the whole thing.

We can make plans to visit someone who is homebound or in a nursing home at this time. We can prepare our children for how to go there, how to be there, how to be grateful for the experience.

We can take an Advent or Christmas song, and copy it for our family reading - perhaps a prayer to be read, over and over. We can talk about what the words mean.

With older children, we might find a time to prepare food for a meal program for the homeless or go there to help serve and meet the families there. We may even be able to get them to tell the younger children about the experience, and why it fits so well with preparing for Christmas.

And, as we make these special family traditions during Advent, we will come up with others, that fit our family well.

excerpted from *Creighton U. Online Ministries Home Page* (for a complete copy of this article see: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/preparing-children.html>)

## December/January Calendar of Events

|   |   |
|---|---|
| December 4, 18  | 8:10 AM School Mass   |
| December 6  | 3 PM 1st Reconciliation Celebration,<br>Open to Parishioners                |
| December 8  | 8:10 AM All School Mass, Feast of the<br>Immaculate Conception              |
| December 10   | 6:30 PM H&S Steering Committee<br>Mtg.                                      |
| December 14   | 5-6 PM, Market Day Pick -up   |
| December 15   | Monthly Tuition Due   |
| December 15   | 6:30 PM Advent Concert grades K- 6,<br>Reception in Gym following Program   |
| December 16   | Deadline for Elizabeth house Drive  |
| December 17   | 7 PM MOPS   |
| December 22   | 1 PM Christmas Celebration in class-<br>rooms, 2 PM, Advent Prayer Service  |
| December 23—January 1, 2010   | Christmas Vacation  |
| January 4, 2010   | Classes Resume  |
| January 8,15,22,29  | 8:10 AM School Mass   |
| January 14  | 6:30 PM H&S Steering Com. Mtg.  |
| January 15  | Semester, Quarter and Monthly<br>Tuition Due                                |
| January 18  | No School, In-Service   |
| January 21  | 7 PM MOPS   |
| January 22  | End of 2nd Quarter  |
| Jan. 24-30  | Catholic Schools Week   |
| Jan. 24   | 10:30 AM, CSW Kick off Mass,<br>Coffee and Rolls in Gym after<br>Masses     |
| **January 25  | <b>St. Ann School in-session, please<br/>carpool. No bussing available.</b> |
| January 25  | 5 -6 PM Market Day Pick-Up  |
| January 29  | Spaghetti Dinner and Basket Raffle  |
| <b>Catholic Schools Week: Catholic Schools—Dividends<br/>for Life. See Agenda for CSW in our Jan-Feb. news-<br/>letter in mid-January.<br/>See January Monthly Calendar for All Events.</b> |   |



# Classroom News



## Pre-Kindergarten News

During the month of November, the Pre-Kindergarten classes have been busy talking about and getting ready for the season. We have been reading books about the pilgrims and the Native Americans, about Thanksgiving traditions and foods, and about the weather changes in fall and the beginning of winter. We have been talking about and thinking about the special people and things in our lives. Check out our "We are thankful for..." bulletin board!

In between all these holiday preparations, we are continuing to learn about our letter of the week. During "H" week we hopped into and out of hula-hoops in the gym and during "I" week Pre-K 3 had an ice cream taste test while the Pre-K 4 classes counted ice cream scoops. There's always something exciting happening in our room; stop in and see for yourself!  
~ Mrs. Fields

## Kindergarten News

In Kindergarten, we are learning about Advent and about the Angel Gabriel and how Mary chose to say "Yes" to God. Ask the children why the Advent wreath is circle shaped, and green, and why four candles, and red ribbons!



We will act out the first Thanksgiving on Tuesday, and then the first Christmas the last week before Christmas break.

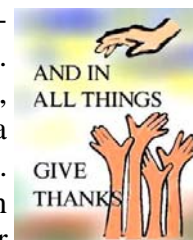
We are finished with the initial foreign country unit, and now can talk about countries for the rest of the year and think about which continent they are on, and really get a good basic idea about our world and different cultures.

This class is unbelievably bright and are like sponges when new ideas are introduced!

~ Mrs. McGuire

## What's New in First Grade?

God has given us another wonderful month of fun and learning. With Thanksgiving approaching, we started the month by creating a list of things we are thankful for. Each day the students choose an item off their list to add to our growing classroom cornucopia.



In Reading, we have moved into our second reading book and have had fun reading different folktales. We learned how even stories can teach us lessons and can teach us about our past. We recently celebrated a week of reading and the first graders dressed up as their favorite book character.

Our mealworms continue to grow and change and have showed us first hand the metamorphosis process. Many of them are in the pupa stage and some have grown into beetles! Soon we will be finding out more about different habitats and what animals live there. In Math we have been learning how to use a number line to add, and practicing adding doubles.

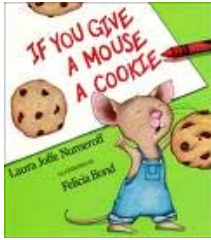
It has been fun learning more about the Native Americans and the different ways they helped the settlers.

We wish everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving!

~Mrs. Hoyer

## Second Grade News

Please pray for second graders as they prepare to receive their First Reconciliation on December 6. Students have been busy preparing by learning prayers, memorizing the 10 Commandments, and studying stories of God's forgiveness.



This month we studied circle stories, or if...then stories, like If You Give A Mouse A Cookie - "If you give a mouse a cookie, he's going to want a glass of milk to go with it..." All of the circle stories by Laura Numeroff have such funny causes and effects. We wrote our own circle stories, titled "If You Eat Too Much Thanksgiving Dinner..." Check them out in the hallway.

We are also preparing to write a friendly letter. After reading the chapter book, Flat Stanley, about a boy's adventures after he is flattened by a bulletin board, we sent our own version of a Flat Stanley to a friend along with a nice letter.

Math this month was all about money, money, money. The kids are doing a great job of adding money and counting change. Students worked in pairs to plan a Thanksgiving dinner. They cut grocery ads from the newspaper to plan the food, then had to add up the cost. They found out hosting Thanksgiving dinner would not be cheap!

Our *life structures* unit concluded with some great science projects. The projects ranged from writing a song and dance about seeds and germination to keeping a worm farm. Thanks to all the families who agreed to take home one of our crayfish as a new pet. November was also a great month for grown-ups. It was wonderful to meet and talk with parents at conferences; and grandparent's day was a real success. Thanks to all the parents and grandparents who have been such essential influences in these children's lives.

~ Mrs. Prechel



## Third Grade News

The third graders continue to learn about the saints. We hear their stories and try to relate their lives to ours here in 2009. Our religion book focuses on Jesus as a teacher, miracle worker, and Savior. We will hear stories from the Old Testament as we celebrate Advent through our Jesse Trees. Our virtue-of-the-month for December will be compassion, and we will put that into action as we strive to be kind and caring children. We will continue to save can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House and donate to the Catholic Multicultural Center.

We are completing our math unit on adding and subtracting 2- and 3-digit numbers, and soon we will focus on time, data, and graphs. We begin to learn about ecosystems in Science and citizenship in Social Studies. We will enjoy reading 2 novels in our literature groups in December, and Mrs. Donovan is reading Mary Poppins to the whole class right now, too.

~ Mrs. Donovan

## Fourth Grade News

Fourth Grade continues its look at the regions of the United States. We have just completed the Southeast region and will begin the Midwest region this week. Students examined the split in our nation over slavery, eventually leading to the Civil War. We looked at the Missouri Compromise, Abraham Lincoln's role, and the leaders of the Union and Confederacy Armies. Our class also figured out what items are grown in the south because of their long growing season.



Our Science continues to focus on the human body. Students have learned about the skeletal system and how it works with the muscular system. Last week, we discussed the flow of oxygen throughout the body as it journeys from the mouth to the lungs to the air sacs and eventually out into our blood. This led to a look at the circulatory system and how important blood is to our body. This week, students will create a board game on the digestive system.

For Math, we have begun our look at multiplication. Students used arrays to create addition and multiplication sentences to see their connection. We studied patterns for multiplying certain numbers such as 0, 1, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12s. We also took a look at the different properties of multiplication and how they can help in the process. This week, we will begin division.

We are currently in Theme 3 for reading. Our focus skill is cause and effect. Students read a non-fiction story on mountains and how they were formed. They recognized that, "Because of this then this happened." After the holiday, we will begin our first literature group as we read "Because of Winn-Dixie." In English, we continue our look at nouns. Students have worked on singular and plural possessives, collectives, and irregular nouns. Currently, in writing, students are completing their research paper on a saint. We will be moving on to writing a persuasive essay after Thanksgiving.

~ Mrs. Grutzner

## Mrs. Stano's Classes

I can hardly believe that the holidays are just around the corner. Time is really flying! That is proving to be the case in both fifth and sixth grade language arts classes.

The Fifth Grade has been working on the first of six traits in writing, which is the *idea* trait. They have been developing their "idea" on Thanksgiving and the traditions that their families have for this special day. Also, with this paper, this fifth grade is working on keeping their idea focused on the topic of traditions and adding lots of descriptive words and sentences to elaborate on their idea.

Reading class for the Fifth Grade involves working on the skills of sequencing and understanding the character's motives, which in turn helps develop the theme of the story. They enjoy reading aloud and discussing the passage from the textbook.

The Fifth Grade is answering the call to stewardship. We will be going to the Catholic Multicultural Center in Madison to help prepare the food pantry for the many people that the pantry serves. The fifth graders are very eager to volunteer. Along with the volunteer work, the fifth grade continues to examine the sacraments

during religion class. They enjoyed designing a cup in which they placed the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The class learned that during the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Bishop calls upon the Holy Spirit to pour forth the Gifts of the Holy Spirit onto the person that is receiving the sacrament.

The Sixth Grade continues to enjoy reading *The Westing Game*. The class is currently working on travel brochures that promote the wonderful town of Westington and all the mystery that surrounds it!

The Sixth Grade did a wonderful job peer editing their current writing project. Each student received another student's paper. They spent time reading the paper and writing comments to help the person improve their paper. They also scored the paper with the same rubric that I would use. It was a very good learning experience because the students received feedback not only from me, but also from their peers. Many students were encouraged by the comments that they received, and wanted to make the needed adjustments to their papers for a better score.

~ Mrs. Stano

## Mr. Eliason's Classes

The first quarter of our school year came to an end very quickly and it's hard to believe it is almost Advent! In sixth grade Religion we have been studying the story of Abraham and Sarah and the many sacrifices they had to make throughout their lives. The students have come to realize that we all must make sacrifices in our lives.

In Math we have begun our fraction work. We will cover addition, subtraction, and multiplication with fractions, as well as the representation of fractions in decimal and percent form. The sixth graders have a great deal of knowledge of fractions from last year so I think they will do great!

In Science, we have begun our *Genetics* unit. We will be discussing topics such as heredity, traits, and the reproduction process of meiosis. This unit shows us how we were made, from our hair to color to the shape of our nose.



Our social studies travels will soon take us to our neighbors to the north, Canada! Most people do not know a great deal about Canada, even though it is very close to Wisconsin. We will learn about the provinces of Canada, the economy, and many of the interesting activities that take place there.

In fifth grade Math we have started our journey into the world of long division. Knowing multiplication, division, and subtraction facts is very important in this process and we will work very hard to make sure we are able to divide correctly.

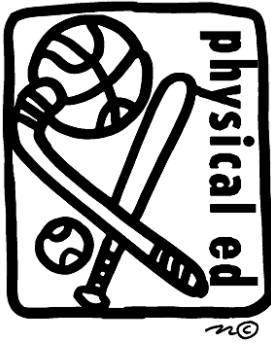
In Science, we are continuing to work through our FOSS Landforms unit and the kids are doing a great job of working together to investigate how canyons and mountains are formed as well as the processes of erosion and deposition. The FOSS kits are a great way to learn and I know the students are really enjoying them.

Lastly, in Social Studies, we are wrapping up our *Explorers* unit. When this unit has finished we will have had explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Marco Polo, and Juan Ponce de Leon visiting our classrooms (in the form of your child). This is always an exciting project that allows the students to incorporate some of their drama talents into Social Studies.

Have a great Advent!

~ Mr. E





## News from the Gym

When I originally took the position of Physical Education Teacher at St. Ann School, I thought the most important goal of my curriculum was to teach basic skills of many different sports and activities while keeping the children moving and active for 45 minutes. While I still believe these are important goals, I have since realize the many other benefits that P.E. class has to offer our children.

Physical education provides an opportunity for children to develop critical life skills, such as problem solving, strategy, and working together. Many of the activities in P.E. class require the children to work together to achieve a goal. They also learn the basics of good sportsmanship and that there is much more to sports and physical activities than simply winning or losing.

Physical activity, in general, not only keeps our bodies healthy and fit, it also provides many psychological and mental benefits as well. For example, exercise and movement can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety and promote an overall sense of well-being. The increased blood flow during exercise transports oxygen to all parts of the body, including the brain, which can help improve memory and reasoning skills.

I have come to view the children's experience in P.E. class as unique and very important. With a broad range of games and activities that incorporate teamwork, strategy, skill-building exercises, active participation and fun; P.E. class can help build self-confidence in all children.

~ Mrs. Jamison

## Computer News

Happy Holidays to all of you! As we celebrate this season of good will and peace, the students in Computer class are busy, discovering ways that they too can share their talents with others through the Internet.

The First Grade has completed their fall stories and is learning how to add voice narration to it and create a slideshow and podcast. The Second Grade has presented their educational websites to their classmates and are now moving into creating podcasts themselves. After they are finished, I will post the podcasts for you to watch at home.



The Third Grade has been working extremely hard on their keyboarding skills. I am very pleased with how patient and excited they are to work on drill after drill after drill. I emailed all of the Third Grade parents, but any student in Grades 3-6 should encourage their son/daughter to go to <http://www.freetypinggame.net/free-typing-lesson.asp> and work on keyboarding. Like anything else, students have a tendency to stray away from proper keyboarding, and I've noticed in class that many of them have resorted to the pecking method.

Rather than watching TV or playing video games, ask your child to take ten minutes to work on keyboarding. We have so many other things happening in class that it's difficult to find the time to re-teach this skill.

Speaking of the upper grades being busy, Fourth Grade has finished learning about email and is now creating a Powerpoint presentation on holiday traditions around the world. Their research will include books as well as Internet sources. In addition, they will be creating bibliographies on Bibme.org, a free, online bibliography maker. I have created a school account, and they will log in using the school's generic Gmail account. We will begin using this email for any Internet site that requires a registration account.

The Fifth and Sixth Grades have finished their Google Docs presentation on the Holocaust Heroes, and are now creating entertaining, informative multi-media on Voicethread. Once they have created their shows, they will be able to embed them in our Ning. For those of you not familiar with Ning, it is a social networking site, similar to a Wiki, where students can share their thoughts, upload pictures and videos, get assignments and stay in touch. I have added another segment to our Ning on how to create podcasts and have also added a Forum question, asking students to brainstorm ideas. If you'd like to see the Ning, please email me, [kara.roisum@stoughton.k12.wi.us](mailto:kara.roisum@stoughton.k12.wi.us), and I'll send you an invite. Currently, I have the Ning locked-down to prevent strangers from getting into it.

~ Mrs. Roisum

## Español ~ Diciembre

In December, **all classes** will be learning the story of The Virgin of Guadalupe/Juan Diego, and then move on to Posadas. Posadas are a Christmas tradition in Spanish speaking countries where people go door to door (like Joseph and Mary) looking for lodging.



In Kindergarten, we are busy finishing up our Thanksgiving vocabulary...el peregrino (pilgrim), el pavo (turkey), el indio (Indian/Native American), etc... We will start on our Christmas words after Thanksgiving and

also begin a few weather expressions!

The First Grade has finished up their first unit! Next, we begin the first of two lessons on classroom vocabulary which will keep us busy for a few months to come. A lot of focus is put on listening and comprehension. I incorporate a lot of TPR work (moving around a lot...touching, pointing, dancing, singing) in the first grade curriculum. When students are assessed, they listen to me speak, and then circle, color, or draw a line to (hopefully!) the correct picture on their quiz. No need to memorize spelling at this point!

The Second Grade is working on colors and days of the week! This is the year that we begin spelling, but not too much. It's more important that they can understand the language when they hear it, and be able to respond appropriately. In the next unit, we will practice more numbers, but out of order!

The Third Grade is learning about various animals. They already know their colors and numbers, but we're adding in some other adjectives...feo (ugly), bonito (pretty), alto (tall), and bajo (short). So...by the end of this unit, they should be able to describe 15 pigs who are pretty and pink, in Spanish!

The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades are working on the same lesson, but they are at different points. Unit 11 covers weather expressions, and I hope to finish it in the beginning of December. The sixth grade will be working on a presentation of the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe (saint day is Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>). After that, we will be preparing for a review test of ALL we have covered so far in Spanish class! I will give you more information on that as we get closer to the date.

~ Señora Wahlin

## News from the Art Room



Grades two through five have completed their self-portraits. You can view them on display around the school.

Grade one recently took home their Bug Books. Many weeks were devoted to the children experiencing many different art media. They too will be creating their own self-portraits.

Both Fifth and Sixth Grades have been learning the art of print making. Sixth Grade carved their self-portraits into a rubber-like product and fifth grade indented their insect image onto a foam-like material.

Grade Four will be learning about the art of Blue Willow China. They will be creating their own china pattern using stories from the bible.

Grade Two and Three recently provided their artistic talents to decorate placemats for the Stoughton Senior Center. They enjoyed the abstract theme of their designs so much that they are creating their own abstract pictures using a crayon resist technique. These they get to take home.

Art To Remember was a huge success, raising over \$700 dollars. These monies will go towards the music and P.E. programs. Thank you all for participating.

~Mrs. Jamison

## Music Notes

We had so much fun singing for Grandparent's Day this year! The students did a wonderful job with the music and readings for our patriotic music presentation in November! Now we've moved right along into our music for the Advent Concert. All of the students will be singing selections to fit into the story "Why the Chimes Rang". Some of our songs will be in Spanish, others will be popular songs we've come to love during this season, and we will even put new words to a few familiar melodies. We are also going to practice using some drums and bells during our music for the concert!

Just as we have the past few years, we will be wearing red, white and green for our concert this year. Any combination of those colors (and also black) will be acceptable. Don't forget to mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. We can't wait to sing for you!



~ Ms. DePons