



## A message from the Principal

St. Michael Families,

I hope that this newsletter finds you all well and that you enjoyed your extended time together with your children, family and loved ones. I hope that delicious food was shared, fond memories were made, laughter was heard and many prayers of thanksgiving said. I was so happy to see the smiling faces of our students as they came back to school today. Some still seemed a bit sleepy, not sure if that was from all the turkey that was ate or adjusting to early mornings again but I'm sure after a few rigorous hours of academics in the classroom and a fire drill, they are wide awake now!

The liturgical season of Advent started this Sunday. We marked this by the lighting of the first candle on the advent wreath. As a child, this was always the hardest four weeks to endure. Eager for the celebration that would come at the end, one of gifts and lights and cookies, it was easy to miss the true meaning of Advent. As a child I knew that we were waiting for Jesus to come, we were waiting for Christmas, for Jesus to be born. As I grew older however, I realized that the anticipation wasn't necessarily for Christmas day itself, but what it symbolized: Jesus coming again.

When this epiphany first dawned on me, I was terrified. I was still young and in high school. I would sit in church and see the first candle on the Advent wreath being lit and get excited for the season of Christmas, but the Sundays leading up to it always left me with an uneasy feeling. I had noticed the theme in all the readings and in the Gospel, be prepared for the coming of Jesus, and I realized they weren't talking about Christmas. As a kid you don't like thinking about "the end of the world", at least not the end of the world as you know it. As a kid I lived in my tiny bubble where everything was perfect and happy. I had the love of my family, my friends and I wanted for nothing. I was naïve and sheltered from troubles of the world. I was full of hopes and dreams and aspirations of how I wanted to live my life, all the things I still had yet to do. I wasn't ready for Jesus to come again! I would worry and fret all through Advent until finally the joy of Christmas day came and my worries about His second coming faded away with each carol being sung and each present being opened.

## Upcoming Dates

- Mass on Thursday, December 3rd & Friday December 4th
- No School on Tuesday, December 8th in Celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
- Mass on Thursday, December 10th
- Dress Down day for students Friday, December 11th
- Mass on Thursday, December 17th
- Friday, December 18th is Polar Express Day! Students in all grade levels may wear their pajamas! We will be watching the Polar Express and enjoying hot chocolate and popcorn!
- Early Release @ 12:00 on Friday, December 18th
- Christmas Break December 21st - January 1st
- Students return to school Monday, January 4th
- Friday, January 8th Dress Down Day!
- Friday, January 15th Early Release @ 12:00pm
- Monday January 18th & Tuesday January 19th No School



## *A message from the Principal*

Now as an adult, I understand the true meaning of Advent and what we as Catholics and Christians all over the world are really looking forward to during this season. As an adult that I am looking forward to it more now than when I was a child. Sure, I still haven't done a lot of the things that I'd like to do and I'm not quite in life where I'd thought I'd be and it still gives me a sort of queasy feeling, more from uncertainty than anything else. However, with the deteriorating state of our world, it's hard not to look forward to a day when we are once again reunited with our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus forever. Not to sound like a complete pessimist, I'm an optimist by nature and I still strive to find the good in life. Luckily for me, it's not that hard to find. I'm surrounded by it every day, eighty four little blessings and reasons that I continue to have faith in this world and in humanity.

This season of Advent, I'm making my best effort to truly prepare myself for the coming of our Lord; the baby Jesus, the Messiah, Emanuel. Forgiving others for their transgressions, making sacrifices, giving without the expectation of receiving, and spending lots of time in prayer. I'm letting my life be shaped by God and by the cross, letting go of things that are out of my control. Something I've learned about myself is that I very much like to be in control and I get very anxious when I don't have control over situations. For Advent, I'm giving my worries and anxieties over to God and I'm letting Him be in control of my life.

Easier said than done right? I know it will be a challenge, I'll fail often and have to remind myself daily of my intentions however, with lots of prayer and hopefully with intercessions from the holy men and women who have gone before me, I believe that I can do it. It will make my Advent journey and ultimately my faith journey lead me to a closer relationship with our Lord. The time for preparation isn't just for the season of Advent, it should be a way we live our life daily. We should always be preparing ourselves for the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

May we all feel the giddy excitement for the coming of our Lord and the celebration we will have in just a few short weeks. May this be a time of preparing not only our homes, but our hearts as well. God Bless,

*Michelle Vollman*

## Reminders

- Turn in lunch orders by Friday at noon
- Morning Drop off ends at 8:00AM. If you arrive on campus after 8:00, please park and bring your students in through the office. We will no longer be outside past 8:00AM
- Please try to minimize visits to the front office during the day unless it is to pick up or drop-off your child. If your child forgets their lunch, one will be provided for them. Please no lunch drop-offs during the school day



## Father Rossi's Column

Dear SMCS Families, I pray you all had a blessed and safe Thanksgiving holiday. I also extend to you blessings of the Advent Season, which began yesterday. Advent is a time of focused preparation. We are meant to prepare our hearts for the coming of our King, Jesus Christ. We prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas, which has already occurred in time and history. We also prepare for the Second coming of Christ at a day and time unknown to us. In order to have hearts that are watchful, we must set aside time for daily prayer. I suggest 15 minutes each day. We can settle into a quiet place at home or in church and open our hearts and minds to Jesus. Make Advent the time where we intentionally set aside time for Jesus in private prayer, which is the only way our love for Him will grow. Saint Andrew's Feast day is November 30th and we ask him to help us hear the voice of Jesus and follow Him in a life of prayer.

God bless, Fr. Rossi



## St. Philomena

The week of Thanksgiving three little lambs were born on my parents farm. One of them we named Philomena, who is the patron saint of infants, babies, youth and lost causes. I found the prayer below and prayed it frequently over the break. I wanted to share it with you all.



We beseech Thee, O Lord, to grant us the pardon of our sins by the intercession of Saint Philomena, virgin and martyr, who was always pleasing in Thy sight by her eminent chastity and by the profession of every virtue. Amen. Illustrious virgin and martyr, Saint Philomena, behold me prostrate before the throne whereupon it has pleased the Most Holy Trinity to place thee. Full of confidence in thy protection, I entreat thee to intercede for me with God, from the heights of Heaven deign to cast a glance upon thy humble client! Spouse of Christ, sustain me in suffering, fortify me in temptation, protect me in the dangers surrounding me, obtain for me the graces necessary to me, and in particular ([here specify your request](#)). Above all, assist me at the hour of my death. Saint Philomena, powerful with God, pray for us. Amen. O God, Most Holy Trinity, we thank Thee for the graces Thou didst bestow upon the Blessed Virgin Mary, and upon Thy handmaid Philomena, through whose intercession we implore Thy Mercy. Amen.

## Protecting God's Children

Thursday, December 3rd there is a Protecting God's Children class being offered virtually. All adult volunteers need to have taken this course and be registered in our online Virtus Program in order to come in and volunteer in our school. We currently have five spots remaining for this class and this is a wonderful opportunity to be able to attend right from the comfort of your own home. If you are interested in attending, please email [school@stmichaelsgastonia.org](mailto:school@stmichaelsgastonia.org) to register and receive the Zoom link for Thursday's session. Thank you in advance for helping to ensure the safety of all of our students!

## Purposeful Acts of Kindness

Encourage your children to practice kindness for the entire month of December with our 2020 Kindness Calendar. Just like academic skills, social skills — including kindness, empathy, and respect — become second nature with practice. The more children practice kindness, the more they'll notice that being nice to others feels great! Engaging in acts of kindness releases feel-good chemicals like oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine. The person receiving the kind act and everyone who witnesses it feels those benefits, too. The mood-boosting benefits create a ripple effect that encourages people to pay it forward — one kind act can motivate many acts of kindness. Check out the calendar below for 30 Days of Purposeful Acts of Kindness. Sponsored by [Big Life Journal](#)



# DECEMBER

|    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | Call a relative to say you are thinking of them and ask about their day.  |  |
| 2  | Help a family member with a household chore   |  |
| 3  | Write down three people you are grateful for and why, then tell them  |  |
| 4  | Give a sincere compliment to five different people  |  |
| 5  | Create Kindness Rocks and place them around your neighborhood   |  |
| 6  | Pick flowers and give them to someone you love (or make tissue paper flowers).  |  |
| 7  | Tell your teacher why he or she does a great job  |  |
| 8  | Help a neighbor with an errand  |  |
| 9  | Find a funny joke or think of something that makes you laugh, then share it with three other people in person, on the phone, or in a video chat |  |
| 10 | Donate items to a clothing, canned food, or toy drive (or to another charitable cause of your choice).  |  |
| 11 | Leave a treat or a thank you note for delivery drivers  |  |
| 12 | Tell a family member you love them  |  |
| 13 | Write encouraging sidewalk chalk messages for your community to enjoy   |  |
| 14 | Make holiday cards and mail them to a local nursing home  |  |
| 15 | Share something you care about with someone you care about  |  |
| 16 | Pick up litter in your neighborhood (or throw away trash at home).  |  |

# DECEMBER

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|----|--|--|
| 17 | Leave a nice note complimenting someone's holiday decorations                                      |  |
| 18 | Look at yourself in the mirror and tell yourself three things you like about YOU.                  |  |
| 19 | Make a point of smiling at everyone you see today  |  |
| 20 | Create a piece of art and share it with someone you love   |  |
| 21 | Call your grandparents (or an older relative) and ask them about their favorite childhood memories |  |
| 22 | Plant something  |  |
| 23 | Brighten your family's day with a story, song, dance, poem, or other forms of entertainment        |  |
| 24 | Tell a friend or family member why they are special to you   |  |
| 25 | Give someone a special handmade gift   |  |
| 26 | Learn something new today, then share it with a friend or family member                            |  |
| 27 | Give a thank you note to someone who probably does not hear "thank you" often enough               |  |
| 28 | Notice five beautiful things, then tell someone about them   |  |
| 29 | Call a friend you have not seen in a while to say hello  |  |
| 30 | Write kindness notes and leave them in library books or other places where people will find them   |  |
| 31 | Make treats or thank you cards to give to your local fire or police station.                       |  |