



THE PEACEMAKER... *PIECES*

St. Thomas School community prepares children for life in a respectful and supportive environment by providing a dynamic education centered in Christ.



Advent By Candlelight

Attention Women! You are invited to join with other women of our Parish to celebrate Advent by Candlelight.

Friday December 5th 2008

7:00 pm – 9:00 p.m.

St. Thomas Church lower level

Let an evening of fellowship, music, special programming and dessert fill your heart and mind with peace, love, hope and joy as you enter into the Advent Season. All women of the parish and their guests (age 10 and up) are invited to attend. Call Pam Strobel at 957-7776 for more details.

Time and Talent Needed!!

The 4th grade is in desperate need of a school banner. Each year during the 4th grade Diocesan Songfest there is a parade/display of school banners. We have been using the school flag, and dimensions are much larger than what we are supposed to have. The banner needs to be 3 feet by 3 feet, have our school name, some simple symbols, and be folded over at the top in order to put a rod through it to hang it up. If you have the time and are interested in making a banner for us to use, it would be greatly appreciated. Please give Mrs. Bethann Petkus a call and she can answer any additional questions. Thanks much!!

Updated School Calendar

Please note that several important dates have been changed or added to our school calendar.

- Christmas Vespers has been moved to Wednesday, December 10th at 7 p.m. in the Church.
- First Communion dates are April 26 & May 3, 2009.
- Confirmation will be held Wednesday, May 27.

An updated St. Thomas School Calendar is attached and is also available on the school website homepage. Thanks for your help.

Saint Thomas Christmas Vespers

We will celebrate "Christmas Vespers" on Wednesday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Church. Vespers is a series of Old and New Testament readings, prayers and songs telling the story of Christ's birth. Our parish children and Youth Choirs (Grs. 3-8) and school children (Grs. 4-8) have prepared special music and readings. Please come and celebrate the season with us.

~ Kathy Proulx



Reminder:

Transportation Surveys are due tomorrow December 4. Please take a moment to complete it online at the following website:



<http://www.stthomasgr.org/survey>



ATTACHMENTS



- December Calendar
- December Hot Lunch
- St. Thomas School Calendar (updated)
- Christmas Wish List
- Home & School Minutes
- Educational Outfitters Flyer

"Operation Christmas Child" an Inspiring Success!

"I was really happy this year. It's always nerve wracking, but I was really pleased. We sent out 285 boxes with messages of God to 285 kids," said Maureen Jones, the Saint Thomas coordinator for Operation Christmas Child.

Much organization and preparation go into the weeks before the actual packing party and many, many people are involved in the operation from start to finish. Each classroom is asked to donate different items and they are collected the weeks prior to the packing party. Other people donate the empty shoe boxes. Other students and groups get together to pre-wrap the boxes. Others donate money to pay for the shipping and handling costs of sending the boxes. Then still others come to the packing party and put the boxes together.



On the official day of Operation Christmas Child—or Packing Day, pictures are taken of each student or family that is packing a box. The pictures are printed while the boxes are being packed with the basics—things like toothpaste and soap. Things we take for granted. Then a few small toys are added. When the box is full, students and families move into the letter writing room. Maureen said the letter writing room was very busy this year. Children write a note to the child who will receive the box they are packing telling them they are loved by God and that we are all praying for them. They then include their name and address. Last year six of our students received letters back from the children who received their boxes, three of them coming from as far away as Africa.

When each student or family has packed as many boxes as they choose to, they move into the Ministry Center Community Room for shared fellowship and prayer.

All of the boxes are brought to Samaritan's Purse, the organization that collects the boxes and distributes them to kids in 100 different countries.

Whether you donated boxes, items, money, time, or your prayers...thank you for joining in this special Saint Thomas outreach and making this year's Operation Christmas Child such an awesome success!

Gym Concession Workers

The following families have been assigned to work in the gym concession stand during the next week. They are:



Saturday, 12/6/08	9:00 a.m.	Becherer*
	10:10 a.m.	Blanco
	11:20 a.m.	Paul
	12:30 p.m.	Herdegen
Monday, 12/9/08	6:30 p.m.	Alfaro*
	7:40 p.m.	Poggi

*The first game of the day, family scheduled please arrive ½ hour before start time.

A complete Winter Gym Concession Schedule will be going home with your student.

The Church Speaks

~ An awareness of Mary's presence can be a great help toward making the school into a "home." Mary, Mother and Teacher of the Church, accompanied her Son as he grew in wisdom and grace; from the earliest days, she has accompanied the Church in its mission of salvation.

THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF EDUCATION IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL 1988
- Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education

Important Library Reminder



The library is collecting money through December for the matching grant through the Cameron Foundation. Thank you to all who have already contributed to make this matching grant a success!

Protecting God's Children Awareness Sessions

If you still need to attend Virtus training, (required for all school volunteers), please note the upcoming sessions:

St. John Vianney Parish
4101 Clyde Park SW
Monday, December 15, 2008 6:30 pm-9:30pm

Cathedral Square
360 Division Ave. S.
Tuesday, February 17, 2009 2:00pm-5:00pm

Cathedral Square
360 Division Ave. S.
Thursday April 16, 2009 9:00am-12:00pm

Catholic Charities GR
40 Jefferson Ave. SE
Tuesday, June 16, 2009
Contact Sue Levandoski for the time. (246-0594)

Cathedral Square
360 Division Ave. S
Wednesday, August 19, 2009 2:00pm-5:00pm

Catholic Charities G.R.
40 Jefferson Ave., SE
Tuesday, October 20, 2009 9:00am-12:00pm

Cathedral Square
360 Division Ave. S
Wednesday, December 16, 2009 2:00pm-5:00pm

If you plan to attend one of these sessions, and have not already registered, please register online as follows:

Go to www.virtus.org

- Click "Registration"
- Click "Begin the Registration Process"
- Select Diocese of Grand Rapids as the organization.
- You will be required to enter a UserID and password (of your choice)
- Fill out registration form
- Choose a location

Middle School Band Concert

Partner School Band Christmas Concert

St. Cecilia Music Society, Royce Auditorium
Wednesday, December 3, 2008
Report Time: 6:30pm
Concert Start: 7:00pm



Attention Cookie Tray Volunteers!



The Holidays are coming and it's almost time to put together our Christmas Cookie trays for teachers and staff!! The trays will be assembled on Wednesday, Dec. 17th. Those volunteers who signed up to make cookies or sweet treats will be getting reminder calls closer to the date with details We always appreciate additional bakers, so if you would like to bake or bring in something, but did not sign up to do so, please call Jennifer Dalrymple at 447-9276 to volunteer or with any questions. Thank you for your help!

Congratulations to:

Shannon and Cecily Near

On the birth of their son:

Loche Edward Near



Born: Friday, November 21, 2008
Weight: 8 oz
Height: 19 inches

Proud Sibling: Zachariah Near (Kindergarten AM)

Booster Seats – It's the Law

Parents, please be informed that as of July 1, 2008, Michigan law states that until your child is 8 years old or 4'9" tall, they **must** use a booster seat while riding in a vehicle. For more information regarding this, please visit:

www.MichiganSafeKids.org.



Encountering the Living God Through You

FRONT ROW:
MIDDLE ROW:
BACK ROW:

FRONT ROW:
MIDDLE ROW:
BACK ROW:

FRONT ROW:
MIDDLE ROW:
BACK ROW:

FRONT ROW:
MIDDLE ROW:
BACK ROW:



Parent Grade Gatherings

Thank you to **Michael and Christina Rosloniec** for hosting the **3rd grade** parent gathering. Great fun was had by all! A special thank you again to all of the families who hosted grade gatherings this year. Thank you also to all of the families that were able to attend the gatherings!

At our last Home & School meeting, there was a discussion about making some changes to Parent Grade Gatherings in the future. We would love to hear from you and we welcome all ideas. Please email any ideas or suggestions to Amy Bocian at chadbo@comcast.net.

Budget Requests

We will be putting together our budget proposal for the 2009-2010 school year soon. This budget will be voted on at the January Home and School meeting. If you have a request or no longer need to be on the budget, please call or email Amy Bocian by December 12th. 559-8803 or chadbo@comcast.net.

Next Home & School Meeting

Our next Home & School meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 14, 2009 at 12:00 pm in the church nursery. See box below for complete listing of the remaining meetings.

2008-2009 Home and School Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, January 14th @ 12:00pm
Wednesday, March 11th @ 8:15am
Wednesday, May 27th @ 7:00pm

Please plan on attending at least one meeting this year and assist us in planning for our school and children.

Thank You ... Thank You ...



Thank you to all of the families who provided food for the teachers and staff during conferences on Tuesday, November 25th. We really appreciate all of the amazing volunteers who helped make this happen! If you were not able to make a dish for this luncheon, we will do it again in February for conferences then. Please pick up your dish, crock pot, bowl or pan on the Lost and Found shelf near the school front entrance. Thank You!!

Have a Blessed and Holy Christmas Season and a Very Happy New Year!





Saint Thomas the Apostle School

December 2008



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Jr. High Band Rehearsals 6:00, 6:45 and 7:30 pm	2 CC 7th & 8th grade Visit Day 9-1:15 at Catholic Central	3 <i>Pieces Out</i> Jr. High Band Christmas Concert—7 pm @ St. Cecilia's	4 6-9 pm Self Study Committee Work Session	5 9:55 am Mass 1st Friday Holy Hour 1:30—Gr. 5 Rosary at Holland Home Advent by Candlelight 7-9 pm in Church	6
7 1st Communion Parent/Child 2-4 pm 2nd Sunday of Advent	8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass at 12:30 pm Parent Catechists in rooms 9-11 am Jean Pass Day	9	10 9:30-1:30 pm Gr. 3 visit Museum Student Council Officer Mtg. 11:30 am 7 pm Christmas Vespers	11 9:55 am Mass Sub & Cookie Dough Distribution	12 9:55 am Mass Sub & Cookie Dough Distribution	13
14 Confirmation Candidate/Sponsor 6:30-8:30 pm 3rd Sunday of Advent	15 Non Uniform Day	16	17 <i>Pieces Out</i> 11:30 Student Council Mtg. Cookie Tray Assembly 7 pm Ed. Com. Mtg.	18 6-8:30 pm Multicultural Mtg.	19 8-10 am 2nd Gr. Christmas Party 9:55 am Christmas Mass	20
21 4th Sunday Advent	22	23	24	25 <i>Christmas</i>	11 am Dismissal —Christmas Vacation Begins	27
CHRISTMAS VACATION RUNS FROM 11 AM ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19TH THROUGH SUNDAY, JANUARY 4TH Have a Blessed Christmas!						
28	29	30	31			
SCHOOL BEGINS MONDAY, JANUARY 5TH See you next year!						