

## A Note from the Principal . . .

Students, teachers, families, and staff are off to a terrific start of the 2023-24 school year! Saint Benedict is our September Saint. Welcoming and warm hospitality are a couple of Saint Benedict's charisms.

There are two field trips scheduled for September: grades 4-6 Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park; grades PreK-2 Ferguson's Apple Orchard.

We are enjoying our preschool in the main school building. They bring much joy and blessings each day.

Our first round of reading and math fall testing will be completed September 29. A data coach will be meeting with our teachers to discuss results.

Our library is now moved to the first floor of the Holy Childhood building. Thanks to Georgine Gansen and Judy Otto for all of their hard work in getting the library ready for the school year. We are blessed to have our Catholic school. We thank our Parish for your prayers and support.

Mrs. Sheila Hendricks, Principal

## A Word from Father Michael . . .

As we begin a new school year, it is an exciting time with lots of anticipation. We expect this to be a year filled with the love and joy of learning, growing in holiness and devotion. Each Friday the children will be singing at Mass, generously sharing their talents with all who are able to worship that day. I hope that you will come for the joy that the children will share.

There is great enthusiasm in our halls with teachers dedicated to the Catholic mission of the school and families making sacrifices to ensure that their children will receive a Catholic education. I am very grateful for all that so many do to continue the tradition of our school. Please help to spread the word that our parish and school are moving in positive directions. You help to share the enthusiasm and joy all over Belle Plaine and I am appreciative.

God bless you,

Father Michael Kaluza

## Here's what's happening in the classroom . . .

Our Preschool Year is off to an amazing start! We have a total of ten friends that attend our half and full day programs. Students have already acclimated to our routine and are enjoying being in the classroom. Our days are filled with art projects, water play, dress up, blocks, music & stories. Outdoor Time in the play yard has been a blessing; such a great opportunity for exercising our big muscles and exploring God's Creation. September 25th – October 1st we will have a Dinosaur theme and



PreK



PreK



PreK  
OUTDOORS

## Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic School 2023 Marathon of Prayer September 29 through October 18

*Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus*

Our Marathon of Prayer is quickly approaching. We are very excited to participate in the prayers and walking to support our school and pray for all of those who have requested our prayers. All families, Preschool through 6th grade are invited to participate. If each student raises \$200 we will reach our overall school goal of \$6000. The proceeds from the Marathon play an instrumental portion of our annual budget. It helps supply core and supplemental curriculum along with helping with the overall budget to run the school. We are grateful for everyone who supports our school. Students will be walking a total of 20 laps over a three day period and will be praying a specific prayer for each lap.

1. Prayers of thanksgiving to God
2. Prayer for Catholic Schools
3. Sick & dying
4. Souls in purgatory
5. The hungry/homeless
6. Priest and deacon vocations
7. Rosary
8. Prayers of blessings from God
9. Prayer for Students
10. Local, national and global leaders
11. Abortion
12. Cancer survivors & sufferers
13. The imprisoned and lonely
14. Rosary
15. Those fallen away from their faith
16. Prayer for teachers
17. Beatitudes
18. Prayer for parents
19. Prayer for grandparents
20. Rosary

October begins with Earth theme. Watch your student's gray folders for Scholastic Book Orders and Email/Facebook for highlights from upcoming events. Blessings, Mrs. Ross



## Here's what's happening in the classroom (continued) . . .



Grades 1 & 2

Hi Families,  
Welcome back to the 2023-24 school year! Can't believe we are already at the end of September. Our class has made wonderful adjustments from being at tables last year to sitting at a desk this year! Big transition for young children. Once a week we clean our desk and make sure everything is in the right order.

We have been working on rules, routines, and respect. This goes right along with our Social Studies lesson, Governing the People: being good citizens. Next we will discuss government services and choosing good

leaders. In our Mystery Science we are learning about Animal Characteristics and Habitats. The next two weeks will be biodiversity, Habitats, Species, and Engineering (why frogs say 'ribbit' and how to get more birds to your bird feeder!).

Both 1st and 2nd have been reviewing addition with different strategies and next subtraction. In our Believe and Read first grade has been reviewing letter sounds and sight words, second grade diagraphs and spelling rules. Superkids has us working on nouns and pronouns, sh, ch, tch, and second grade nouns and pronouns and adding adjectives!

First grade religion just finished learning about who the three persons are in the Blessed Trinity. Our next chapter talks about Mother Mary and the Holy Family. Second grade finished a chapter about when we became followers of Jesus: Pentecost and will be starting : We belong to the Catholic Church.

Blessings to all, Happy Fall!

Mrs. Hennen



Welcome back to school everyone! We have had a great first few weeks in kindergarten. Students have been trying lots of new activities and routines, as well as getting to know everyone in our class and school. We have been practicing being good friends and helpers while at school. How can we show kindness and love others like Jesus loves us?

In our Believe and Read program, the kindergarteners begin the year by practicing pre-writing skills including proper writing posture and pencil grip as well as letter sounds and names. In math the focus has been on sorting things into groups by size, shape, and color. Our math words of the week were alike, similar, and different.

It's going to be a great year of fun and learning! God Bless! - Mrs. Schroers



READING TIME  
Grades 4, 5, 6

We have gotten off to a fantastic start in Mr. Lopahs' 4th, 5th, & 6th grade class! Students are already in the swing of things with several spelling tests, math "Quests", Science and Social Studies Quizzes, and a Book Report already in bag. They are also doing an amazing job leading Children's Mass each Friday morning and are showing excellent leadership skills for our little ones.

In addition to all the learning we have several fun features in our room, from the Hall of Fame which highlights student achievement, the "Let's Play" Behavior Chart

where students work hard to earn a Fun 'Fri-yay' privilege, and the MVP where we feature a different Saint each week. This month we focused on St. Teresa of Calcutta, Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Matthew, and the Archangels.



BUS SAFETY



## MUSIC notes

Music classes have begun at OLP! We have a few band students from our 5th and 6th grade classes this year. Our younger students are refreshing their Children's mass repertoire and really singing out during Mass. Preschool students have been so excited and eager during our music classes and very attentive during Children's Mass. I look forward to a wonderful school year! - Mrs. Carolyn Gleason

# PTA Meeting

## Minutes

September 21, 2023 6:00 p.m.  
Gathering Space

Welcome and Our Father

Introductions

Attendees: Jess Kurvers, Ashley Simon, Kim Baltus, Loni Scheff

### PTA: why we have it and how it works

The PTA is a parent led group that helps fundraise money for field trips, student activities, teacher appreciation and other school activities. In our small school community we need ALL parents to participate. It is a great way to connect with the school and parish community, the teachers and other OLP families.

There is over lap in the PTA and all school (general school budget) fundraisers. Mostly this is a budget/book keeping distinction. Again because of our size, all parents will be asked to participate in the planning and execution of all fundraisers as needed.

### PTA Leadership

The current leadership structure is President and Vice President. At some point we would like to add a secretary and treasure. We would like to have the leadership transition every year or two to keep the idea fresh and replace outgoing parents ( kids that have graduated from OLP, moved ect) If you are interested in PTA leadership talk to Jess or Ashley

### PTA Fundraisers

2023/24 fundraisers

- Back to School Out of Uniform (raised \$220)
- 9/30 - Spaghetti Dinner
- 9/30 thru 10/18 - Fall Prayer Marathon (Information coming soon)
- Dec - Christmas Out of Uniform Sale
- Jan- Catholic Schools week Waffle Breakfast
- Feb/March - Catholic United Ticket Sale and possible St Patricks Day Fundraiser
- April - Gala
- May - Stuff The Truck

### PTA supported events

Field Trips/bussing

Birthday Mass

Teacher Appreciation Gifts/Meals

Special Events and Activities

### VIRTUS

In order to volunteer in classrooms, at lunch or on field trips you MUST be SAFE ENVIRONMENT CREDENTIALLED through VIRTUS. You can be certified online and it takes about 90 minutes. If you are not SEC certified and you would like to be please contact Jess or Kelly Pumper in the office.

### Spaghetti Dinner

We NEED YOU!!! Many hands make light work! Please sign up for a shift and invite your friends, family and neighbors!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0A49ACAE2BA0FD0-44361014-spaghetti>

### Prayer Marathon

The 2023 Prayer Marathon has been reworked this year in order to more fully connect the students to the prayers and intentions of the marathon. Information will go home with students this week. Staff is excited about the changes and

the connection we hope the students will make with the prayer intentions made during the marathon.

### Gala Team

We are hopeful to have a GALA TEAM to take the leadership this year. We are looking for 2-3 people to join the Gala Team. Commitment would include 1 meeting this fall and 1-2 meetings a month Jan-April. Please reach out to Ashley or Jess if you are interested in being on the Gala Committee.

### BAND APP

The PTA uses The Band App for communications.( Emails are also used and those are sent via FRONT DESK from OLP)

If you haven't done so already please use the QR Code at the end of these minutes to join the PTA Band. This app allows us to send reminders and information outside of office hours.

Thanksgivings and Hail Mary

Jess Kurvers, PTA President



Religious Education Program registration is taking place now for Wednesday classes starting on October 25.



On Monday, October 2, we honor and commemorate the Holy Guardian Angels. Hopefully, all of our OLP students find themselves in the favorable habit of praying their Guardian Angel Prayer daily. Even more so, those of us who have lived long enough to have been to [the place where the devil dwells] and back a time or two, have hopefully never been far from the ancient practice of asking our Guardian Angel to pray for us, and be ever at our side to light and

guard, and to rule and guide. The great Abbot, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, put it much better than some DRE schmuck ever could, when speaking of the blessed wonders of these devoted spiritual beings. In one of his surviving Twelfth Century sermons, quoting from Psalm 90 (Psalm 91 in newer Biblical Translations) to drive home his point, he said... "In every place show respect to thy Angel. Let gratitude for his benefits incite thee to honor his greatness. Love this thy future coheir, the Guardian appointed for thee by the Father during thy childhood. For though we are sons of God, we are as yet but children, and long and dangerous is our journey. 'But God hath given His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands, they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk; and thou shalt trample underfoot the lion and the dragon.' Yes, where the road is smooth enough for a child, they will content themselves with guiding thee, and sustaining thy footsteps, as one does for children. But, if trials threaten to surpass thy strength, they will bear thee up in their hands. Oh those hands of Angels! Thanks to them, what fearful straits we have passed through, as it were without thinking, and with no other impression left upon us, than that of a nightmare suddenly dispelled!"

May we all be ever grateful for the daily protection and encouragement to those whom God's love commit us here, and may we all be open to the inspirations of our Guardian Angels! Can I get an "AMEN!"?

Mark Simons, Director of Religious Education



**Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic School  
PTA Fundraiser**

# **SPAGHETTI DINNER**

**Saturday, Sept. 30th**

**4:00-7:00 pm**

**Belle Plaine Vet's Club**

**Free Will Offering**



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