

November 30, 2023



Holy Spirit School
Inspiring Minds/Igniting Hearts
2023/2024
"Faithfulness"

Santa's Ride Toy Drive!

Our annual Toy Drive ends tomorrow, Friday, December 1st.

As of this morning, we have collected 279 toys with a goal of 400.

Thank you to those who have already contributed. If you have not, please consider supporting this worthy cause.

The 1st Trimester ended on Tuesday, November 21st. Report cards for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will go home on December 1st.

The next couple of weeks are busy and exciting around here. Once the season of Advent begins we seem to be on full-speed until the Christmas break. Please be sure to read each week's newsletter thoroughly so not to miss items and be sure to regularly check the school calendar and the teachers Schoology pages.

Holy Spirit will be hosting a Virtus seminar on December 2nd from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. You may go to www.virtus.org in order to register.

Dear Parents,

I am writing today to let you know that I will be stepping away from my role as principal of Holy Spirit School at the conclusion of this academic year. I have enjoyed more than you know my ten years as principal and my nineteen years at the school. This has been my home since we enrolled our oldest in prekindergarten way back in 2001. Holy Spirit will still always be home to me.

This has been coming for a good bit of time now, but my husband and I have decided this is the right time as our youngest will finish college in just a few weeks and with the birth of our first granddaughter last March that having a life not necessarily tied to an academic calendar is what we would like.

Father O'Donohue in consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools will be putting together a Search Committee for a new principal. I am sure that the person who is meant to lead this special community will find his or her way here.

I still have seven months to lead and to interact with you and your children, so today is certainly not "good bye", but I felt it important to finalize this decision with Father early in the year so that the selection process has plenty of time.

I will see where my professional career leads next once I have completed the year.

Thank you for your support of all things Holy Spirit School. You have made a wonderful choice for the education of your children as they grow in grace and wisdom.

Blessings always,
Maureen Ashby

Thoughts from Father O'Donohue

(Moving forward we will have a monthly contribution from our Pastor as we all seek to continue to grow and develop on our Faith journey.)

The season of Advent is almost upon us. It begins this Sunday. Advent is a four-week liturgical season of spiritual preparation for the coming of Christ Jesus. This year the season of Advent is as short as it can be. Because Christmas falls on a Monday this year, this means the Fourth Week of Advent is celebrated only on the Fourth Sunday of Advent; it's only a one-day week.

This means this year every day of Advent is all the more precious. The special grace of the season of Advent is to spiritually prepare us to celebrate the coming of Christ Jesus. It is not meant to be a season in which we *already* celebrate his coming. With Christmas Day, that new birthday season of celebration commences. If we ignore Advent or allow the celebration of Christmas to already dominate our lives, our spiritual preparation is guaranteed to be shallow and inadequate, lacking in the depth and riches that the grace of the Advent season provide.

So I encourage all of our school families to make the most of the Advent Season. Advent wreathes, Advent calendars, a Nativity scene in which the baby Jesus does not make his appearance until Christmas Day, and Advent music are all some of the ways to enrich the season. Family traditions that involve these and other devotions can leave such a lasting imprint on a person's life and soul, helping to unite families in faith and devotion.

Yes, there is an expectant joy that grows as Christmas comes closer, but there is also a somber dimension to the season. The color of the season is violet, reflecting in a visual way a sense of mourning and sadness as we are reminded that the Son of God came down from heaven and took on mortal flesh precisely because of our sins. St. John the

Baptist is one of the great and essential saints of the Advent season. Every Second Sunday of Advent he makes his appearance in the Gospel, preparing the way of the Lord by *proclaiming a baptism for the forgiveness of sins* (Mk 1:4). Jesus comes as Savior to save us from our sins. As the angel of the Lord joyfully announced to the shepherds (and to us): *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”* (Lk 2:11). So, lastly, please during this Advent season respond to the voice of St. John the Baptist by, as a family, celebrating the Sacrament of Confession. For one of the deepest and truest joys of Christmas is to know Jesus as Savior through his merciful forgiveness of our sins. May this Christmas joy be yours by heeding the Advent voice of the one ordained by God to prepare for the coming – the advent – of the Lord.



Parents of altar servers...

First, thank you for allowing your sons to participate in this very important ministry for the parish.

We are looking for your assistance in being sure to remind your sons of when they are serving so that they arrive to school in their regular uniform.

Also, if your son is unable to serve on a scheduled day, please keep in mind that it is not the responsibility of the front office to secure a substitute. It gets very chaotic in the lead up to 9:00 Mass when the boys are not here or have a test and we are having to find someone to fill-in.

Thank you for your attention to this.

The application for the 2024/2025 academic year for NEW students is now open and accessible on the school's website.

If you have children (especially prekindergarten or kindergarten age), please take the time to complete that application as soon as possible so that we retain spaces.

For current students, Holy Spirit uses continuous enrollment, so unless we hear from you that you will not be returning, we plan for your children to be here.

The tuition rates for the 2024/2025 academic year will be sent home next week. There is a re-registration fee that is assessed per student. The date for that being posted to family FACTS accounts will be in the information that comes to you regarding tuition. For those families who are not returning for next year, the packet will include an Intent Not to Return form that we ask that you complete and return.

Families interested in applying for tuition assistance for the 2024/2025 academic year, the FACTS application is open. The deadline for applying is March 13, 2024.

holy moments

Did you create your own Holy Moment this week? Did you assist your child in creating a Holy Moment here at school? This week's challenge is to really pay attention to the teacher at least once every day in every subject. Seems fairly minimal. We tend to think that certainly our children are keenly focused all day long on the learning and information that is being presented to them. But then again, let's be honest about that. Are any of us keenly focused on what is happening around us each day? Think of the happiness that those around us feel when we are very intentional in our interactions and are not distracted by the myriad other things going on around us.



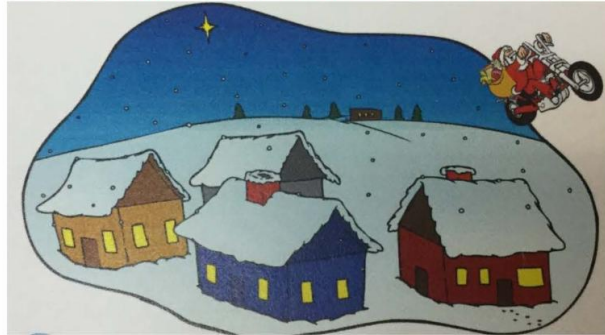
Our annual Toy Drive end tomorrow!

We have set this year's goal at 400 toys.

Annual Holy Spirit School Toy Drive

SANTA'S RIDE

Help Bring Holiday Cheer to Sick Children



Monday, November 27th - Friday, December 1st



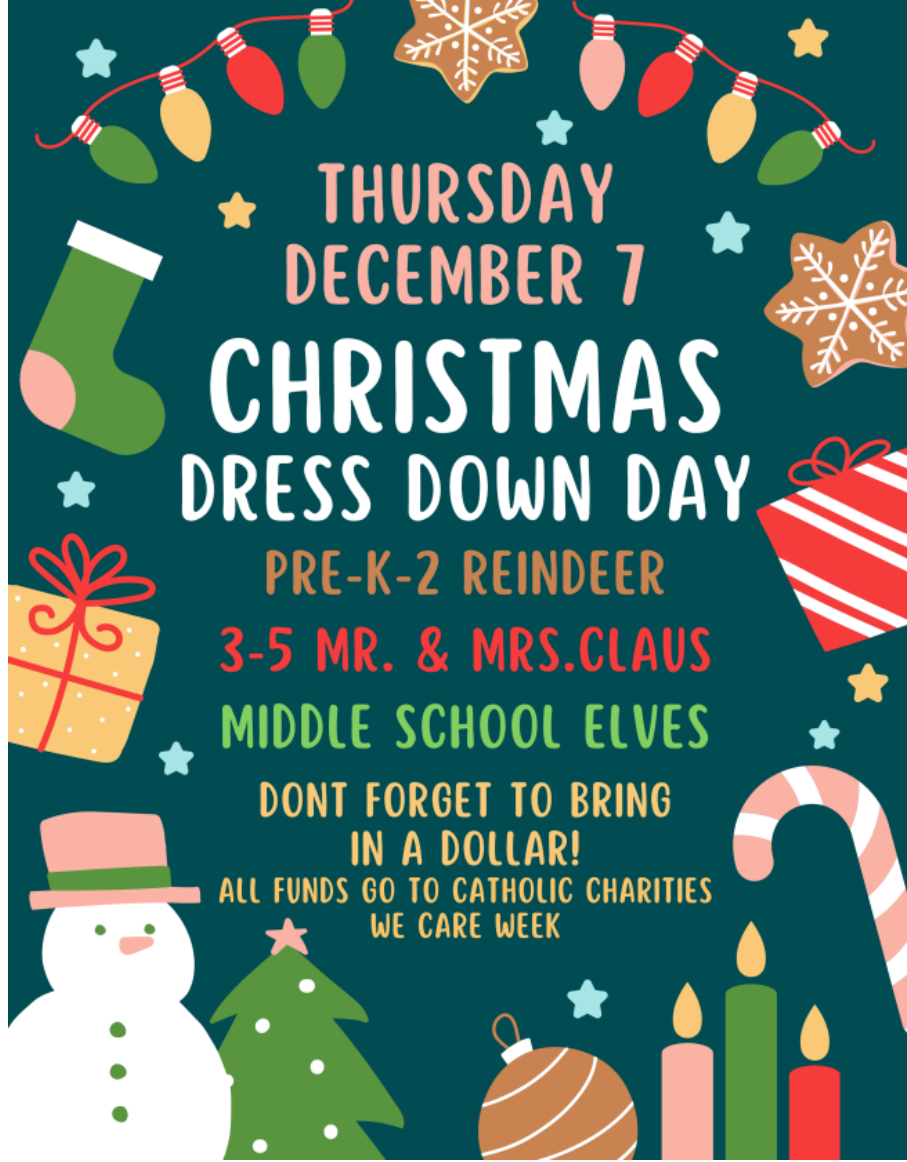
Make a difference in the lives of the many sick children who are unable to return home for the holidays.

The Fairfax County Police Department motorcycle squad is collaborating with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office and others to collect and distribute toys to children at Fairfax Hospital and Georgetown Lombardi Cancer Center.

Please donate a new, unwrapped toy, game, or book.

Thank you for your generosity.

Holy Spirit supports Catholic Charities "We Care Week"!



THURSDAY
DECEMBER 7

CHRISTMAS DRESS DOWN DAY

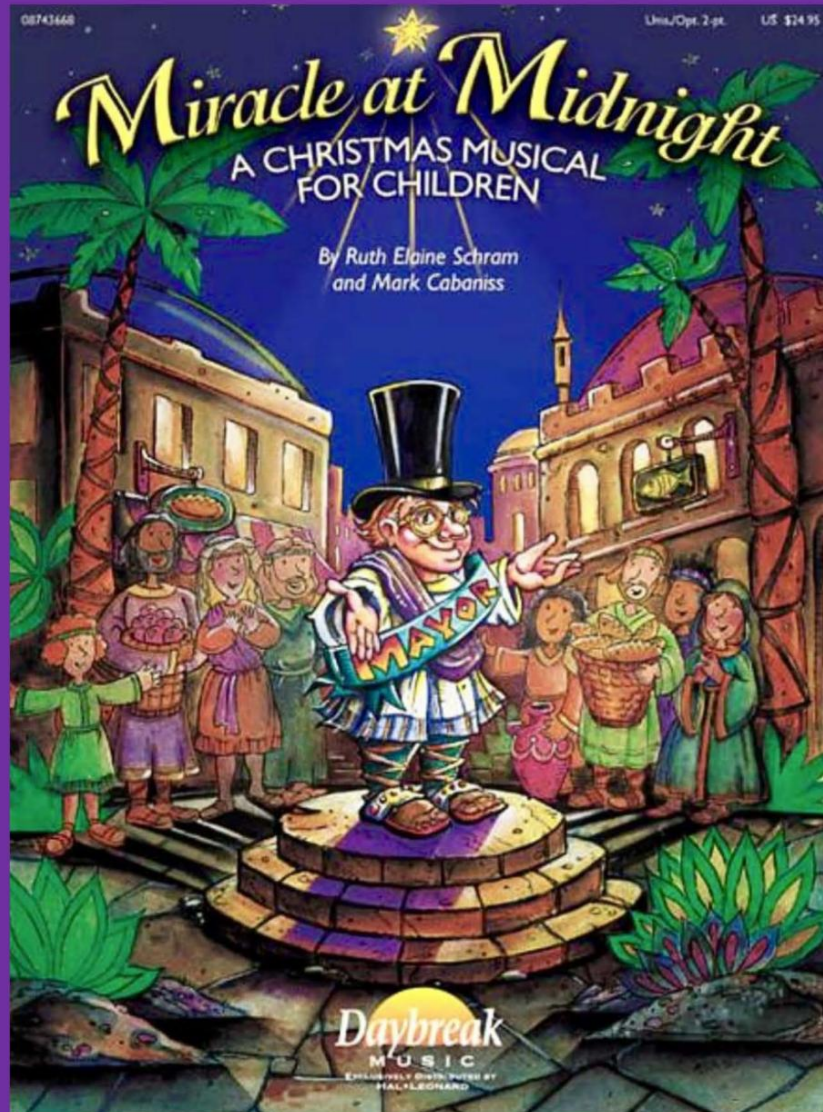
PRE-K-2 REINDEER

3-5 MR. & MRS. CLAUS

MIDDLE SCHOOL ELVES

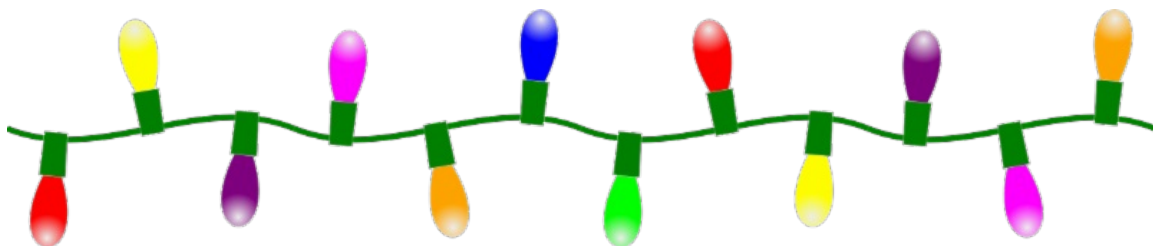
DONT FORGET TO BRING
IN A DOLLAR!
ALL FUNDS GO TO CATHOLIC CHARITIES
WE CARE WEEK

Holy Spirit School Presents:



Thursday December 14, 2023, 7 p.m.

Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. - Free Admission



Miracle At Midnight

**K-4 Christmas Musical
December 14 at 7:00pm**

Costume and Call Sheet for the Christmas Musical

Miracle At Midnight

The Christmas Performance is **December 14th @ 7:00 pm.**

Grades K-3: Please bring your child to their room **NO EARLIER** than 6:15 pm,
NO LATER than **6:30 pm.**

Grade 4: Please bring your child to their room **NO EARLIER** than 6:00 pm,
NO LATER than **6:15 pm.**

The show begins promptly at **7:00 pm.** Doors **DO NOT** open until **6:30pm.**

Kindergarten- "Sheep"

The Kindergarteners will wear their PE uniform sweatpants and sweatshirts inside out, with white socks and black uniform shoes. They will be provided with floppy sheep ears.

1st Grade- "Angels"

The 1st Graders will wear their PE uniform sweatpants inside out, with a long sleeve white T-shirt, white socks and black uniform shoes. They will be provided with halos.

2nd Grade- "Camels"

The 2nd Graders will wear brown or khaki pants and brown or tan long sleeve T-shirts, with white socks and black uniform shoes. They will be provided with camel visors!

3rd Grade- "Townspeople"

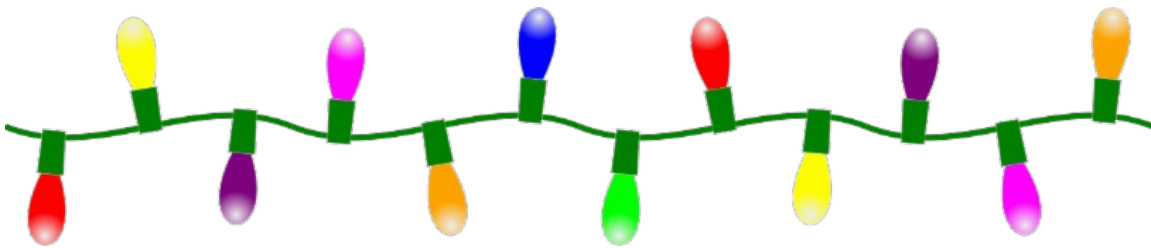
The 3rd Graders will wear long sleeve T-shirts in any shade of blue and khaki pants, white socks and black uniform shoes. They will be provided with head scarves to keep them looking Biblical!

4th Grade- Main Cast

Please see your child's Fourth Grade Music Schoology Page regarding costume essentials for the individual cast member.

If you have any **questions or concerns**, don't hesitate to contact Ms. Sanborn at CSanborn@holyspiritflames.org.

Thank you so much for your cooperation in making this year's Christmas Musical a beautiful experience for us all!



Holy Spirit School Presents:



Night of Nights

Nativity Play

Tuesday December 19, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

Doors will open at 1:30 p.m.

Free Admission

Looking for a service project for your family?

The Art Room needs your boxes from flat screens for the middle school musical. 75 inch size or bigger would be preferable.



Thank You! Mrs. Liss Art Teacher
Please contact me if you have any questions.

iliss@holyspiritflames.org

-Maureen Ashby

Principal

Holy Spirit School PTO



Upcoming PTO Events

Sunday, November 26th – December 17th

Christmas Tree Sales

See Volunteer Opportunities below for more information.

Thursday & Friday, December 7-8

Christmas Boutique

Details sent home via backpack mail.

Saturday, December 9th

Gingerbread House Decorating 4:30pm

Holy Spirit Cafeteria

See flier for more information and Volunteer Opportunities below to help out.

Saturday, December 16th

Dinner at Panera - 4pm – 8pm

6230 Rolling Rd Suite V, West Springfield

25% of sales donated back to Holy Spirit! See flier below for more information.

Holy Spirit Christmas Ornament Sale

See flier below for information on how to order.

Volunteer Opportunities (1 point/30 mins volunteered)

Christmas Tree Sales November 26 – December 17

Sales begin on Sunday, November 26th. Help is requested for setup, sales and breakdown. We need two families per weekday sales shift and three families per weekend sales shift. This is a family event! Bring your spouse, kids, aunts, uncles, grandparents. Parents will earn PSSC service hours and teens can earn their service hours as well!

Questions? Contact Jouhn Borja PTOChristmasTrees@holyspiritflames.org

Toy Drive Parishioner Reception December 1

Holy Spirit will be hosting a small reception for Fairfax County Police/Sheriff Department, our staff and middle school students to celebrate the end of our annual toy drive. We are looking for volunteers to donate coffee and snacks for the event and assist with setup and cleanup.

Questions? Contact Alyss Gaughan alyss.jacobsen@gmail.com

Christmas Boutique Volunteers December 6-8

Help is needed with set up/decorating on December 6th as well as 'running the show' on December 7th & 8th. Feel free to dress in fun holiday attire!

Questions? Contact Toni O'Neill PTOVDevelopment@holyspiritflames.org

Gingerbread House Decorating December 9

The Craft Committee is looking for some help baking gingerbread houses and constructing houses for the December 9th event. Baking will be at home, dough and pattern will be provided.

Questions? Contact Stephanie Thull stephthull@gmail.com

Reminders

In order to volunteer with any youth in the Arlington Diocese, you must be [Child Protection Compliant](#).

Recess Duty volunteers are still needed for the remainder of the school year. Families who have completed their required commitment of one day are eligible for 4 PSSC points for each additional day served.

**The deadline for ordering the 2023/2024 Holy Spirit
Christmas ornament is fast approaching!!!**

Annual Holy Spirit School Christmas Ornament
2023-2024



Payment is via check in the amount of **\$15** and made out to the **Holy Spirit School PTO**. **NO CASH**. Please return the lower half of the form with your check by *Friday, November 17, 2023*. Checks and forms may be redirected to % Jennifer Sylvester (Homerooms 2E Epperly and PKG Garcia).

Questions: Contact jennifermichellesylvester@gmail.com or toniquinnoncill@gmail.com.

Please return the lower half of the form with a check in the amount of **\$15**, made out to the **Holy Spirit School PTO** by *Friday, November 17, 2023*. **NO CASH**. Checks and forms may be redirected to % Jennifer Sylvester (Homerooms 2E Epperly and PKG Garcia).

Family Name: _____

Quantity: _____

Total (\$): _____

Homeroom teacher: _____



Santa's Secret Shop IS COMING SOON!
Get that special gift for everyone on your list!

Dates: December 7th and 8th

Please consider volunteering your time at the
Boutique!

Look for the volunteer sign-up on Connect1



**Panera
FUNDRAISING**

Help support us!
Holy Spirit School

December 16, 2023
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm EDT
6230 W Rolling Road, West Springfield, VA

**25%
OF SALES
WILL BE
DONATED**

Use code **FUND4U** at online checkout, in the Panera App,
or at the kiosk in-cafe.*

Bring this flyer or show a digital copy to your cashier when ordering at the cafe or enter the
promo code FUND4U at checkout on Panerabread.com or the Panera App to ensure your
organization gets a portion of the proceeds.**

Learn more at fundraising.panerabread.com

©2023 Panera Bread. All Rights Reserved.
*Gift card and catering order placed on Panerabread.com, and delivery orders placed through third-party sites are excluded and will not count
towards the event. Other restrictions apply. For complete details, visit: <http://fundraising.panerabread.com/terms-conditional>. **Services vary by cafe.

PTO Board 2023 - 2024

President - Christine Ploschke - PTOPresident@holyspiritflames.org

Vice President - Rob Wu - PTOVVP@holyspiritflames.org

Treasurer - Karin Floyd - PTOTreasurer@holyspiritflames.org

Secretary - Kristyn Poreba - PTOSecretary@holyspiritflames.org

Volunteer Coordinator - Lauren Schmidt - PTOVPMembership@holyspiritflames.org

Fundraising Coordinator - Toni O'Neill - PTOVDevelopment@holyspiritflames.org

Homeroom Parent Coordinator - Valerie Overstreet - PTOHomeroomCoordinator@holyspiritflames.org

Volunteering

Please remember that you must be fully compliant with the Child Protection policies of the

Parish Happenings!

Community Happenings!



FAMILY FOLDER

The following flyers may be found in the folder labeled "November 30, 2023" on the website. For your convenience, some flyers are repeated.

Family Folder

School Flyers:

1. Diocesan Tuition Assistance Programs Overview
2. Santa's Ride Toy Drive
3. Art Room supply need flyer
4. Partners in Faith (December) newsletter
5. Partners in Faith Family Advent Calendar
6. Wreaths Across America flyer
7. NJHS Christmas Dress Down Day flyer
8. Miracle At Midnight Costume list

PTO Flyers:

1. Holy Spirit Ornament Order Form
2. Santa Boutique flyer
3. Gingerbread House Decorating flyer
4. Panera Bread Fundraiser flyer

Parish Flyers:

Community Flyers:

Holy Spirit School | 8802 Braddock Rd., Annandale, VA 22003

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