



## **Weekend Update: Sunday, December 1, 2024**

Today marks the beginning of Advent; our four weeks of preparation to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Saviour at Christmas. Throughout the next several weeks we will reflect on what it means to prepare for Christ at Christmas. We will light the candles on the Advent wreath, and watch as the glow gets brighter as we get closer to Christmas. We will share prayers and reflections on morning announcements along with our ongoing community outreach which includes the annual Christmas Food and Sock drive for those who need some extra care during this time of the year.

Last week we were fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in two days of workshops led by the Indigenous Education department from the Board. All students in Grades 4 through 8 had the chance to learn more about Lacrosse and play some games. We are always grateful for these opportunities and will continue to look at bringing these experiences to our students. Our Intermediate Volleyball teams both competed in their pod tournaments. The coaches were all proud of the commitment and perseverance that the teams demonstrated. Congratulations to the girls' team on their first-place win at their tournament and qualifying for the Family Tournament. Go Mercy Magic!! We ended the week with the annual concert to kick-off our "Christmas" season at Our Lady of Mercy School with the Gonzaga Jazz band Friday afternoon. The band played some seasonal favourites along with the crowd pleasing, "You're Welcome" from Moana to end the show. I want to thank the students for their attention and incredible round of applause to show their gratitude for the musicians to end the show. Our future bulldogs also hung around at the end of the concert to speak to the students and take some selfies with the "Future Gonzaga Musician" frame.

As we look ahead to the month of December, there are a number of fun activities planned for our community which include the annual Christmas Market this week, Advent Mass, Christmas Concert, X-Movement Workshops and the Community Christmas Event with Gingerbread houses, Santa, singing and dancing! We will also have a special Christmas Spirit Week, the final week of school for 2024. Stay tuned for all the fun theme days. I know that there is a lot of energy at this time of the year, and although we have so many fun events planned, I remind all our students that we still need to channel some of that energy into schoolwork. Teachers will be busy preparing Term One Report cards shortly after we return to school in January!

Once again, I thank you all for taking a few minutes each week to review the items in the Weekend Update. This is a way that we can all stay connected. As the weather has certainly changed now, I ask that all our students come to school with the appropriate attire to keep them comfortable and warm while outside for recess. Students need to have warm coats, hats, mitts, and outdoor footwear. Students spend seventy minutes outside each day, let's ensure that they will be able to enjoy that time regardless of the cooler temperatures.

*Leslie Marchand*

### December's Virtue of the Month: Hope

"May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:13)

God helps us to work for a more peaceful world even when we feel discouraged.



#### Staff Directory:

Leslie Marchand	Principal
Serita Pereira	Head Secretary
Jennifer Cahill	FDK Teacher
Hui Zhang	DECE (LTO)
Heather Maxwell	Grade 1/2 Teacher
Caroline Loiacono	Grade 1/2 Teacher
Cindy Nguyen	Grade 3/4 Teacher (LTO)
Trish Fang	Grade 4/5 Teacher
David MacSporran	Grade 5/6 French Immersion Teacher (LTO)
Colleen Dougherty	Grade 6/7 French Immersion Teacher
Trish Duivesteyn	Grade 6/7 Teacher
Madeleine Hinterhoeller	Grade 7/8 French Immersion Teacher
John Galbraith	Grade 7/8 Teacher
Sara Petrucci	SERC Teacher/ESL/SERT/Planning Time
Elaine Romaniuk	Sanctuary Program Teacher
Filomena Pandullo	Special Education Teacher/Planning Time
Lyla Colavecchia	Core French/ Planning Time Teacher (M, T, Th, F)
Paola D'Agostino	Teacher Librarian/Planning Time
Asmaa Ezzo Daher	Education Resource Worker
Sylvia Caruso	Education Resource Worker (Sanctuary)
Kellie Donaher	CYW
Jamie Brassard	CYW Sanctuary Program
Gillian Grant	Social Worker
Margaret Russ	MHSW (Sanctuary)
Jason Kotsopoulos	School Psychologist
Cheryl Suh	Speech and Language Pathologist
Tony DiRenzo	Head Custodian
Rose DiCerbo	Night Custodian
Luigi Aquino	Night Custodian

#### Christmas Market:



We are so excited, and grateful to our Catholic School Council, for the return of the Christmas on Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Students will all have an opportunity to come and purchase gifts for their loved ones throughout the day. Please do not forget to send students with cash on this day if they are going to do some shopping while at school! Thanks to the parents who have reached out to help!

### **Intermediate Ottawa Trip:**

As a reminder, the next installment for the Ottawa trip is due to Brightspark on December 6<sup>th</sup>. If there are families that are still interested in attending, please reach out to the school to make arrangements. It is not too late to register.

### **Christmas Concert:**



All classes are working hard to prepare a special song, dance, presentation for our Christmas Concert on Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM. All parents are welcome to attend the presentation. We ask that you please bring in non-perishable food items for our Christmas Food Drive and/or new socks for the Sock drive as admission.

### **Community Christmas Event:**

All families are welcome to join us for the Mercy Magic Community Christmas event on Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. Families who purchased Gingerbread houses will be able to decorate their house, but even if you didn't purchase a house, you are invited to come to celebrate the season. Santa will be dropping in and there will be lots of dancing, and singing too!

### **Weekly Lunches**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
No special Lunches.	<b>Subway</b> Order from Lunchbox on SchoolCash by previous Sunday @ noon.	<b>Lunchlady</b> Order from the lunchlady website, 48 hours in advance.	<b>Panago Pizza</b> Order forms are out now, due Thurs. Sept. 26 <sup>th</sup> . Payment on Schoolcash.	<b>Harvey's</b> Order from Lunchbox on SchoolCash by previous Sunday @ noon.

Our lunch offerings are always optional and meant to ease the pressures of daily lunch making for families and our students do enjoy their special lunches as well! The school does get a share of commission from these items to support extra activities and materials in our school.

### **Reporting Student Absences**

Student absences should be reported by parents/guardians for each student in our school through the Safe Arrival system in School Messenger. There are three ways to access the program:

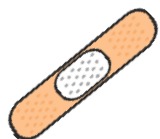
Web: [www.go.schoolmessenger.ca](http://www.go.schoolmessenger.ca) App: SchoolMessenger Phone: 1-844-435-3440 (toll free)

Student absences not reported will trigger phone calls to confirm the absence each morning. If you need assistance, please contact the school.

### **Water Bottles:**

As we are a Platinum Eco School, we remind students to bring a reusable water bottle to school each day. We have water-filling stations for their bottles to be refilled but we do not have any disposable cups for students to fill.

### Reporting Student Injury:



When students get hurt and come to the Office for care, we look at their injury and provide first aid treatment as appropriate. Sometimes, students are just looking for some “magic ice” and a visit in the Office and then go on their way. When students hit their head, or require more significant treatment, you will receive a call from the school to inform you of the injury. This may come from the Office, or the classroom teacher.

### School Day and Kiss and Ride:

Our school day commences at 8:45. Students will be able to enter the school as of 8:30 each morning and will be asked to make their way to their classroom. All students (other than FDK) are asked to enter the school through the side door closest to the driveway entrance of our school.

Parents who are driving are asked to drive their children up to the front of the school so staff supervising the Kiss and Ride are present to assist children exiting cars and making their way to the sidewalk.



**Please avoid pulling over to drop children off at the entrance to the parking lot, as this significantly backs up traffic.** If you wish to park and walk your children to their entrance, you are welcome to do so.

Students are dismissed at 3:15. Primary students are to be picked up on the school grounds so teachers can ensure they have been safely met. All students being picked up by car are asked to walk around to the front of the school to line up on the sidewalk and wait for their ride. All our Kindergarten students are to be dropped off and picked up at their gate at the front of the school.

### Student Lunches:



Please make sure your children come to school with their lunch. Our intermediate students (**grade 7 and 8 only**) may bring a note to sign-out for lunch. Please ensure the note is dated with the appropriate date. Students can then go out to eat but are asked **not to bring food or drinks back to school**. Students will not be able to go back to their class until the bell rings again at 12:56 to signal the start of our afternoon classes. Students will not be permitted to call home to ask for permission, please have this arranged in advance.

### Students Signing Out for Lunch:

**ONLY students in Grades 7 and 8 are permitted to leave the property for lunch.** EACH time your child wants to go out for lunch in the community, parents are required to provide a note, dated, and signed, for that specific day. We thank you for supporting your children in making these plans in advance.

### Allergens:

Please make sure you are sending your children to school each day with lunches that are free from allergens including **Nuts, Tree nuts, Pumpkin, and Seafood**. We have many children in our school who have serious allergies to these allergens, some of whom are airborne allergies. We thank you in advance for your attention to this as you pack lunches.

### **Dress for the Weather:**

Please be mindful of the weather conditions and dress children appropriately. Students need to have warmer items to play outside comfortably, such as hats, gloves, and warm jackets. Students are all expected to have indoor shoes at school, as wet and soiled boots and shoes will remain in the hallways to keep the classrooms clean!

### **Non-Essential Items at School**



Just as a reminder, we ask that students refrain from bringing non-essential items to school like toys, and trading cards. Students may want to share some of their special items, but we'd hate to see these favourites get lost. These items are a distraction from learning and can also create conflict between students if they go missing. I thank you all for supporting this from home.

### **Cellphone Communication**

This is just a reminder that cell phone communication is not permitted during the school day. If you need to connect with your children, please contact the school and we will support you in connecting with them. Students bringing phones to school are expected to leave them in their backpacks on silent or turned off. Smart watches should also be set to school mode.

We also remind parents and students that taking pictures, and recording videos of students or teachers during the school day is prohibited, ESPECIALLY when there is no consent.

### **Catholic School Council**

The next Catholic School Council meeting will be held on Monday, January 13, 2025 @ 6:00 PM. The agenda and link for those who wish to join virtually, will be sent out closer to the date. If you have items for consideration for the Agenda, please reach out to the school. Approved minutes can be found on our school website: [www.dpcdsb.org/olmcy](http://www.dpcdsb.org/olmcy).

### **Merciful Redeemer Parish**



Please check out the Merciful Redeemer website at [www.mercifulredeemer.org](http://www.mercifulredeemer.org) for the latest bulletin and other events happening at the Parish.

### **Self-Identification Option for Indigenous Families:**

If you are First Nation (Status Indian or Non-Status Indian), Métis and/or Inuit you can self-identify as Indigenous. You do not need to produce any documentation or proof of ancestry. Self-identification is voluntary and confidential. "This has been really important for us because of the sense of community and the connection to other Indigenous families." ~ Melanie Cormier, parent.

Self-identification will provide access to culture and language programs and monthly programming for students and families. Relevant information will be sent directly to you about upcoming cultural events and opportunities which help to build community and a sense of Indigenous pride in Dufferin-Peel.

To learn more about opportunities for Indigenous students and families please visit:  
<https://www3.dpcdsb.org/students/indigenous-self-identification>

**Final thoughts:**



I am looking forward to seeing our community create HOPE for so many who may feel hopeless at this time of the year, a time that is not always magical for everyone. If you can, I encourage you to send in non-perishable food items, and/or new socks for the Sock Drive led by our Youth Faith Ambassadors. This is such a wonderful opportunity to help our children to remember the true meaning of Christmas. Helping others, is a wonderful way to help prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus.

**Advent Prayer**

*Lord Jesus,*

*Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon  
our preparations for Christmas.*

*We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice  
each day,*

*We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming  
among us.*

*We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your  
kingdom.*

*We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.*

*We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.*

*To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"*

*Amen.*

*- Henri J.M. Nouwen*





### **Upcoming Events:**

Please click on the following link to access the [2024-2025 School Year Calendar](#).

#### **Monday, December 2:**

Advent Liturgy during announcements.

Pathways and Transition Teacher: Intermediate

#### **Tuesday, December 3:**

Christmas Market

Roots of Empathy: Baby Visit

(Duivesteyn/Sanctuary)

#### **Friday, December 6:**

President's Choice Children's Charities:

Bowlerama (small group of students)

#### **Tuesday, December 10:**

Advent Mass at **1:00 PM** (Parents are welcome)

#### **Wednesday, December 11:**

Pathways and Transition Teacher: Intermediate

#### **Thursday, December 12:**

Cahill/Zhang, Maxwell, Loiacono: Trip to the Library (AM)

#### **Friday, December 13:**

Christmas Concert @ 1:30 PM. Admission is a non-perishable food item.

#### **December 17-19:**

X-Movement Workshops

#### **Thursday, December 19:**

Community Christmas Event 5:30-7:00

#### **Friday, December 20:**

Last day of school for the Christmas break.

#### **Monday, January 6, 2025**

Return to school after Christmas break.

#### **Monday, January 13, 2025**

Catholic School Council @ 6:00

#### **Monday, January 20, 2025**

PD Day