

Happy New Year...

As I write my New Year letter, my heart is filled with joy as I share with you the journey we all took watching our Nativity at St Thomas. Our middle school students with pure hearts and a prayerful spirit, led us all to the Manger for the birth of Jesus. We saw ourselves in the characters and captured the spirit of joy and peace.

The beginning of the New Year is synonymous with the three kings arriving at the manger. "The star which they observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the Child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star." Imagine their journey.

As we celebrate the feast of Epiphany, may we, like the three star gazers, be open to the journey, open to the splendor of the light within each of us, and open to the radiance of God's love.

On behalf of Mrs. Whitehead and myself, as well as our entire faculty and staff, I thank you for the many ways you found to remember us during the Christmas season.

Our prayer for each of you is that the New Year will bless you and your family with good health, happiness and peace.

Let us continue to celebrate the journey we are on together.

*New Year Blessings,
Sr. Patty*

JANUARY NEWS NOTES

OPEN HOUSE & REGISTRATION FOR NEW FAMILIES will be held on SUNDAY, JANUARY 23,

12:30-1:30 - For families interested in preschool and kindergarten

1:30-2:30 - For families interested in grades 1-8

Re-registration information for students currently attending St. Thomas will be sent home later this month. Families who wish to enroll siblings for the 2022-2023 school year may register at the Open House or you can call the school office and registration information for your child new to St. Thomas School will be sent home after January 23rd.

Please share the good news about St. Thomas School with your family, friends and co-workers!

DID YOU KNOW ?

Water Bottle Filling Stations/Bubblers – We remain focused on the health and safety of our students and staff during these troubling times. We are very thankful to have received a grant from the Big E West Springfield Trust to help us purchase 4 filtered water bottle filling stations/bubblers for our school. St. Thomas School has been blessed twice, as a very generous benefactor covered the cost of these stations that were not covered with the grant monies. We are so very grateful!

Feast of St. Nicholas - On December 6th, St. Thomas School celebrated the Feast of St. Nicholas. In keeping with the spirit of the feast of St. Nicholas, the students left their shoes outside of their classrooms and were pleasantly surprised to find treats in their shoes! Our modern day Santa Claus began sharing gifts of toys and coins.

Children's Christmas Bazaar – Our annual Children's Christmas Bazaar took place on December 10th. Many thanks to Melissa Lizardi and our PTO members for making this event possible for the children, and to those who worked at the Bazaar that day. Special thanks to our middle school students for helping our younger students shop and pick out gift items for all the special people on their lists.

Preschool Events – Our preschool children enjoyed many events in December! Families sent in their favorite recipes to be included in a cookbook of 'family favorites'. Preschool also celebrated Crazy Sock Day, Ugly Sweater Day and Grinch Day! Little voices filled the halls as Mrs. Paige's and Mrs. Canata's 3 year old carolers sang "We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!"

Kindergarten 'Blessing Bags' – Mrs. Rust and Mrs. Leclair's kindergarten class celebrated the true meaning of Advent and the giving season. They talked about how there are many people that are less fortunate than themselves. As a class, they decided to make 'Blessing Bags' for those in need. They all discussed what items should go into the bags. Many small personal care items and items to provide comfort and warmth were included in the bags, but most importantly, a card with a special prayer created by the class was also included in each bag. The children were excited to use their 'KIND COUPONS' they earn in class, to have Mrs. Rust purchase the items. The 'Blessing Bags' were donated to the West Springfield Ecumenical Outreach Christmas event. It was a beautiful and meaningful way for our kindergarten students to celebrate Advent and the Christmas season.

Kindergarten - Future Chefs – Miss Malouin and Mrs. Drapeau's kindergarten class presented their families with 'Our Kindergarten Class Cookbook 2021-2022'. The students brought in their families favorite recipes, everything from Bolognese Sauce and Meatballs to Gluten Free Banana Pancakes! Many of the staff were presented with the cookbooks, and we can't wait to prepare some of these great family favorites!

Grade 1 Future Scientists – Miss Nicolliello's first grade students conducted a 'candy cane investigation'. They placed candy canes in warm water, cold water, vinegar and vegetable oil. The purpose of the experiment was to observe how fast a candy cane can dissolve and what substances will make it disappear faster. The students make hypotheses about what would happen to the candy canes, illustrated their observations and concluded that warm water causes candy canes to melt the fastest.

Grade 4 "Celebrating Holidays Around the World" – Mrs. Neffinger's students recently completed a "Holidays Around the World" research project. Each student was given a specific holiday to research, compile notes, and write a report on their findings. The holidays included: Christmas, Diwali, Kwanzaa, St. Lucia's Day, Hanukkah, Eid al-Fitr and Chinese New Year. The students enjoyed learning many interesting facts about so many different cultures.

Advent Activity for Grade 7 – During the Advent season, grade 7 has participated in the "Keeping Christ in Christmas" poster contest hosted by the Knights of Columbus. Mrs. Fedora's talented artists and 'professional card makers' also made Christmas cards that were sent to our veterans at the Holyoke Soldier's Home.

Middle School Ugly Sweater Day – On Monday, December 20th, our middle school students and teachers enjoyed wearing their favorite 'UGLY SWEATERS', fun day for all!!

St. Thomas School Advent Angels – On December 6th, St. Thomas School Students 'dressed down' in support of a family that needed assistance during the Christmas season. We were able to present a check for \$1,300 to a family very much in need. Many thanks to our families for your generous donations.