



All Saints Catholic School

Behold I make all things new.

The Sentinel Newsletter

August 30, 2023

Principal's Message

On Friday evening, we welcomed a crowd of several hundred to the *18th Annual Welcome Back Barbecue*. Undeterred by a couple of passing rain showers, the parents, students, and faculty who had gathered enjoyed a wonderful time of food and fellowship. The evening was made all the more memorable by the double rainbow that appeared over the school halfway through the event.

I wish to thank Mrs. Rachel Weigler (Event Coordinator), Mrs. Amanda Caggiano (PTO President), and Mrs. Kelly Ballard (PTO President-Elect) for coordinating all of the details for the barbecue. The 50's theme was a great hit and everyone enjoyed the addition of ice cream this year. I also want to thank our caterer (Elegance to Simplicity), our Facilities Team, and the many volunteers who assisted with the set-up, serving, and clean-up efforts. Again, many thanks to the PTO at large for planning such a terrific kick-off event for the new school year!

This week I am pleased to share a number of important updates regarding staffing as well as partnerships that we have established in advance of the 2023-2024 academic year.

Kindergarten Instructional Assistant

I am delighted to announce that Mrs. Anne Geiran has accepted the position of instructional assistant and began working in Mrs. Long's kindergarten classroom on Monday, August 28. Mrs. Geiran earned a Bachelor of Science from Dayton University and has extensive experience as a clinical dietician. She has previously served as a science facilitator in a grade school setting and has also provided reading and science instruction within a homeschool coop. Additionally, as a former school parent at All Saints, she has an understanding and appreciation for the mission and culture of our school. Most importantly, with a great love of the Catholic faith, she will be a wonderful addition to our kindergarten team.

Professional Coaching

Through funds provided by *Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools* (EANS) in the wake of the pandemic, new and beginning teachers at All Saints will receive tailored support from an instructional coach as we begin the new school year. We welcome Mrs. Pat Coleman who will serve in this role and who, through her classroom observations, will provide feedback and guidance for the newest members of our faculty.

Resource Program Partnership

In support of our school's commitment to providing educational services to students with special learning needs, we are pleased to welcome Mrs. Mary Desmarais as a consultant in our school. Mrs. Desmarais is a former educator in the Diocese of Arlington and founder of Catholic Inclusion, LLC. Through a partnership with the Office of Catholic Schools, Mrs. Desmarais will be spending ten hours per month in our building, supporting the work of our resource program and providing guidance to classroom teachers as they strive to meet the distinct learning needs of students.

School Counselor Intern

We are pleased to welcome Ms. Megan McCaskey who is completing her practicum in School Counseling through Liberty University. During the first half of this year, Ms. McCaskey will be working closely with Mrs. Slater, our school counselor, who will serve as her mentor during the completion of her practicum.

This week I would also like to share a couple of updates related to curriculum and the instructional schedule.

Mathematics

During the pandemic and the immediate time thereafter, teachers worked diligently and with great creativity to provide instruction for their students, the result of which was a variety of instructional approaches across grade levels. As we begin this new school year, we will return to a standardized approach for the teaching of mathematics. The Sadlier program will once again serve as the foundation for all instruction through the elementary grades and the middle school regular math program through grade seven. As such, students will be using both Sadlier textbooks and workbooks over the course of the year.

In addition to providing for a seamless approach across grade levels, the use of these learning materials will be helpful to parents as they monitor and support their children's progress. During this school year,

we will also complete a textbook review process for the adoption of a math program for the 2024-2025 school year. With this in mind, it will be all the more important that we use the existing program with fidelity, in order to establish a baseline as we review other textbook series.

In the middle school program, we are also implementing a minor schedule change for the 6th grade. In consideration of the small size of the 6th grade advanced math class, the opportunity exists for us to divide the 6th grade regular math class in half, thereby reducing the class size to allow for more differentiated instruction. For this reason, Mrs. Hatch and Mrs. Stowell will both be teaching sections of 6th grade regular math this year. It is our hope that the small class size, as well as the collaboration between the teachers, will produce significant learning gains for our students in the year ahead.

Physical Education

In an effort to make the best use of time for students in the P.E. program, we have revised the schedule to provide students with one longer class per week instead of two shorter P.E. periods. An exception remains for the kindergarten students who are scheduled for two P.E. classes since they do not begin Spanish instruction until first grade, which allows for this additional time block.

This P.E. schedule change reduces the time lost due to transitions while still meeting the curriculum and schedule requirements as defined by the Diocese of Arlington. A related benefit is that classroom teachers will have more shared planning time. As announced last week, the implementation of Professional Learning Communities is a top tier goal for our school. With each grade level now having 2-3 common planning periods per week, our teachers will have increased time for deeper curriculum discussions, resulting in even higher quality instruction for our students.

Finally, in closing, I'd like to provide a quick recap from our Opening of the School Year Assembly that occurred last Thursday. During my presentation to the students, I encouraged them to focus on three priorities: Practicing Procedures, Practicing their Learning (Classwork & Homework), and Practicing Kindness.

After providing examples of each, I shared with the students that it is generally thought that it takes about thirty days to establish a new habit. With this in mind, I encouraged them to focus on work completion as a top goal for the year, i.e. completing every classwork and homework to the best of their ability each day. I assured them that if they do so for thirty days, not only will they have learned a great deal, but they will have developed a new habit. And I shared with them that if they do so – thirty days of school work with 100% completion – I will buy them ice cream! This will be an occasion not to celebrate the fact that they have done all of their work, but rather that they have established a habit that will serve them well the rest of their lives. I hope to be serving a lot of ice cream on October 10!

Looking forward to sharing more updates next week. In the meantime, wishing you blessings during this first full week of school!

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SchoolMessenger Emergency Notification System

The Diocese of Arlington uses the *SchoolMessenger* notification service to send important information to families through phone calls, emails, and text messages.

In the event of an emergency, All Saints Catholic School will activate the *SchoolMessenger* system. As the system will only be used for this purpose, parents can anticipate that any communications received via this program are critical and deserve particular attention.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the system, All Saints will conduct a test on Friday, September 1. A test message will be issued via recorded phone message, text, and email to the emergency contacts of all students and staff at approximately 10:30 a.m.

To sign up for text alerts via *SchoolMessenger*, simply text the word “subscribe” to 68453. To opt out of all text messages from *SchoolMessenger*, go to <http://www.schoolmessenger.com/txtmsg/> or reply STOP to the opt-in message you receive.

The Diocese and the school do not pay for text message charges that may be incurred by the user. Please check with your wireless carrier for possible charges.

New Volunteer System - Connect 1

As we transition to Connect 1 as our new volunteer system, you may find that you need points added to your account for various reasons. The system will add them for you automatically if you are signed up

for a specific event. However, there may be situations where you need points added manually. These could include:

- Doing ad-hoc work for teachers or staff (classroom help, special requests from teachers, etc.)
- Doing work over the summer
- Staying later than your scheduled shift in Connect 1

If you are in a situation where you need points added, please use the following guide to request the adjustment on Connect 1. And if you haven't signed up yet, please do! It is quick and easy. Follow the instructions here!

[Connect 1 Instructions](#)

September Lunch Menu

[Cafeteria Menu - September 2023](#)

Important Reminders

Virtues in Practice – Year II

Virtue for the Month of September: Hope

Definition: Trusting in God's loving plan

Saints of the Month: St. Joseph (PK-2), St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (Grades 3-5), Blessed Louis & Zelig Martin (Grades 6-8)

Parent- Student Handbook (2023-2024 Edition)

The 2023-2024 Parent-Student Handbook can be accessed electronically via our website and may be found at the following link:

[HANDBOOK](#)

Please take some time to review the policies and procedures of our school and discuss them with your children. Each family is asked to sign and return the acknowledgment form by today, August 30.

Message from Mr. Ward (Band Director)

Hello, my name is Barry Ward, and I am the band director at your school. Band at All Saints starts in 4th grade and goes through the 8th grade. The beginner band is mostly made up of first year students, whereas the award-winning advanced band takes students mostly from 5th - 8th grade that have a little

more experience. The link below explains most everything about starting an instrument for the first time. It includes a number of sections to help you at home, and Mr. Ward will be meeting with students in early September to show and tell about each instrument.

The sections included in the link are: **1.** a message from Mr. Barry Ward, **2.** selecting an instrument, **3.** videos from involved parents and students, plus a link to **Music and Arts (Rental) Stores**. Generally, your first instrument will likely be rented, or you can purchase an instrument, but the safest route seems to be renting for the first year. In order to get started, use the introductory 2-month rental deal with a purchase of the lesson book, **Essential Elements for Band, Book 1** (for your instrument) - Hal Leonard, publisher. A music stand for home use is always a really good idea as well. Many of these items can be found on the Music and Arts (online) instrument rental site that is attached to this link.

Take a look at the videos that are also included, and certainly if you and your student are only mildly interested in the program and playing in our school band. Playing an instrument certainly can add a lot to a student's day and certainly serves as an interesting elective. The All Saints Band Program has a long rich history of teaching students to play and perform. All lessons are at school and during school hours where students are placed in similar group lessons. A band is formed for end-of-the-year performances at school or for other venues. Here is our link to joining the **BAND!**

<https://www.bepartofthemusic.org/group/index.php?id=7523>

Thank you for reading this important information, and I hope to see and meet you and your student this coming year at All Saints Catholic School.

New Parent Coffee (September 12)

All new parents, including those who joined our school last year, are invited to attend "Coffee with the Principal" on Tuesday, September 12 beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Parish Activities Center (PAC). Following a presentation, there will be time for questions and discussion about our school and its many programs. Plan to attend and meet other new families who have recently joined our community!

Student In-Service ~ Sexual Harassment, Our Policy & Response (Grades 6-8)

In accordance with diocesan policy, students in grades six through eight will participate in a brief classroom presentation within the next three weeks on the topic of the prevention of sexual harassment. Again this year, in consideration of the sensitivity of the topic, the training will be offered in a single-sex environment with Mr. Conroy addressing the boys while Miss Mallon will present to the girls. Each of the grade-level lessons will be approximately fifteen minutes in length and include an overview of the diocesan policy as well as an explanation as to how students should respond if they

encounter any behaviors of this nature. Should you have any questions about this policy or presentation, please do not hesitate to contact the principal.

Background Checks – Policies for School Parent Volunteers

As part of the diocesan initiative to maintain a safe environment for all of our children, all volunteers in the school are required to complete a background check prior to working in the school and to complete VIRTUS training within 45 days of submitting the background check application.

In accordance with diocesan policy, full compliance for an adult parent volunteer is not required for *open* events. (An open event is one that is open to the public, infrequent and publicized, such as Field Day, concerts and special events/assemblies.) However, full compliance is required for adult parent volunteers who wish to participate in closed events. (A closed event is one that is not entirely open to the general public such as classroom activities, parties, field trips, etc.) For this reason, all parents who wish to attend field trips or volunteer in support of classroom activities are required to complete the background check process and attend VIRTUS training.

The online application for the diocesan background check can be found at the following link:

<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/background-checks/>

To register for VIRTUS training which is hosted at parishes and schools throughout our diocese, please follow the link below.

<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/virtus/>

Upcoming Events for John Paul the Great

Adult Bioethics Sessions

(Active through October 16, 2023) -

All community members are invited to join Sister Malia Grace in six, 90-minute sessions discussing the Dignity of the Human Person. In these six sessions, Sister Malia Grace will present an overview of the first Bioethics course offered at Saint John Paul the Great High School. This course -- The Human Person: A Philosophical Perspective -- is designed to present St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophical understanding of the human person, which gives the basis for understanding human dignity. Topics covered include the relationship of the human body and soul, the distinguishing powers of the human soul and its nature as both a spiritual and immortal entity, and finally, the nature of human love, marriage and human sexuality.

To register, please use this link: <https://forms.gle/WFRjsKXqpg5mCmns7>

Sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School in St. Thomas Aquinas Hall.

You are welcome to attend all sessions, or as many as your schedule allows. The sessions build upon each other, yet each topic is also its own class.

- September 12th -- What is Truth?
- September 19th -- The Dignity of the Human Person -- Philosophical Foundations
- September 26th -- From Love to Desire to Joy: The Role of Emotion in the Moral Life
- October 3rd -- The Rational Powers of the Human Soul
- October 10th -- The Nature of Human Love
- October 17th -- Marriage & Human Sexuality

[Bioethics Seminar Flyer](#)

John Paul's 10th Annual Golfing with Wolves

(Active until September 20, 2023) -

John Paul's annual Golfing with Wolves Tournament is on Thursday, September 21st at Potomac Shores Golf Club, a Jack Nicklaus designed course! Tickets include a boxed lunch and Italian dinner buffet. Proceeds go to supporting the academic and extracurricular activities at Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School. Please contact Amy Thomason at golf@jpthegreat.org or call 703-445-0306 with any questions.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please use this link: <https://jpthegreat.schoolauction.net/golf2023>

[Golfing with Wolves Flyer](#)

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, August 30

Due Date: Parent-Student Handbook Forms

Thursday, August 31

Lockdown Drill – First Drill of the Year/Announced (10:00 a.m.)

Friday, September 1

School Mass (8:30 a.m.)

SchoolMessenger Test Message (10:30 a.m.)

Monday, September 4

Holiday (Labor Day)

Tuesday, September 5

Band Demonstration of Instruments

PTO Executive Committee Meeting (PLC/7:00 p.m.)

Wednesday, September 6

Faculty Meeting (3:30-5:00 p.m.)

Thursday, September 7

Back-to-School Night for Grades 1-5 & PTO General Membership Meeting (PAC/7:00 p.m.)

Friday, September 8

School Mass – Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8:30 a.m.)

Monday, September 11

Standardized Testing (NWEA MAP) Begins

Confessions – Grade 8 (9:30 a.m.)

Tuesday, September 12

New Parent Coffee (PAC/9:00 a.m.)

Band Parent Meeting & Registration (Music Room/6:45 p.m.)

Wednesday, September 13

Spirit Wear Day

Confessions – Grade 7 (9:15 a.m.)

Enrollment Management Team Meeting (PLC/7:00 p.m.)

Thursday, September 14

Middle School Night (7:00 p.m.)

Friday, September 15

School Mass – Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows (8:30 a.m.)

Saturday, September 16

Alumni Reunion (PAC/10:00 a.m.)

Monday, September 18

Confessions – Grade 6 (9:30 a.m.)

Tuesday, September 19

Band Lessons Begin

Room Liaisons Meeting (Meeting Room 2/7:00 p.m.) – **Postponed to September 21**

Wednesday, September 20

Confessions – Grade 5 (9:15 a.m.)

Thursday, September 21

School Mass – Feast of St. Matthew (8:30 a.m.)

PTO Helping Hands (PAC/9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

Room Liaisons Meeting (PAC Atrium/7:00 p.m.)

Friday, September 22

Noon Dismissal

Professional Development Day for Faculty (Professional Learning Communities)

Monday, September 25

6th Grade Field Trip – The EDGE

Confessions – Grade 4 (9:30 a.m.)

Tuesday, September 26

After School Advanced Band Begins

Wednesday, September 27

Confessions – Grade 3 (9:15 a.m.)

Faculty Meeting (3:30 – 5:00 p.m.)

Friday, September 29

School Mass – Feast of the Archangels (8:30 a.m.)