



December 2024



Dear Parents,

Peace! Happy Advent! May the next 20 days be full of God's peace, mercy, kindness, light, etc. I encourage you to listen to Father Rich's homily on December 1, 10:30 AM mass.

Our school community is going to focus on **KINDNESS** and **LIGHT**. The theme is "**Kindness Brings God's Light to Our World**". Each of us, adults and children, are challenged to make our world brighter by our choice of words and actions.

All grades K-8 began this special season with a "toothpaste" activity. The teachers and students discussed KIND and UNKIND experiences. In small groups every child had the opportunity to push toothpaste out of the tube when hearing an unkind word or action. Hopefully they realized, that like toothpaste, once the unkind word, action, text messages, etc is out it is very difficult to get it back. With a concentration on the words we hope to see a brighter world. Unfortunately some people don't realize they are being unkind until it is brought to their attention. I'm sure you have heard the expression or excuse, "*I didn't mean what I said or what I did*" or "*You took it the wrong way*". Whatever the truth is behind the action, we are hopeful that an awareness of kindness and God's light will brighten this Christmas and the coming year, 2025. Students were asked when brushing their teeth in the morning to ask God to help them be kind with their words. Night time brushing can also be a check in time on the good they did and what they can do the next day.

Our 8th grade class has a long tradition of supplying for our Senior Citizen Christmas Luncheon. In the past parents prepared the food and the students served. For numerous reasons we now ask for Shop Rite donations so that we can purchase food for the luncheon. Thanks for your assistance.



As part of our SJA School family practices, we will continue collecting food for our local pantries, gift cards for families in need along with classroom projects. These outreach practices include St. Nicholas Toy Drive, Blessing Bags for the Homeless, Helping Hands and more. Check Google classroom for each classroom project. Thanks so much for teaching your child/ren the joy of giving.



Thank you for helping us teach your/our children their responsibility in caring for those in need, of being Eucharist for others.

Special thanks to all who organized, decorated, participated in and cleaned up after our annual Christmas Bazaar. It was a huge success and provided a wonderful opportunity for new and former families to connect. Your support of this fun/fundraiser helps our school budget and your tuition.

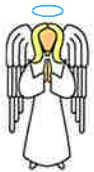
Our spaghetti dinners are taking a respite for the month of December. We will pick up again in January 2025. Again, our thanks to all who make these dinners possible.

Thanks to our many alumni and friends who donated to National Giving Tuesday. We appreciate your donations.



Conferences are over, report cards are finished and we are into the second trimester. Congratulations to all the students who worked so hard and did their best work. Encouragement to those who need to try harder by studying each night, participating in class and completing all assignments on time. We are looking forward to a great second trimester.

We will have our Annual Advent Retreat for moms, grandmoms and aunts on Friday, December 6, following the 9:00 AM liturgy. Hopefully you have responded and we will see you there. Our hope is to provide you with some Advent time for yourself before the hectic pre-Christmas events begin. **TIME TO BE KIND TO YOURSELF.**



In the afternoon we will have our dress rehearsal for our Advent Christmas Recital at 1:30 PM in the church. Our main performance will be at 7:00 PM that evening. Our 1st through 6th graders will help us slow down and prepare our hearts for Christmas. Please follow Mr. Peiffer's directions. Like last year, the children will be assigned seating in the front and center of church. All visitors will be directed to sit in back of the students or in the side aisles. Hopefully this will add to the prayerfulness of their presentation. Please be mindful our performances will be held in church, and we encourage our students (and parents) to exercise their Saints-in-training behavior.



As you know, our school family will have a Holiday Hayride at Johnson's Farm sponsored by our PTA on Wednesday, December 11 beginning at 6:00 PM. Tickets are still available. If you have already purchased tickets, they will be distributed at

Johnson's between 6:00-6:30 PM in front of the barn. Hopefully you will be able to join us. It has been a delightful night in the past and promises to live up to its reputation.

We will observe the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Monday, December 9 at 9:00 AM Mass. You are welcome to join us on the holy day of obligation.



PTA will provide an opportunity for children to visit Santa's Workshop on Friday, December 13. Thanks to all who are organizing and participating in this event. It is a great day for Christmas shopping. Next week in SJA Weekly Happenings, PTA will provide a "Wish List" for your child to fill out and bring with them on Friday. Children are invited to wear school appropriate red and green clothing. We will not be going to mass on Friday, December 13.

Application for the Diocesan Tuition Assistance Program for the 2025-2026 school year is available online [HERE](#). If you think you will need assistance, please complete the application. Remember in order to qualify for parish financial assistance you **MUST** first apply for diocesan financial assistance.



We are continuing to celebrate our Brain Symposium. The activities have certainly been engaging. The students will meet Thursday, December 12 with their prayer partners to learn about Multiple Intelligences.

Yes, hydration is good for our bodies and brains. Please remind your child/ren to bring their water bottle to school already filled to avoid gathering at the water fountain. If by chance you are purchasing a water bottle as a Christmas gift, please be aware of the appropriate size. Also, please remind your child if buying milk or water at lunch to drink it. We tell the children the importance of eating and drinking what they buy or what you provided. Throwing food or drink away is like throwing their lunch money in the trash.



Thank you for your cooperation with the **DRESS CODE FOR SCHOOL** and your cooperation in helping us teach the children the language of dress. With some of the growing spurts since September, some skorts and/or gym shorts may need to be adjusted over the Christmas break. **REMINDER: SCHOOL SHOES ARE TO BE COMPLETELY BLACK. THIS INCLUDES SOLES, DESIGNS AND SHOE LACES.**

We welcome all our school families to join our SJA Parish Christmas Caroling Festival on Sunday, December 15 at 3:00 PM in the church. Please bring bells to ring



and a statue of Joseph from your Christmas crib to be blessed. It is a wonderful family experience.

We will celebrate our last liturgy of 2024 on Friday, December 20 and have an afternoon performance by the Bowman dancers. Dismissal will be regular time at 2:50 PM. School will re-open on Thursday, January 2, 2025. Students may wear their gym uniform. We will have our annual retreat day. PTA will provide hamburgers or hot dogs for lunch. Order forms will be coming home.

Pope Francis has declared 2025 to be a Holy Year for the church. The theme for the year is **PILGRIMS OF HOPE**. There will be numerous school and parish events to celebrate this special time.

Check the Parish bulletin for the Christmas Mass schedule.



Our Advent preparation began with the traditional amaryllis plant. It is amazing how it sums up there Advent words: **WAIT, WATCH** and **WONDER**. We will **WAIT** for the bulb to burst through the dirt and the stem/bud begin to grow (sometimes an inch overnight!). We will **WATCH** the stem grow taller and tall

er each day. We will stand in **WONDER** and awe as 4 or more, large beautiful flowers bloom, gifting us with their beauty. Hopefully this will happen before we leave for Christmas vacation. May your Advent be filled with kindness from beginning to end. May your hearts and homes be filled with God's light. May we all experience **PEACE ON EARTH** and **JOY TO THE WORLD**.

Merry Christmas and God's Blessings,

Sister Pat

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