

# OUR WEEKLY NEWS

"LIGHTING A PATH TO THE HIGHER PURPOSE."



December 8th through December 12th

St. Joseph Community School's mission is that we are here to lead students to their fullest potential. We focus on four main categories: *academic excellency, faith, leadership, and service*. All of these categories are meant for them to thrive and also encounter Christ while on their journey.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCY

FAITH

LEADERSHIP

SERVICE

Proverbs 27:17



What are you waiting for?

**START YOUR PATH HERE**



"At St. Joe's, my faith was cultivated and intertwined with academics, volunteering, and athletics, and truly everything that we did. This was so valuable and formative during my growing up years, alongside what I was learning at home and at church about my faith."

**Lydia Gessner // Class of '16**



# UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND ST. JOSEPH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

## All Month - Kindergarten Cocoa Stand

### Monday, December 8th

- All school Mass at 8:30am (Holy Day of Obligation)
- 12 Days of Dress Up - Red vs Green
- 12 Days of Giving - 3 year old - Toothpaste and toothbrushes

### Tuesday, December 9th

- 12 Days of Dress Up - Twinkle Lights (no flashing lights)
- 12 Days of Giving - 4 year old - Canned Fruit
- Learning Connections Class at 5:30pm in the Sunrise Preschool room

### Wednesday, December 10th

- 12 Days of Dress Up - Wrap it Up (Dress like a present)
- 12 Days of Giving - Kindergarten - Socks
- Advent Prayer Service at 10am in the gathering space

### Thursday, December 11th

- 12 Days of Dress Up - Holiday Vacation (think tropical)
- 12 Days of Giving - 1st Grade - Toilet paper

### Friday, December 12th

- 12 Days of Dress Up - Flannel Friday
- 12 Days of Giving - 2nd grade - Baby Wipes
- NO All School Mass

### Sunday, December 14th

- Christmas Program at starting at 11:30am in the Church

*\*Visit our school [calendar](#) to see more upcoming events!\**

## UPCOMING ACTIVITY EVENTS

### Thursday, December 11th

7th grade girls basketball vs MFL at 4:15pm

### Friday, December 12th

7th grade girls basketball vs Decorah at 4:15pm

Visit the activities [calendar](#) to see any changes or more information!



## OUR DAILY SCHEDULE

Doors open 7:45am

Breakfast is served  
7:45am-8:00am

School day begins  
8:05am

School day ends 3:15pm

## WEEKEND MASS

### Saturday Mass Times

4pm at Holy Family

6pm at IC in North  
Washington or St. Boniface

### Sunday Mass Times

8am at Holy Family

9am at Holy Family



# MEET THE TEAMS

## *Specials Teams*

### MUSIC NOTES UPDATES:

Christmas is here for music at St. Joes! We will be working all week on putting on the finishing touches for our Christmas program The Peace of Christmas which will be held this Sunday, December 14 at 11:30 am after Mass. The students have worked very hard on sharing their talents with parents, family, friends and the whole community. We have an exciting morning of peaceful holiday music we are thrilled to share! Please join us on Sunday for peace and holiday joy at The Peace of Christmas. Happy holidays!

**- Mr. Speltz and Mrs. Schueth**



### WEEKLY ART GALLERY:

What can I do with this line? The answer is built into the background skills and application for our projects. Kindergarten and First Graders created Fun Turkey Tails using the circle family and the basic handwriting stroke called "The Hill Stroke" found in the printed lowercase letters n, m, and h, and even along the outside edge of their thumb. This hill stroke helped make the turkey's head and neck, as well as developing a fan tail by dabbing thumbprints in a circular fashion. The turkeys turned out SO cute! Second Grade finished an interesting exploratory making an Autumn Forest scene using newsprint to add texture to vertical and slanted tree trunk bark and layering autumn colored sponge paint to create foliage. Amazingly beautiful masterpieces. Third and Fourth Graders continue to apply vertical and horizontal lines as background for their monochromatic still life art pieces. A surprising twist for adding final detail of contrasting curly lines will be painting using dried prairie weeds and grasses. Middle Schoolers have spent time noting the color gradation of sunrises and sunsets along horizon lines in magazine photos. Using chalk, they have developed a multicolored background for landscapes that will have silhouetted trees in the foreground created by straw blowing India ink. Quite a process, but results will be Awesome Autumn Silhouettes. **-Mrs. Boge**

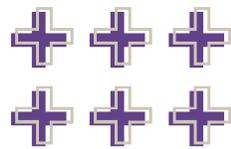
### P.E. LINEUP:

Students have been practicing their basketball skills this week in preparation for our annual Turkey Basketball event next Wednesday. They've been working hard on dribbling, passing, and shooting, and we're excited to see their progress in action!

We are also eagerly looking ahead to our roller skating unit that is starting in December—always a student favorite. Permission slips for roller skating will be sent home this week. Please be sure to sign and return them so your child can participate in this fun and active unit.

**- Mr. Henry and Mrs. Larsen**





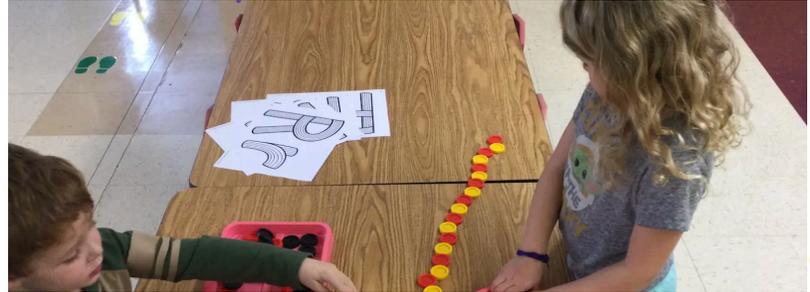
# MEET THE TEAMS

## *Early Childhood Team*

### 3 YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS: A FUN WEEK OF LEARNING!

Colors- pink, brown, black, purple  
 Letters- Hh, Uu, Bb, Ff  
 Numbers- 6, 9, 0, 8 S  
 Shapes- oval, crescent, square

Our Smart room has more of a Christmas vibe in it with new numbers in both of our slap tracks. The students continue to enjoy this room and especially our learning ladder on the rebounder. During large group time we have added a pattern activity and counting words in sentences activity. They are working hard on their ability to identify words that rhyme and the ability to identify words that start with the same initial sound. Our new curriculum with Ted the Bear has been a huge hit. We read about The Gingerbread Man and then the students did more than one activity with the story. They worked on identifying the differences between two pictures and which characters went with which story setting. They also read a story about a panda at a beach and another story about Ted and his friend rabbit. With these stories they worked on identifying the pictures that would go with each part of the story and eventually had to retell the story to TED the bear through the pictures. We also have been working on different parts of our body vocabulary such as wrist, ankle, and palms as well other vocabulary words such as: wash, dry, dirty and clean. We also started our first winter activity making "string lights" to add to our hallway. - **Mrs. Schueth**



### 4 YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL HIGHLIGHT

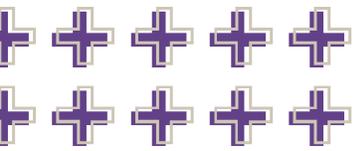
Letters- P, Q, R, S  
 Numbers- 11, 14, 17, 13  
 Shapes- circle, hexagon, square/cube, cylinder  
 Nursery rhyme- Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

During Station Rotation this week the preschoolers built Mat Man, played alphabet bingo, worked on quantifying dots and identifying numbers, did a cutting activity, and created patterns. On super cold days, we went to the gym to play with balls and run around, and on the warmer days, we enjoyed playing in the snow on the playground. We talked about the different ways people and trees change as they grow older. The preschoolers have been working hard when we practice our songs for the Christmas concert. There is information in your child's folder about the concert.

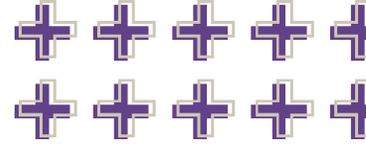
#### Upcoming Dates

December 14- Christmas concert  
 December 16- Kindergarten cocoa stand visit  
 December 23- Early out  
 December 24 through January 2- No school for Christmas

- **Mrs. Abbott**



# MEET THE TEAMS



## Early Childhood

### KINDERGARTEN HIGHLIGHTS:

What a busy week we had! In religion, we learned about Advent, attended an Advent prayer service, and heard the story of the real Santa Claus—Saint Nicholas—in preparation for his feast day yesterday. In phonics, we learned the new heart words "it", "like", and "be", and reviewed the pathways for writing the lowercase letters we've been practicing. We made gingerbread people to send out in the mail for our annual Gingerbread Exchange, listened to different versions of "The Gingerbread Boy", and even danced to a few gingerbread songs. We are looking forward to tracking where our gingerbread letters come from as we work with maps in social studies to answer the question, "How do maps help us?" We are finishing up our work with hundred charts this week as well. We practiced counting by ones and by tens, using the chart to guide us. We also learned that when we move across a row, we are counting by ones, and when we move down a column, we are counting by tens. The excitement of the Christmas season is building, and one of my favorite parts of this time of year is seeing it through your children's eyes. Enjoy these special days! - **Mrs. Flugum**



### FIRST GRADE INSIDE SCOOP:

Happy Sunday! We are officially starting our second week of Advent and learning more about how we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus. It is a time to reflect and to calm our bodies, minds, and souls and make ourselves more mindful. We had our first prayer service last Wednesday and will continue this through Advent. In math they are preparing to test over topic 6 on Tuesday. We are working on Fact Families using addition and subtraction. For example:  $6+8=14$  or  $14-6=8$ . We will also be starting topic 7 which is working on making numbers to 11 all the way to 19. In writing we worked on our realistic stories. We focused on characters, setting (when/where) and our beginning, middle, and endings as well as punctuation and capitalization. This week we will be writing Christmas stories. In science we started a new unit working on the patterns of day and learning about the sun and also shadows. They have been working hard on the Christmas program as well. We can't wait to share it with you. Just a friendly reminder to send back Friday Folders, a water bottle, and a pair of socks if they don't have some already. Sometimes their socks are wet from the snow! Have a great week!

- **Mrs. Heying**

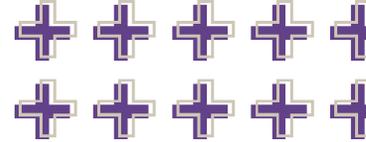


## Elementary Team

### SECOND GRADE NEWSFLASH: A WEEK OF LEARNING AND FUN!

This week the second grade class learned more about Advent as we prepare for Jesus at Christmas. We open our hearts to welcome hope, peace, joy, and love. The class learned about the Advent calendar, the Nativity, and the Advent wreath. In math, the class learned about mental math and how making tens is a strategy to solve problems. We finished our final lesson in science of Plant Adventures as we prepare to take the Unit Assessment. - **Mrs. Rochford**





# MEET THE TEAMS

## *Elementary Team*

### THIRD GRADE:

Welcome to Advent! The students were busy creating a lapbook for week 1. They learned a bit more about the symbols of Advent along with some reflecting. We will continue to add more to the book each week leading us the Christmas. We shared our gift of song at mass on Friday and will lead mass on Monday for the holy day. Multiplying by 0,1, 2, 5, and 9 were our focus this week. We looked for patterns- not just tricks- on how to remember the facts. Fluency skills are improving every day. It is so fun to listen to students as they read aloud using what we learned about in reading lab. A new author was introduced this week. Janel Cannon is the author of "Stellaluna". We will be looking at her style of writing and illustrating the next couple of weeks. The third and fourth graders reflected on the theme of friendship and accepting other's differences because that is what makes the world a great place. -

**Mrs. Herold**



### FOURTH GRADE:

This week has been full of learning and excitement! In reading, we enjoyed Stellaluna by Janell Cannon—a beautiful story that helped us discuss friendship, differences, and what it means to feel at home. Students loved exploring the characters and themes.

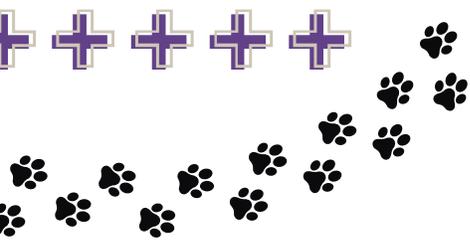
In math, we practiced two-digit by one-digit multiplication. The class worked hard on using strategies to solve problems accurately and confidently!

For social studies, we began a new unit looking at places Jesus visited in the Bible and what those locations look like today. Students were fascinated to compare life in biblical times with the modern world.

We also spent time rehearsing for our Christmas Concert, which will take place on December 14th. The students are excited to share their songs and hard work with you! Thank you for your continued support—have a blessed week!

**- Mr. Larsen**

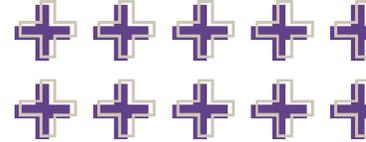




# MEET THE TEAMS

## Middle School Team

### MIDDLE SCHOOL:



**8th Grade Career Week Camp:** Preparing Students for Tomorrow! St. Joseph School was proud to partner with New Hampton Economic Development, Northeast Iowa Community College, and New Hampton Middle School for the annual week-long 8th Grade Career Week Camp designed to introduce students to the many pathways their future may hold. Throughout the week, students gained hands-on exposure to both the public and private sectors within our community. They explored career options, strengthened soft skills, and built confidence through interview preparation. They also learned how continuing education plays an important role in nearly every profession—from technical trades and healthcare to management and entrepreneurship. Students took part in on-site business tours, giving them an up-close look at local industry operations. Tour options included Milkhouse Candles, Croell, TriMark, MercyOne, Zip's, and Afinitas. NICC also enhanced the experience by providing virtual reality goggles that allowed students to try job simulations—from mechanical work to medical settings—without ever leaving the school. A highlight of the week was the hiring competition. Based on student interviews, participating businesses selected 17–20 students they would have chosen to hire, and these students received special recognition and prizes during Friday's wrap-up celebration. This friendly challenge encouraged students to apply what they had learned and take pride in their emerging workforce skills. We are grateful to our community partners for offering our students meaningful interactions, career insights, and a glimpse of the opportunities available in New Hampton and beyond! - **Mrs. Stumme, Mrs. Shatek, Mrs. Denner, and Mrs. McDonald**

Advent Learning Has Begun! This week the 5th, 6th, and 7th graders began exploring the season of Advent—a time of joyful waiting and preparation for the celebration of Jesus's birth. We started by discussing what Advent means and why waiting can help us appreciate the importance of what we are preparing for. Students then participated in an interactive rotation of Advent learning stations, each designed to introduce a key symbol or tradition of the season. As they rotated in small groups, students watched short videos, reflected on a guiding question, and completed a simple coloring activity connected to each symbol. Throughout the stations, students learned about the meaning behind the purple color of Advent, symbolizing Christ the King; the Advent calendar, which helps us countdown the days to Christmas; and the Nativity, reminding us of Jesus' humble birth in Bethlehem. They also discovered how John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus and explored the Jesse Tree, which traces Jesus' family line through important Bible stories. At another station, students learned about Christ's Candle, the white candle symbolizing Jesus as the Light of the World, and reflected on how light brings hope. They also examined the Advent wreath, made of evergreen to represent God's everlasting love, and learned about the joyful meaning of the pink candle lit on the third Sunday of Advent. This activity offered students a meaningful, hands-on way to understand the symbols and message of Advent. We look forward to continuing this journey of preparation, reflection, and joy as we move closer to Christmas.



# 12 Days of *Christmas* Dress Up Days

## **December 8th - Merry & Bright**

(Red vs. Green, wear your favorite color and see which wins)

## **December 9th - Twinkle Lights**

(Glow sticks, light-up necklaces, or LED accessories. NO flashing lights please)

## **December 10th - Wrap It Up**

(Wear bows, ribbons, gift-tag accessories, or paper patterns)

## **December 11th - Holiday Vacation**

(Think tropical Christmas—Hawaiian shirts, sunglasses, leis, beach Santa vibes)

## **December 12th - Flannel Friday**

(Wear your coziest flannel shirt or plaid outfit)

## **December 16th - Tree Topper**

(Holiday hats! Santa hats, elf hats, reindeer antlers, or tree toppers)

## **December 17th - Festive Socks or Sweaters**

(Choose between crazy holiday socks or an ugly/festive sweater)

## **December 18th - Holiday Character Day**

(Dress as or wear items inspired by elves, reindeer, snowmen, Grinch, etc.)

## **December 19th - Candy Cane Day**

(Wear red and white, stripes, or peppermint-themed outfits)

## **December 22nd - Blizzard Blue Day**

(Wear all blues, silvers, sparkles, or snowstorm-themed items.)

## **December 23rd - All the Jingle Bells Day**

(Go all out with full holiday spirit—holiday shirts, accessories, bells, and festive colors)

# 12 Days of *Christmas* Giving

3 YO - Tooth Paste/Tooth Brushes

4 YO - Canned Fruit

K - Socks

1st - Toilet Paper

2nd - Baby Wipes

3rd - Shampoo and Conditioner

4th - Canned Vegetables

5th/6th - Laundry Detergent

7th/8th - Body Wash/Soap

Office - Mouth Wash

Teachers - Feminine Hygiene Products

Support Staff - Deodorant