

January 8, 2023

Dear Saint Joseph Catholic School Community,

Items in this newsletter: Thoughts for the week; 5th and 6th Grade Open House; Catholic Schools Week Kick-Off Masses: Used Uniform Program; PTO Update; Run with the Saints 5K; Divine Auction; Spirit Night; 2023-2024 Re-enrollment; 529 Plans; Spread the Word – Open House Events; MAP Testing; Ecumenical Prayer Service; Keyboards; and Important Upcoming Dates.

Thoughts for the week: In the Gentile Magi, the divisions of culture, religions, and nation are reconciled because, as we respond with the antiphon to Psalm 72, “*Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.*” If we believe that every nation every religion has some gift to offer God, can we dare refuse to accept the gifts that strangers bring? A multicultural society and church are witnesses to the inclusiveness that Christ asks of us. It is often the strangers and outsiders who reveal to us how and what we should be seeking. – Living Liturgy.

5th and 6th Grade Open House: We will host an Open House for rising 5th & 6th-grade students and their parents on Wednesday, January 11th, at 6:00 pm. Mr. Bramhall will be graciously offering a special Art Club session for the 4th and 5th grade students who attend the Open House with their parent(s). We are excited to share more information about our curriculum and opportunities for leadership.

Additionally, if you have any friends who are interested in learning more about our 5th and 6th-grade program, please share the invitation to attend. We look forward to seeing you.

Catholic Schools Week Kick-Off Masses: National Catholic School Week is from January 28th to February 3rd. The school and Parish will kick off the week with Saint Joseph school students filling the liturgical roles at each weekend's Masses on January 28th and 29th. All students are asked to attend one of the four weekend Masses in their dress school uniforms. All students who attend one of the recognition Masses will get a coupon for a dress-down day on Monday February 6th.

Please see the attached volunteer form to sign up your student(s) to fill a liturgical role at one of the Masses. All volunteer forms must be submitted to the school office by Friday, January 23, 2023.

Used Uniform Program: Save the date! *St. Joe's Clothes* officially opens this month! Start sorting your used uniform items and mark your calendars for our first Buyback Day on **Tuesday, January 24th**. We will have morning, lunchtime, and afternoon appointments available for you to bring in clothing and accessories.

Stay tuned for specific program details coming soon. Remember that only clean clothes in good or excellent condition that meet the St. Joseph Uniform Dress Code guidelines can be bought back.

PTO Update: The PTO would like to remind everyone that our two biggest fundraisers for the school are quickly approaching in the new year. Our Run with the Saints 5K is Saturday, January 28, 2023, and our Divine Auction is Friday, February 3, 2023! We are beyond excited to see everyone at these fantastic and fun events!

Run with the Saints 5K: Mark your calendars for the 8th annual Run with the Saints (RWTS) 5K and 1-mile Fun Run. The races will take place on Saturday, January 28th. This event is a Midlands favorite and one of SJCS's largest fundraisers. Please sign up at <https://www.strictlyrunning.com/gpsrlnReg-9f.asp> and remember to include your \$5 coupon code, SAINT5. All 5K runners will receive a race t-shirt if they register before Friday, January 6th. Runners who register after January 6th are not guaranteed a race t-shirt. These t-shirts are a favorite of all of our students and families! This year we plan to offer a prize for the class with the highest student participation!

Divine Auction: Save the Date for the 2023 Divine Auction! Please mark your calendars to join us at our Annual Divine Auction Friday, February 3rd, at Carolina Park (the same place as last year). We will have food, drinks, silent & live auction items, and DJ VooDoo Child! We will also have Host Families again this year. Check out our website (<https://Divine23.givesmart.com>) or contact Auction Chair Margaret Asay for more information (margekd@aol.com).

Spirit Night: Spirit Night is planned for Tuesday, January 10th, from 4:00 - 10:00 pm at Home Team BBQ. Whether you dine in or order takeout, please mention Saint Joseph and we will get a portion of the sale.

2023-2024 Re-enrollment: It is hard to believe, but it is time to start thinking about re-enrollment for the next school year. The Advisory Council and Parish Finance Council have approved the school budget.

The school will open re-enrollment for current families on Wednesday, January 4th. **Returning families will have until January 27th to reenroll current student(s) and/or submit an application for a sibling to be given priority. A \$160 re-enrollment fee (per family) is due upon re-enrollment.** Upon submission of Online Enrollment, a family has until April 3, 2023, to withdraw their enrollment with no cancellation penalty. Any application or re-enrollment fees paid are non-refundable for any reason, regardless of the date of withdrawal. Between April 3, 2023, and May 1, 2023, any family wishing to void their tuition contract will owe a contract cancellation penalty of \$1,000 per student. After May 1, 2023, if a student is withdrawn for any reason, the remaining tuition and consumable fees through the end of the academic year must be paid in full.

If you have not completed the enrollment process by January 27th, your child will no longer be guaranteed a spot for the 2023-2024 school year. On January 28th, the school will begin accepting applications from new families for the 2023-2024 school year. A \$100 late fee will be assessed for re-enrollment after January 27th.

529 Plans: A 529 plan is a savings plan that encourages education savings for qualified education expenses: college, vocational, or other post-secondary learning. South Carolina 529 plans can also be used to pay tuition at K-12 private schools - up to \$10,000 annually.

Funds can be deposited and then withdrawn for qualified school tuition after 60 days. Start planning now and you could pay March's tuition with your 529 accounts.

Unlike a traditional savings account or bank account, your money grows tax-deferred in a 529 account, and qualified distributions are federal tax and state tax-free. **South Carolina has two state plans to choose from: the Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan and the Future Scholar 529 Advisor Plan.**

You can find more information about both college savings programs at www.futurescholar.com or by consulting a financial advisor. South Carolina taxpayers can claim a tax deduction on the full amount of their 529 plan contribution. And for many, a 529 plan can be used to transfer wealth. Contributing to a 529 plan lets grandparents or other contributors reduce the size of their taxable estate while helping them fund a grandchild's or family member's education. It's even possible to make five years' worth of contributions in a single year, up to \$75,000 (or \$150,000 for married couples), and still get the gift tax exclusion.

Spread the Word – Open House Events: We have several upcoming events that might be of interest to prospective Saint Joseph families. I ask that each of you think about someone you could invite to these events. We know that the best way to advertise our school is for our families to share their great experiences.

5th and 6th-grade Open House

Wednesday, January 11th - 6:00-7:30pm

Future Saints Start Here

A special informational session for prospective 4K and 5K families.

Thursday, January 19th - 6:00pm

Group Tours and Meet, the Principal

Come meet our principal, take a group tour of our campus, and get a taste of student life.

Tuesday, January 31st - 8:30 am - 10:30 am

Thursday, February 2nd - 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Individual Tours and Meet the Principal -- Any time by appointment

Please pass along these dates and information to any potential new saints you may know.

MAP Testing: 5K, 2nd, 4th, and 5th-grade grades will be testing this week. Here are a few things students and parents can do to prepare for MAP testing:

Please refrain from scheduling any appointments for students during testing. Students who are late will not be able to take the test with their class and will need to make up the test on Friday.

Make sure your students **get plenty of sleep**. Going to bed a little earlier can help ensure a good night's sleep. Being well-rested will give your children an extra energy boost for test day.

Provide a nutritious breakfast. Eating protein (eggs, meat, cheese, etc.) rather than a sugary donut will help students perform better. (Too much food can make them feel sleepy, so do not overdo it!)

Be sure your child gets some **exercise after school** to keep their energy up.

Remind children to **double-check their work on the test**. They can catch mistakes if they take the time to proofread answers carefully.

Encourage your children to do their very best, but do not place too much emphasis on the test.

Please contact the school if you have questions about MAP testing.

Ecumenical Prayer Service: Each year, we enjoy a celebration with ministers, pastors, and rabbis from the churches and synagogues that our students attend. We have not been able to meet in person for several years (we shared video messages with our students), but we are hoping to host an in-person prayer service in January once again. This is an excellent opportunity to bring together our school family and faith. If your family attends a place of worship other than St. Joseph Church, please complete this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/sJT6QT9cqV> so that we can invite your minister, pastor, or rabbi to be part of our service.

Keyboards: All students in grades 3-6 will need a Bluetooth keyboard by January 17, 2023. The keyboard should be compatible with iPad 8th generation devices. You can pick one up for under 15 dollars.

Important Upcoming Dates: Below are some important events to be aware of in the coming days:

January 9	2 nd Quarter Report Cards emailed home
January 9	MAP winter testing starts
January 10	PTO Spirit Night – Home Team BBQ – 4:00-10:00 pm
January 11	5 th & 6 th -grade Open House – 6:00 pm
January 16	No School – MLK Day
January 23 rd	Penny Wars starts

2 pm dismissal
January 25th Student Dress Down Day 4
January 27th Re-enrollment ends
Ecumenical Prayer Service- 9a
Penny Wars ends
January 28th Run with the Saints 7:30-10:30
CSW Mass 5:30
January 29th CSW Mass 8:00
CSW Mass 10:30
CSW Mass 12:15

CSW January 30th -February 3rd – More information coming soon.

It is the little things we do that show how God is in us, with us, and working through us – *"Serve one another with the gifts you have received."*

Sincerely,

Donavan F. Yarnall, Ed. S
Principal
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