

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah9:6)

PRINCIPAL’S CORNER

As Catholic Christians, our focus is now on celebrating Christ’s coming into our world. We are in the season of Advent, a time of preparation. St. Mark reminds us: “Be watchful! You do not know when the time will come.” Within this season, we are challenged to keep a Christ-centered focus. The world around us is busy shopping, wrapping, decorating, cooking, and baking. Amidst the flurry of activity, our call is to remain focused on the real meaning of the season and prepare our spirits and hearts to be ready for Jesus.

The signs of the season and the gift of faith are present in each child’s school day. We encourage each family to observe Advent in your home. As partners in your child’s faith formation, we are responsible to prepare and form the next generation of Catholics. What an awesome blessing and responsibility!

May this Advent be a source of peace as we anticipate the birth of Christ, our Savior. May God continue to richly bless you and yours with the grace of this season and throughout the New Year!

THANK YOU

We wish to **thank everyone** who sold tickets, donated desserts and/or baskets, their time, and talents to make our “**Christmas Gift Extravaganza**” a **HUGE success!** We especially are grateful to **Lisa Beck** for chairing and organizing the event, **Theresa Kelly** for preparing the delicious meal, **Gene Pietrowski** for donating his DJ Services, and **April Weiland** for assisting with fundraising throughout the event. Their direction, expertise and the giving so much of their time afforded many benefits for our school students as a profit of **\$19,697** was realized. **Thank you to all our school families for a job well done!**

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Our second-grade students will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time **Saturday, December 9th, at 10:00 AM** during a special Penance Service. Let us pray that this time of preparation and reception of this sacrament deepens the faith of these children and continues to bring blessings upon them.

REMINDER TO FIRST GRADE PARENTS: Baked goods for the reception to follow First Reconciliation may be brought to school on Friday, December 8th during regular school hours or directly to the school cafeteria at 9:30 AM on Saturday, December 9th. **Volunteers are needed to work the reception. If you can share a few hours of your time please call the school office.**

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

During Advent, students in Grades 3 – 8 will have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation during an Advent Penance Service on **Thursday, December 14th @ 10 AM.**

MID-TERM GRADES/WARNING NOTICES

December 1st marked the mid-point of the second report period. Mid-term grades and/or warning notices will be sent home to the parents of students in grades 4 – 8 on Monday, December 4th.

CAFETERIA

This month we have invited the parents and grandparents of students in **Fifth Grade** to join their child (grandchild) for lunch on **Tuesday, December 5th**. They will go

to lunch at approximately **11:30AM**. Adult lunches are \$3.10. A child's lunch is \$2.40. When making your reservations, please do not include your student as they will be included in their class lunch count.

As a reminder to all our school families, the cost of a **student lunch** is **\$2.40**. **Milk** can be purchased for **.45 cents**. Please make note of this as many families are only remitting \$2.30 for student lunches.

Should your financial situation change at any time throughout the school year, you are not only encouraged, but eligible to apply for free and reduced lunches even if your application was previously denied. If you need to obtain an application or need assistance with the application process please contact Becky Seymour @ 472-9117.

SECRET SANTA SHOP

Students will have the opportunity to purchase Christmas gifts for their families on **Friday, December 8th** at our very own "Santa Secret Shopping Spectacular." This one-day shopping event is always a favorite among our students allowing them to buy gifts for their family members at bargain prices. The cost of individual items will be kept at a minimum to allow all students to participate. This is **NOT** a fundraiser, but simply an occasion for the children to anticipate the Christmas season by choosing their own secret gifts for their loved ones.

Volunteers are needed in the areas of setting up the shop, checking out items purchased, assisting students in making their selections, wrapping gifts, and cleaning up afterwards. Any questions, please contact Rachel Beiswenger @ 886-2633.

All volunteers must follow all Diocesan guidelines. Before you will be permitted to serve as a volunteer, the following documents **must be on file with the school office and Diocesan Education Office**:

- PA Child Abuse Clearance (ACT 151)
- PA Criminal History Clearance (ACT 34)
- Arrest/Conviction Report & Certification (ACT 24)
- Youth Protection Certificate & Necessary Paperwork

HOME-SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PIZZA PARTY

On **Friday, December 8th**, our Home-School Association will sponsor their annual Christmas luncheon for our children. Lunch is **FREE** and we encourage all students to have lunch in the cafeteria on that day! Pizza will be served, drinks provided, and an ice cream sundae bar will be offered.

ADVENT “LOVE TREE”

As we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas, we are asking all school families to consider **helping others through the spirit of giving**. We are encouraging our students to donate to our school “Love Tree.”

As the children contribute, they will be given a heart on which they will write their name and place it on the “**Love Tree**.” The hearts in addition to the monetary gift will be presented to families in need this holiday season.

Thank you in advance for your support with this special Advent/Christmas project! Your generosity is deeply appreciated!

GIFT FOR FR. BYRNES

We would like to present **Father Byrnes** a *gift* from the school children. If you would like your child(ren) to contribute to this gift, please place the money in an envelope marked “Christmas Gift” and return it to school no later than **Thursday, December 14th**.

CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT

Our annual Christmas Program will be held on **Sunday, December 10th** in Our Lady of Loretto Community Hall. Our performance begins at **1:00PM**. The students must be at the **school** no later than **12:30PM** for the play to begin promptly. (Please do not come before 12:30PM as the doors will not be opened until then.) We are looking forward to seeing you and your family at our program!

Order forms to purchase a DVD of the performance was sent home last week. If you wish to buy a DVD, please fill out the order form and return it to the school office along with **\$15.00** by Friday, December 8th. You may also give your order to the videographer the day of the performance.

NATIVITY CHANCES

Saint Michael School is sponsoring its annual Nativity set raffle. We are asking each school family to buy or sell 10 chances @ \$1.00 each. If you would like additional chances, please contact the school office @ 472-9117 and we will be happy to send them home with your child.

The winner will be drawn on Sunday, December 10th at our Christmas program.

ADVENT SERVICE PROJECT (FRUIT BASKETS)

As an Advent service project, the 8th grade students will be making and delivering fruit baskets. We are asking your help in providing names of people from the parish and community who would appreciate this gift and a short visit from two or three students. Please remember those who live alone, the sick, the elderly, those in need, those who lost a loved one this past year, etc. Call the school office with names, addresses and directions or send them into school with your child and we will add them to our list.

Thank you in advance for supporting this worthy project through your fruit and candy donations, and for providing recipients for the fruit baskets. Our students get to experience the true spirit of giving and what it means to serve others.

CLASSROOM PARTIES

Individual Christmas classroom parties will be planned under the direction of each homeroom teacher. These will take place on **Thursday afternoon, December 21st**.

CHRISTMAS VACATION

Please note that **Thursday, December 21st**, is our last day of school before Christmas. Classes will resume on **Wednesday, January 3rd, 2018**.

CHRISTMAS EVE LITURGY

Our children's choir has been very busy preparing for their debut at the **7:00PM Children's Christmas Eve Liturgy**. They are doing an excellent job at practices and are certain to perform wonderfully at Mass! We appreciate and thank the students who volunteered their time to sing out in praise in anticipation for the birth of Jesus! We also extend gratitude to their parents for supporting this extracurricular activity. Students are to report directly to the **choir loft** by **6:30 PM**.

HOSS'S COMMUNITY NIGHT

We thank those families who participated in the Hoss's Community Night on November 5th. A profit of **\$450.00** was realized and we are planning to repeat this fundraiser again in February.

SCRIP PROGRAM

Each family is mandated to purchase **\$750** SCRIP (Gift Cards) at face value, not net percentage profit, **per** calendar school **year**. This amount is substantially low as compared to other schools in our area that require \$2500 per year and yet another school that bases their mandatory requirement on the retail percentage profit value. The terms for our mandatory participation are as follows:

- Gift cards may be purchased at once or over the period of the school year with the final purchase having to be made by **May 14, 2018**.
- Families have the option to buy out of this mandatory fundraiser by paying a fee of **\$100.00**. **If your family contribution of gift card purchases (\$750) is not satisfied by May 14, 2018, \$100 will be added to your tuition account.**

Smithmyer gift cards are once again available for purchase. Beginning this week **Shop n' Save** cards will be available in **\$50** increments. Don't forget to stock up on the **\$10 gift cards** available only for a limited time for **Olive Garden, Red Lobster, Outback Steakhouse, Applebee's, Amazon, Target, and Walmart**.

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

Extra-large (6 cards or more from the same retailer) and special orders must be placed by **Wednesday, December 13th** to guarantee delivery in time for Christmas. However, orders will be filled from our regular inventory up to and including Thursday, December 21st.

\$100/20 WEEK CLUB TICKET

Our **\$100/20 WEEK CLUB TICKETS** are presently available for your convenience. Although they are not due for several months, we wanted to give you the opportunity to sell these tickets throughout the holiday season. **The \$100 Club ticket sells will begin in February and will end Monday, April 9th**. However, if you would like to receive the \$100 Club tickets before February please contact the school office and they will be sent home. **It is mandatory that all families participate in this School Council sponsored fundraiser.** Your response in the past with this fundraiser was well received! Thank you in advance for your cooperation in selling your fair share of tickets. The proceeds will go towards expenses incurred associated with maintaining our school facility and curriculum updates. Additional tickets are available upon request.

REMINDERS

1. Please continue to clip and save **Box Tops for Education, Tyson A+ labels, and empty ink cartridges**. These have helped us receive many valuable supplies for our school program and we are grateful for your help and support. It would be very helpful and greatly appreciated if you could please trim all BOXTOPS before submitting them to your child's classroom. Thank you.
2. **SCHOOL MESSENGER** will be used to contact you using the phone numbers you supplied on the student emergency procedure cards at the beginning of the school year. When school is canceled or delayed because of inclement weather, an announcement will also be made on local radio or television stations. If Penn Cambria School district cancels or delays, we are automatically canceled or delayed. Should it be necessary to dismiss classes early due to weather conditions, broadcasts over the same stations will be given and you will be contacted by phone.

PLEASE NOTE: After a School Messenger message has been sent out, we usually get a dozen phone calls from parents who want to know why we called. We ask that you LISTEN TO YOUR MESSAGE when you see the school's telephone number. When you call the school, you are defeating the purpose of this service. Thank you for your cooperation.

A rule of thumb regarding the cancellation of school functions, meetings, appointments and basketball practice is as follows: when school is canceled or dismissed early for the day, all events will be canceled as well for that afternoon/evening.

As the weather begins to get cooler, we ask that the students bring a sweater to school that can be worn if they feel chilly. This may be left in the classroom for whenever they would need it. Students may **NOT** wear sweatshirts, hoodies, coats or jackets during the school day (the only exception is the crewneck sweatshirt component to our uniform).

Let us pray that 2018 will bring forth in us a year of renewed commitment to love and serve in God's kingdom.

From our Saint Michael Family to yours, we wish you a very **Blessed Christmas and Joyous New Year!**

Sincerely,

Mrs. Phister
Principal