

UPCOMING DATES:

Dec 4th - NO SCHOOL - PD day

Dec 6th – Bake Sale

Dec 7th – Red, Green and White day

Dec 12th – Christmas Character Dress up Day

Dec 12th - School Council social

Dec 14th – Kindergarten Christmas Evening

- Christmas Ball! 6:00-8:00pm

Dec 15th – Last Day for Artist in Residence

Dec 18th – Turkey Dinner (students and staff)

Dec 19th – Christmas Sweater Day

Dec 20th – Advent Mass 9:00am in gym

Dec 21st – Warm Hat Day

Dec 22nd – PJ Day and school Bingo

- Last day before Christmas Break

Dec 23rd – January 7th – NO SCHOOL – Christmas Break





A Heartfelt December Update from ESM (Mme Bouchard's message)

Dear ESM School Community,

Tis the season of joy and anticipation, as we eagerly look forward to December and the magic of Christmas, it fills my heart with joy. The Advent season is upon us, a time of waiting, hope, joy, and love. It is also hard to believe this fall has been so mild. It is wonderful that students are playing outside in such mild weather at this time of the year. Now it is time to prepare for Christmas!

November was a busy and fulfilling month, marked by Goal Setting meetings and the culmination of a fantastic volleyball season. Thank you for meeting with your child's teacher(s,) discussing successes, progress and setting goals for the year. It is so important that we all work together when planning for your child's success. Thank you for partnering with us. Please remember to keep an eye on your child's Spaces to see their learning. Our students showcased remarkable progress and growth. Congratulations to our Bobcats! The girls took second place and the boys won first place in the final volleyball jamboree. I want to express gratitude to the coaches, players, and parents for their dedication and support.

Looking ahead, we've introduced Family After School Skating at Henderson, and we invite you to join in the fun. Additionally, we're thrilled to announce our first-ever Christmas Ball on December 14th, from 6:00-8:00 pm. Expect an evening of music, hot chocolate, and delightful treats shared among families. We ask that each family brings treats to share (on a disposable plate.) We would be delighted by your presence. There will be a silver collection for leadership and wellness initiatives at ESM throughout the year. We hope to see you there!

As we navigate through Advent, our calendar is brimming with celebrations. We encourage you to stay connected and participate in these moments of waiting, hope, joy, and love. Join us for Advent celebrations and mass as we open our hearts to the magic of the season, anticipating the birth of Jesus Christ. Our final Advent Mass will be celebrated at ESM on December 20th, at 9:00 am. Please join us!

On December 18th, we will have the annual ESM turkey dinner. This is a wonderful opportunity for our diverse community to come together, share in the joy of a festive meal, and create lasting memories. It will be 'Buy a Plate, Donate a Plate." If you are in a position to buy a plate, please consider contributing to this initiative, ensuring that all students get a turkey dinner. We have several families who are newcomers to Canada and we are so very excited to share this beautiful tradition. School Council will also be supporting this tradition.

Finally, from the Ecole St Mary Family to yours, we extend warm wishes for a Merry Christmas filled with joy, love, and cherished memories. May the upcoming year bring prosperity in wellness, family, and health. Thank you for being an integral part of our community. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Yours in Christ,

Kiera Bouchard

December Message from Mr. Harper 2023

As we welcome the month of December, we embrace the season of Advent, a time of anticipation and reflection leading up to the joyous celebration of Christmas. Beginning this Sunday, December 3rd, we embark on a journey marked by the four themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

To prepare for this special time, we will commence the season of Advent with a Professional Development day on Monday, December 4th. This day will allow us to ready our school, ensuring a welcoming and spiritually uplifting environment for all who enter our doors during this joyous season. We eagerly look forward to seeing the faces of our community, especially at the Christmas Ball on December 14th, as they see what Advent season at Ecole St. Mary is like.

Our 1RE class will kick off the first week of Advent with a celebration on December 7th, starting promptly at 8:15 AM. We extend a warm invitation to all who are able to join us for this special event. Following that, our kindergarten classes will host a virtual celebration for the second week of Advent, showcasing their creative expressions that we can't wait to share with the entire school community.

On Wednesday, December 20th, our 4NE class will lead us in an Advent Mass at 9:00 AM with Father Kevin. This spiritual gathering promises to be an inspiring way to culminate the Advent season, providing a reflective pause before the Christmas holidays. We extend an open invitation for you to join us in this celebration if you are able.

Our dedicated Faith Committee has crafted a fantastic Advent project for every class in the school, designed to help us "build" our faith, community, and a sense of solidarity. Each class's contribution will be collected and assembled, forming a beautiful display that will be featured during our Advent Mass on December 20th. We are excited to witness the collective effort of our school community in bringing this project to fruition.

May this Advent season be a time of reflection, unity, and spiritual growth for each member of our school family. As we journey through these weeks, let us cultivate a spirit of hope, peace, joy, and love in our hearts and extend these virtues to others in the true spirit of Christmas.

Sincerely,

Justin Harper





SCHOOL CARNIVAL WAS A SUCCESS!!!

Thank you for coming to our school Carnival! It was great to see all of our families visiting and playing games. This is our main school fundraiser and a lot of work goes into it. Thank you to Parent Council. Thank you to those who donated silent auction items. Thank you to

those who donated stuffies and toys for prizes. And a big thank you to Mr. Baptista and his class for the behind the scenes work and set up. As well as all the adult and student volunteers who helped run carnival stations.

The Grade 6 Committee kindly invites you to bring your bottles down to Ability Bottle Depot (either location in Lethbridge) and say that you would like to donate your return towards Ecole St. Mary Grade 6. All proceeds will go towards the Grade 6 Farewell Camp and activities for current and future students.



HOUSE TEAMS

The students are assigned a house team (colour team) so be a part of for the year. This encourages the kids to interact with kids in other grades. Our leadership team comes up with special days and activities for students to earn points to go towards their house team. For the Month of October, the winning house team is: The Orange Tigers!!!

SAMARITAN STARS

As the students do good deeds and display exemplary actions/attitudes, their fellow classmates can nominate them and put their name in the "Samaritan Stars" jar. From here we draw names to win a cheque for \$25.00 which is graciously donated by Ward Bros. Construction. Thank you, Ward Bros., for your continued generosity to our school!

For the month of October our winners were: Chrisander 2MI and Flynn 2MI.

STUDENT DROP OFF/ PICK UP

Students can be dropped off no earlier than 7:45am. There will be no supervision before 7:45am if you choose to leave your child unattended at the school this is your parent responsibility.

Parking lot is for <u>STAFF ONLY.</u> You may park on the east side of the street. The west side, by the field, is for school buses only. In the morning the sidewalk between the flag pole and the parking lot is a drop off zone. Hug and Go. Please do not park there for long periods of time.

WATER BOTTLES

We have water bottle fill stations and have not re-installed the drinking fountains for students. Please be sure to send water bottles with your child(ren) every day.

SICK KIDS

If your child(ren) is sick – KEEP THEM HOME. Help stop the spread of germs. Call or email the office to excuse their absence.

ATTENDANCE

Children thrive and succeed when they attend school regularly. We understand things come up, appointments made during school hours, emergencies, sickness etc. Please call the office to let us know if your child(ren) will not be at school on any given day. You can call 403-327-3098 or email esmoffice@holyspirit.ab.ca

SCHOOL BUS

Drivers will be checking for passes. Please download the MyBusStop app for the most up to date information and for route changes and updates. You can also visit the Southland website

https://www.southland.ca/lethbridge/



BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM

We are blessed to have a Nutrition grant this year to provide breakfast for those who need it. We also welcome back Mindful Munchies from the Lethbridge food bank who provide us with lunches for our students who forget or would otherwise go without.

*We ask that as parents you have the conversations with your child about those who might not have enough food. Also that if they eat their whole lunch they are welcome to an extra afternoon snack.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!!

Parents and community members are welcome at the school. You are still required to check in at the office and sign in if you are coming into the school for any school event. We will keep the distractions in the class to a minimum. If you are dropping something off for your child the office staff will deliver it for you. We are happy to accept volunteers this year! You can call the office and let them know if you are available with and what you would like to help with.

Volunteers are asked to fill out the volunteer form found on our website:

https://esm.holyspirit.ab.ca/

This form is good for the school year.

December 2023 Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
					1 Artist in Residence	2			
3	4 NO SCHOOL PD Day	5	6 Grade 6 Bake sale	7 Red Green and White dress up day	8 Artist in Residence	9			
10	11 Skating 3:30- 4:15pm	12 Christmas Character Day	13	14 Kinder Christmas Evening CHRISTMAS BALL 6-8pm	15 Artist in Residence	16			
17	18 Turkey Dinner	19 Christmas Sweater Day	20 Advent Mass 9am @ ESM DIV Board meeting	21 Warm Hat Day	PJ Day Last day before break	23			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
Christmas Holidays									
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January 2024 Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
Christmas Holidays									
7	8 First Day back after holidays	9	10	11	12	13			
14	15 Skating 3:30- 4:15pm	16	17	18	19	20			
21	22	23 Hot Dog Lunch	24	25	26	27			
28	29 Skating 3:30- 4:15pm	30	31						

Christmas Ball



Ecole St Mary's Invites you to attend an evening of dancing and socializing at our Christmas Ball.

We ask that families bring a snack or treat to share; 6 cookies, squares or baked goods on a paper or disposable plate. Hot Chocolate and water will be provided.

A silver collection will be taken for our Leadership, Health and Wellness and Student activities.

Date: Thursday, December 14th, 2023

Tíme: 6:00-8:00pm

(doors open at 5:50pm)

Location: Ecole St. Mary

Dress attire: Formal/ Fancy

(Christmas/church clothing)





*DJ and dancing *Snacks *Photo booth

The library will be open for a quiet place to sit and relax.

The school will be open so students can put their coats and boots in their lockers. We ask that there is no running in the halls and parents supervise their children.

Jeremiah 1:5a

Build!

Pilgrims of Hope

St. Margaret of Castello 1287-1320 (Feast Day: April 13)

Margaret was born in Perugia, Italy in 1287. We know that she was born with a medical condition known as dwarfism, was blind, and had other physical disabilities as well. Her parents, who were nobles, hid her from the public and eventually walled her into a room adjacent to the chapel. It was there that she began her spiritual journey, attending Mass and receiving the sacraments. She became devoutly spiritual during this time of solitude and when she was about 16, her parents took her to a church at Castello, where miracles were said to have happened, seeking for her to be cured. When this did not occur, they abandoned her there.

Consequently, she spent time living amongst the poor of the town before being taken in by a religious family. She joined the Dominican Third Order of Castello, and spent the remainder of her life in prayer, and performing acts of penance and charity to those around her. Her devotion and holiness were so well known in her community that upon her death in 1320, they demanded that she be buried in the local church. She was canonized by Pope Francis in April of 2021, and her incorrupt body still lies in that church in Castello 700 years later.

"Building" In Our Schools

It's important to remember and honour those who have served before us - be it in our community or in service to our country. With the help of Mrs. Alvarez and Mrs. Picton's students, St. Teresa of Calcutta School held a Remembrance Day service, while St. Mary School in Taber hosted a Community Remembrance Day ceremony. On November 9th, a special Mass was held at St. Basil Catholic Education Centre to honour retired staff for their work and support of Catholic Education. "I thank my God every time I remember you..." Philippians 1:3

"For we are God's servants, working together..." 1 Corinthians 3:9a



Corporal Works of Mercy – Advent –

As we enter Advent this month, we would like to highlight a resource and a request.

In Holy Spirit, we have a divisional license for the <u>FORMED</u> platform. This service provides abundant Catholic content for your use with your staff, students, or your own formation. For <u>Advent</u>, they have two new series, an interactive Advent calendar, as well as some Advent FAQs. *Rooted* will be a daily Advent reflection video series, while *Drawing Closer to God* is a Catholic art show for kids!

You will also know that we are working collaboratively this year with Chalice to support the St. Odilia building project. A number of schools are working on fundraising efforts through Advent to support this initiative, and recall that you can also make individual donations through SchoolCashOnline. If you or a community partner would like to make a larger contribution, please let us know!



"...the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel." (Matthew 1:23)



VIEW FULL SIZE

Pope's Prayer Intentions - For people with disabilities

- Let us pray that people with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusion programmes that value their active participation.

Catholic Social Teaching — Participation —

Through the course of this year, we will look each month at one of the Catholic Social Teachings. The aim of Catholic Social Teaching is to shine the light of the Gospel on our contemporary world, allowing us as disciples of Christ to look at the world around us with new eyes, and to take action.

Last month, we looked at subsidiarity - the idea that we should seek to address needs at the most local level and create solutions with those around us. Participation is closely linked to subsidiarity. As part of our living together, we also believe that each person is entitled to participate in making decisions that affect their lives, and to actively involve those around us in those processes, whether economic, social, or political. This is a way of balancing the dignity of each person with the pursuit of the common good.

As Pope Benedict XVI noted in Caritas in Veritate,

Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others.

The Pope's Prayer Intention this month is for people with disabilities - that they may be at the centre of our societies and that we value their active participation. St. Margaret of Castello shows us the importance of this, and the positive impacts that those with disabilities have on all of us.

Learn more about Participation with one of these resources:

The Religion Teacher - <u>Participation</u>
Caritas EU - <u>Participation</u>
USCCB - <u>Participation</u>



Gospel Readings

December 3, 2023 1st Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Mark 13:33-37

"What I say to you I say to all: 'Watch!'" — Mark 13:37

Whenever something exciting is coming in our lives, we wait for it with great anticipation. If it is a birthday or a holiday, there is a lot to do to prepare for it. We put all our energy into the preparations without hesitation because we know how much fun it will be when the day comes. Today's scripture reminds us to prepare ourselves with this same excitement and anticipation for Christ's coming. Since it is the season of Advent, we are preparing to celebrate Christ's birth. But we are also called to be prepared every day of our lives. Jesus wants us to be ready to meet him any day, any time, anywhere.

An Advent wreath helps us count the four weeks of preparation for Christ's birth. Does your family have an Advent wreath or another Advent tradition that helps you count the days until Christmas?



Prayer:

Dear Lord, show me how I can best prepare my heart and mind to meet you whenever you come.

December 8, 2023

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38

"Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." — Luke 1:38

People sometimes mistakenly believe that this feast is about when Mary became pregnant with Jesus. Instead, this feast day is about MARY's birth. From the very moment when Mary began to grow in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, she was without sin. Mary received this special grace from God so that she could live unselfishly her entire life.

God knew that Mary would accept his plan to bring Jesus into the world as a human baby, so he prepared a perfect soul for her so she would become the Mother of his perfect Son.

Can you pray the Hail Mary? The first part of that prayer comes from the words the angel Gabriel said when he appeared to Mary.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.



Prayer:

Sweet Mother Mary, please help me to trust and obey God just like you did.

Download this month's <u>Saint Prayer Card</u> - St. Margaret of Castello



Gospel Readings

December 10, 2023 2nd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8

"...prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." — Mark 1:3

Preparing is what everyone seems to be doing this time of the year. People are buying presents, writing cards, making cookies, and decorating homes. These ways of preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth are lots of fun. But how are we preparing our hearts? There are many special things we can do during Advent, such as a Jesse Tree which reminds us of Jesus' lineage. We could do Advent meditations as a family to help us think about Christ's coming. We could find a way to serve those in need together. Or we could just pray together as a family in front of our Christmas tree and ask Jesus to help us prepare our hearts for Christmas. Whatever we choose, let us find a special way our family can "prepare the way of the Lord."

What will we do as a family this Advent to prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth?

Prayer: Dear Lord, please help us to prepare our hearts in a special way as we prepare to celebrate your birth. December 17, 2023 3rd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

"Rejoice always." — 1 Thessalonians 5:16

During this time of year, there are many things that can make us feel happy. We enjoy seeing friends and family. We may like looking at Christmas lights that decorate people's homes. The festive food that seems to be present everywhere is extra yummy. But today's scripture calls us to venture beyond "happy" into "rejoicing!" There are so many blessings around us that our joy should be abundant and directed to our God who gives us all good things! Let's share our great joy with those around us, so the light of Christ will shine during this Advent season and continue through the upcoming Christmas season."

What will we do as a family this Advent to prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, please help us to prepare our hearts in a special way as we prepare to celebrate your birth.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12b)

December 24, 2023

4th Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38

"Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." — Luke 1:30

There are times when I do things that I know must disappoint God. There are other times that I've done things that I hope are very pleasing to God. But can you imagine being told directly by an angel that you have found favor with God? That would be amazing! Mary was someone very special to God. He wanted her to carry his Son. She always tried to do everything in her life to please the Lord. During this last day of Advent, ask Mary to pray for us to have the same desire she did, to do everything in our life to make God happy.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for showing us through Mary such a beautiful example of faith.

December 25, 2023

The Nativity of the Lord

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-18

Today is a day of great rejoicing! Jesus is born! He has come to teach us how to live with love and compassion. He was here when the whole world was created and he is here right now! Let us spend today and the rest of the Christmas season praising him for his goodness to us.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for continuing to love us.

Thank you for being the Word of God that speaks to us of your love.

Sources:

NOVENATO ST. MARGARET OF CITTÀ DI CASTELLO
The saint who was abandoned by her own parents
Meet St Margaret of Castello, the pope's unexpected canonization
St Margaret of Castello Experience at the NCPD Race
for Belonging
In My Heart: The Life of Saint Margaret of Castello

In My Heart: The Life of Saint Margaret of Castelle Margaret of Castello – the unwanted saint 2023 Daily Prayers for Families



Holy Spirit Catholic School Division Presents:



Mental Health Learning Sessions

Location

(online & in-person)

Every session will take place inperson at the Sandman Signature in Lethbridge (320 Scenic Drive S, Lethbridge).

Online sessions will be available on Google Meet.

Time

Doors open at 5:00pm with dinner served at 5:30.
Presentation will start at 6pm and go to 7:30pm.

Please RSVP at

First 50 registrations get a free dinner! https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7R9L8CC



or email willistone@holyspirit.ab.ca to confirm registration.

Resiliency and Self-Care

Ft. Lethbridge Family Services

Jan 16 2024

Feb **15** 2024

Healthy Relationships

Ft. Lethbridge Family Services

ADHD - Understanding the Diagnosis and Treatment Strategies

Ft. Aleigha from True Balance Counselling

Mar **20** 2024

Apr 18 2024 Emotional Regulation - How to help our kids when they have big feelings

Ft. Allie and Bailey from True Balance Counselling

Digital Detox

Ft. Lethbridge Family Services

May **14** 2024



WE DON'T WANT TO TAKE YOUR PHOTOGRAPH, WE WANT TO GIVE IT TO YOU FOR FREE.

December 2, 2023

Multicultural Centre, Lethbridge 421 6 Ave South

From 10:30am to 5:30pm

* No appointment required * No proof of income * We work off the honour system

Photographers, Editors, Hair & Makeup Stylists on site!

A day dedicated to giving families in need a portrait for the holiday season.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



























Ability Skate is a new sensory-friendly public skating program specially designed for our Lethbridge residents with disabilities.

Stay healthy & active by bringing your mobility.

Stay healthy & active by bringing your mobility devices, skates & safety gear to this slow-paced time on the ice!

Civic Ice Arena 905 6 Ave S

Sundays

December 3 | 10 | 17

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Tuesdays

December 5 | 12 | 19

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Admission | FREE

www.lethbridge.ca/leisure

Lethbridge



Motivation...Discipline...Respect



Winter Classes

January through April

In Person: January 9 & 10

6:00pm to 7:30pm

Limited Spots Available

Beginners (6ys+)

8

12ys + Beginners & Intermediate

Registration Packages available at:

www.lajudo.com

Questions? Contact Angie at lethjudo@gmail.com





Holy Spirit Catholic Division Presents:

Resilency

Self-Care

January 16th, 5:30 pm Essie's Ballroom

Sandman Signature, 320 Scenic Drive S, Lethbridge Ab

Join us as Lethbridge Family Services will present for a night of learning and good (free) food!

Please RSVP at

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7R9L8CC



Billy Woitte



ISWAG

Indigenous Student Wellness Access Guide
Holy Spirit Catholic School Division

woitteb@holyspirit.ab.ca (403)635-2415

Emily Williston



SWAG

Student Wellness Access Guide

Holy Spirit Catholic School Division

willistone@holyspirit.ab.ca (403)308-2445

Lethbridge Family Services

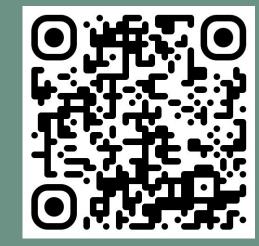
Lethbridge Family Services provides highly-accredited health and social services to over 9,000 individuals and families in more than 30 communities in southwestern Alberta. The Outreach and Education team works with individuals, caregivers and professional to facilitate insight, awareness and enhance skills.

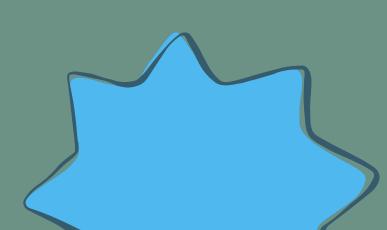
This is a FREE event.

Intended audience: parents, guardians, caregivers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, childcare provides, all school staff, bus drivers, parishioner's

Please RSVP at

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7R9L8CC





Did you miss out on registration in the Fall for Sacraments? No problem we will be running a Boot Camp for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation

The First Reconciliation Boot Camp will run: Sunday, 14 January from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm OR Sunday 21 January from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm at Assumption Church Hall. Snacks will be provided.

The First Eucharist Boot Camp will run: Sunday, 4 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm OR Sunday, 11 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm at Assumption Church Hall. Snacks will be provided.

The Confirmation Boot Camp will run: Sunday, 18 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm AND Sunday, 25 February from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm at Assumption Church Hall. Snacks will be provided.