

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL



8909 Mary St., Chilliwack, BC V2P 4J4

www.saintmarysschool.ca T: 604-792-7715

St. Mary's Elementary acknowledges that the land on which we gather, work, learn and play is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Ts'elxwéyeqw and Pelólxw Tribes of the Stó:lō peoples.



Dear St. Mary's Families,

As we enter into the season of Advent, and prepare our hearts to receive the greatest gift – the coming of our Saviour – at Christmas, I wish to thank you for the gift of your family's presence here at St. Mary's School. We are so blessed by the opportunity to work with your children each day.

At the start of this month, I attended Catholic Educational Leadership days with other CISVA principals. We heard talks by Dr. Ray Guarendi, a Catholic psychologist. He spoke of the many challenges facing families today, and we received a copy of one of his books, *Raising Upright Kids in an Upside Down World*. Please remember that we – parents and school – are a team, and never hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of any assistance to your family.

May you enjoy a blessed Advent and the joy of Christmas.

Mrs. Jeanine Sallos
Principal



Important Dates

Friday, December 1

Student Learning Updates sent home

Sunday, December 4 9:30 a.m.

School-led Mass – Choir to sing (please arrive at 9:15 a.m., in uniform); also Mass for those preparing for First Communion

Friday, December 8

Staff Retreat – NO SCHOOL

Tuesday, December 12

Deadline to order gift cards

Wednesday, December 13

Christmas Lunch for the whole school

Friday, December 15

Christmas Shop – each student should bring \$2 to buy gifts for loved ones

Wednesday, December 20

Advent Prayer Service, 7:00 p.m. in the church – all students to attend

Friday, December 22

Red and Green Colour Day
Singalong, 11:00 a.m.
Last day of school before holidays – noon dismissal

Monday, January 8, 2024 – Back to School! Happy New Year!

December Events

Reconciliation

Each Advent and Lent, our priests make providing the Sacrament of Reconciliation to our students a priority on their calendars. We will advise you of the day that your child's class will have the opportunity to receive this Sacrament.

Please note also that St. Mary's Parish is holding a **Parish Penitential Service** on Thursday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m. There will be several priests available to hear Confessions.

Christmas Lunch – December 13

A lunch together in the gym is a tradition here at St. Mary's. This year we will have a pizza lunch, provided free of charge to all students. Please look for sign up opportunities to help at this event.

Students may wear festive accessories (sweaters, jewelry, hairbands, etc.) **over their uniforms** on this day.

Christmas Shop – December 15

Each year our students enjoy shopping for their adult family members and bringing home wrapped gifts. We request that each child bring \$2 on that day in order to buy two gifts. If children bring additional money, they will be given the opportunity to shop again once the whole school has had a chance to go through.

Please note that we are still happily accepting donations of new or gently used items, as well as gift bags! Suggested items are books, kitchen equipment, unused toiletries (i.e., soaps, bubble bath), candles, ornaments and decorative items, calendars, purses, wallets, scarves, winter accessories...whatever else you can imagine!

Advent Prayer Service

We hope for 100% attendance for this beautiful service, held on Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00 p.m. Come and join us in song and prayer and see your child's class sing!



Food Drive Needs of the Week

December 4 – 8

Boxes of cereal

December 11 – 15

Bags of rice

Also needed: juices (cartons, bottles), cake or muffin mixes, peanut butter, jam, canned meats/fish, coffee, tea

Please see page 4 for information on Christmas hampers.

Thank you very much for your generosity this year. We will be able to provide some real help to those in need.



School Fundraising Programs

Shopping Through Our School – Christmas is Coming!

While you may already be purchasing pre-paid Gift Cards through us to use for your own grocery and gas needs each month, with Christmas right around the corner, this is a chance for you to give twice!

If you usually buy gift cards for family and friends, why not take advantage of the convenience of ordering them in one fell swoop with the ease of having your account directly debited. Not only are you giving a gift to a loved one, you are supporting our school.

In addition, if you support our Parish/School Christmas hamper program, gift cards are a requested item so that our Grade 7 students can shop for specific needs. [Last day to order gift cards is December 12th.](#)

Upcoming Fundraising

In March we will have the **Parking Lot Fundraiser**. This is an event that requires little effort for a great return but calls on MANY people to be available to help direct traffic at Heritage Park. Please reserve the weekend of March 16/17, especially if you are still needing to log participation hours.



The Parish Education Committee is hoping to have another big **fundraiser in the spring**. Past events have included a Trivia Night, BINGO, Raffles, Online Auctions or a Spring Salad Evening. Please watch for upcoming surveys and/or planning meetings for such an event.



Past Fundraising

Oktoberfest

Wow! What an amazing event to have been part of! It was truly a joy to see so many different people in attendance, from school parents and their friends to parishioners and staff members. What a blessing it was to have the support of many school parents to set up the gym, prepare and serve the meal, and take on the enormous job of clean-up the next morning. Many thanks to all of you, and especially to Chris and Jenna Winterhoff for coordinating the event.



School Life

Christmas Hampers

Each year, classes have the privilege of sponsoring a family and creating a Christmas Hamper for them. These families are from within our school and parish. Donations of unwrapped gifts and non-perishable food items are greatly accepted.

Kindergarten: Dad, Mom, 3 y. old girl, 17 yr. old boy, 8 yr. old boy

Grade 1/2 Kessler: Dad, Mom, 8 yr old boy, 11 yr old boy, 5 yr old girl

Grade 1/2 Prost: Dad, Mom, 6 yr old boy, 9 yr old boy, 10 yr old girl

Grade 3/4: Dad, Mom, 4 yr old girl, 8 yr old girl, 10 yr old boy, 12 yr old girl

Grade 4/5: Dad, Mom, 7 yr. old boy, 8 yr. old girl, 9 yr. old boy, 12 yr. old boy

Grade 5/6: Dad, Mom, newborn boy, 3 yr. old girl, 6 yr. old boy, 8 yr. old boy

Our **Grade 7** class will collect monetary donations and use the proceeds from the Christmas Shop to shop for the hampers. They will also be selling **CANDYGRAMS** and **CANDY BAGS** from December 4th – 7th to raise extra money for the hampers (\$1/candygram and \$2/candy bag). If you wish to surprise your child with a candygram, you can email Mrs. Choboter (kchoboter@saintmarysschool.ca).

From the Parish Education Committee

Preschool and Kindergarten Registration

It would be helpful for us to know if you have younger children at home who may be registering for Preschool or Kindergarten. Please phone or email the school (cnetzlaw@saintmarysschool.ca) to let us know your child's name and birthdate.

Save the Date!

St. Mary's School Annual General Meeting to be held Tuesday, February 7, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.



Winter Weather

When it is deemed unsafe for the school to run its buses, or for staff and students to travel to school, we will close. We usually follow the guidance of School District 33, as their transportation department makes a decision based on road conditions all over Chilliwack.

In the event of a closure, we will send an email, post on the parent Facebook group and make a notification on the school website. We will also contact Star 98.3, who will add us to their list of school closures on the radio and on their Facebook page.



Advent Prayer Service

Each year, instead of a Christmas Concert in the gym, St. Mary's School presents an Advent Prayer Service in the church. Through Scripture, prayer and song, we present meditations on the Christmas story as an inspiring way to begin the holiday season.

Each class will present a song, and we hope that every student will be able to attend!

Why: to celebrate the seasons of Advent and Christmas AND give our students a chance to showcase their musical talent

When: Wednesday, December 20, 7:00 p.m. Students to come to their classrooms between 6:30 and 6:45 p.m.

Where: St. Mary's Church

Who: Every student, from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Family and friends are invited!

What to wear: students are asked to dress in "Holiday Festive" clothing or "Sunday Best" – this is a semi-formal occasion

Christmas Singalong!

For many years St. Mary's School has enjoyed a Christmas Singalong on the last day of school before holidays. Our Grade 7 leaders narrate the program (be prepared for the jokes!) and we all sing along to familiar Christmas songs. The highlight of the morning is the singing of The Twelve Days of Christmas!

We welcome all families and friends to join us in the gym for this event. It is a **red** and **green** colour day for our students and we encourage you to wear your fun Christmas clothes as well.

When: Friday, December 22, 11:00 a.m.

(Note: the students are dismissed at noon on this day)

ST. MARY'S PARISH ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS DATES

- Friday, December 1st: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
 - Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 11:30 a.m.
 - 7:00 p.m.: Youth Hour of Prayer; 7:40 p.m.: Benediction
 - **All other Fridays:** 10 am - 7 pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; 11:30 am: Chaplet of Divine Mercy; 6:40 pm: Benediction; 7 pm: Mass.
- All Sundays in Advent:
Masses at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday; 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on Sunday (please note: the 4th Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve – the morning Mass does not fulfill the Christmas obligation)
- Confessions available every weekday, 8:30 – 8:50 a.m., and on Saturdays at 4:00 - 4:45 p.m.
- Parish Penitential Service: Thursday, December 7th, 7:00 p.m. Several priests available to hear Confessions.
- Weekday Masses: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:00 a.m.; Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00 a.m.; Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.
- Christmas Mass Schedule (Holy Day of Obligation – attendance at Sunday morning Mass does not fulfill the obligation):
 - Sunday, December 24th: 5:00 p.m. and 12:00 Midnight
 - Monday, December 25th: 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
- Feast of the Holy Family – Sunday, December 31st
 - Mass at 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
- Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God – January 1st (Holy Day of Obligation)
 - Anticipated Mass, Sunday, December 31st, 5:00 p.m.

Important Information re: Tuition and Tax Receipts

To facilitate our accounting program's end-of-year update, TUITION FEES dated January 1st will be taken out on January 19, 2024.

As we approach the end of 2021, preparation is being done for tuition tax receipts. Before the end of February, families will receive a receipt for the portion of tuition which is deemed a tax credit. Calculations to determine amount eligible for tuition tax receipts are very complex. Each year, the school is audited, and based on the financial statements, our auditors calculate the religious and secular cost of education.

This amount is **claimed as a charitable donation.**

If you have fees in arrears, it is in your best interest to bring your account up to date before the end of December to maximize your tax receipt.

If you have any questions, please contact bookkeeper@saintmarysschool.ca.