

*St. Luke Catholic School*  
*Love, Care, & Respect For One Another*

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## December Newsletter

### What is Advent?

Advent marks the beginning of our liturgical year. In other words, it is the Church's "New Year's Day." The word Advent comes from the Latin word *ad-venio*, which means "arrival" or "coming." It is a period of preparation for the birth of our Lord.

As parents, we may want to think of it as the time we were expecting our children to be born. I bet you can still remember that special time in your lives when you were waiting to hold your love made flesh.

Similar to that longing, Advent is the time when we wait and prepare for the birth of our Lord God. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. It begins with the Sunday nearest to the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle.

Hence, the duration of the season can range from twenty eight days to only twenty-one days. Either way, Advent is the start of the Christmas season and lasts through the Baptism of Our Lord.

Because the first Sunday of Advent marks the Church's "New Year's Day," this is the time we change the cycle of readings we are using at Mass. (From cycles A to B, from B to C, and from C to A.)

Moreover, as a reflection of this change, our liturgical color changes from green to purple. In other words, you will see our priest vestments and church colors change from green to purple. Green represents ordinary time; but we use purple during Advent and Lent as a sign of penance and preparation.

The Advent wreath has its origins in pre-Christian Germany and Scandinavia

where the people gathered to celebrate the return of the sun after the winter solstice. The circular wreath made of evergreens with four candles interspersed represented the circle of the year and the life that endures through the winter. As the days grew longer, people lit candles to offer thanks to the "sun god" for the light.

As Christianity and tradition integrated into one, the lighting of the Advent candles now represents the promise of the coming of Jesus, the light of the world. The circular shape represents the Alpha and the Omega and the evergreens, ever-lasting life.

Come Lord Jesus Come!

Mrs. Ana E. Gomez, M.Ed.

*"Seasons of Holiness" NCEA*

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### Christmas Program

The school community invites all to attend our annual Christmas program on Wednesday, December 16th at 6:30 p.m. in the church. All students from K3-5th will participate and will be lead by our 6th grade class. All students are asked to wear their Sunday's best for the evening's event.

This is a special time for our school community where we can gather together to offer a special prayer and reflect on the meaning of Christmas. We thank all of our teachers and paraprofessionals for helping make this evening a success. We look forward to seeing you there.



## Counselor's Corner

We begin one of the busiest times of the year where the children turn their attention to a different focus...CHRISTMAS!!!!

Last month the 5th and 6th graders participated in a half-day retreat where the girls and boys were segregated to focus that time on different activities. They thoroughly enjoyed the time, and our time together flew by.

This month I will be addressing issues of SAFETY. Every year I address the topic of safety when it comes to children and personal boundaries. The

topics range from "good touch, bad touch" with the younger children to Internet safety with the older children. It is important that you reinforce those topics with your children. I should NOT be the first person that talks to your child(ren) about these subjects since they are crucial for children to understand. We all have the responsibility to protect our little ones, and we must equip them with strategies to help them out.

ALL material is age-appropriate and the children have welcomed the information and actively participated in

group discussions in the past. This effort stems from the Catholic Diocese's "Protecting God's Children" curriculum, and we hope to educate our children to protect themselves.

Small group guidance has continued with the 1st and 2nd grades and have gone smoothly. Those students involved with this effort have received permission from parents and teachers.

If you have any concerns with your children's behavior, please come by to visit with me Mon-Fri 8 am-12 noon.

Thank you, Ms. Caballero



### Joy Drive

Our NEHS members will be hosting this year's Toy Drive. It will begin on Wednesday, December 2nd and run through Wednesday, December 16th. Students may bring a new toy (unwrapped) to school. Students are also allowed to bring a used toy that is in good condition. This will give students an opportunity to share a toy that they no longer use and pass it along to someone and put a smile on their face.

All toys will be given to local organizations who work with children in need. Thank you for your support!

### Students Continue to Shine!

Our Volleyball teams continue to work hard and represent our school well. The girls continue to play strong. They will be wrapping up the season this month. We are proud to announce that our 11-12 girls remain undefeated. Our young girls 9-10 girls have done well and have grown through out the season. We thank all the parents and coaches for their support. Well done girls!!!

Our Starlette's Dance Team has begun this year. This is a dance team for girls in Third—Sixth grade. This year there are twenty girls on the team. They are lead by Mrs. Espinosa. The girls will be performing at the Christmas Parade on Monday, December 7th and at our annual Christmas Program on the 16th.

Finally, we congratulate Ilse Perez, a fifth grader, who received word that she was awarded third place in the annual Fire Prevention Poster contest. Well done!

### "Bring a Bear" Day



Our fourth grade students will be hosting a Blue Jean Day on Friday, December 4th. Students will be allowed to wear jeans and the red St. Luke t-shirt. The fourth graders will be collecting a goodwill donation of \$1.00. All proceeds will be donated to the St. Labre Indian School. St. Labre is a Catholic School serving Native American children in Montana. Currently our fourth grade students are studying various Indian cultures.

In conjunction with this special day, students will be allowed to bring a stuffed animal to school. This will serve as a reminder to pray for the children of St. Labre.

We congratulate our students and their teachers, Ms. Martin and Mrs. Espinosa for coordinating this service project.

### Celebrate Reading!



From December 7th—11th, teachers and students will share their love of reading. Our week will begin with the arrival of Scholastic Book Fair. The Book Fair will run all week at our school's library. Special activities have been planned for students by Ms. Garza and Ms. Campos. We thank both for their efforts. The Book Fair will be open before and after school. This is a great chance to by a Christmas gift or stocking stuffer. All purchases help our library add additional titles to our own collection.

Students will also have special activities planned by their classroom teachers to emphasize the importance of reading. We know that readers are leaders; so take the time to share your love of reading with your child(ren). Snuggle up and share a bedtime story.

## What is a Posada?

The word *posada* means “shelter” or “lodging.” *Posadas* are an Advent custom, which is very popular throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Every night from December 16 through December 24, families and neighbors celebrate Las Posadas. Las *Posadas* is a very special and symbolic celebration, which reenacts the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph endured and their search for lodging along the way. These nine days of celebration, represent the number of months of Mary’s pregnancy. These nightly rituals take place in different neighborhoods across Mexico. They always begin with a procession of pilgrims, often times costumed or carrying statues of Mary on a donkey and Joseph by her side. The neighborhood processions stop at predetermined homes along the route, where participants request posada through song— only to be refused at all stops except for the final site. Between each stop, the pilgrims sing carols, carry candles, and pray the rosary. When they are finally given *posada*, they celebrate by breaking more than one piñata, which is filled with sugar cane, sweets, oranges, peanuts and other goodies. Food normally consists of tamales and *atole*.

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## Parent Meeting: Sacramental Preparation Liturgy Update

As parents, you play a vital role in preparing your child to receive the grace given at each sacrament. The Diocese of Brownsville continues to encourage parent participation in the process. An orientation meeting will take place on Thursday, December 3rd at 5:30 p.m. in the church for all parents of students who will be receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion this year. This meeting will be informative and serve as a guide in your part in the process. These meetings are a requirement of the Diocese of Brownsville and are part of the preparation process for your child(ren).

This meeting is for parents and it is not necessary to bring your child, but they are welcomed. We encourage at least one family member attend the session. Please do not hesitate to call the school if you have any questions.

“ Parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children. They have a unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators or catechists. They catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives and by the love of their faith.”

*National Directory of Catechesis: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

Liturgy the week of December 7th will be celebrated on Tuesday, December 8th. ( There will be no Mass celebrated on Thursday, December 10th) . This is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and is a holy day of obligation. All are welcome to join us! Children may bring flowers to offer to the Virgin Mary this day.

Thank you! Thank you!

A big round of applause goes out to all of our parents who assisted with this year’s Thanksgiving Feast. We thank you for making this day so special for our students. We thank our Room Mothers who took the lead to plan, coordinate, decorate and add a pinch of love to the day! All you do is appreciated.

“ Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “ God is with us.”

*Matthew 1: 23*



## Calendar Events



- 12/2/09–12/16/09 - NEHS Toy Drive  
12/3/09—Parent Sacramental Meeting 5:30 p.m. Church  
12/4/09: Blue Jean Day / "Bring a Bear" Day  
12/7/09-12/11/09: Scholastic Book Fair  
12/8/09: Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass 8:30 a.m.  
12/11/09: Virgin De Guadalupe Prayer Service  
2 p.m. Church  
12/16/09: Christmas Program 6:30 Church  
Final instructions will be sent as soon as possible.  
12/18/09: School Posada/ Noon dismissal  
12/21/09—1/3/10: Christmas Break  
1/4/10: Teacher Workday/ No classes  
1/5/10: Classes Resume

## School Posada

Our Christmas Break will begin on December 18th at 12 noon. This day is a very special day for students as we come together before the holiday to spend time in prayer.

Our 6th grade Room Mothers are coordinating this year's school Posada for our students which will begin at 10 A.M. Our sixth grade students will lead us in song and prayer. All Room Mothers and available parents are welcome to attend and assist during these activities. Parents are asked to meet in the cafeteria before ten.

Special treats and games will be shared with our students this morning. We thank all those who have helped to put this great event together.



## Reminders

**Arrival and Dismissal:** We continue to monitor procedures to ensure the safety of all students. It is very important to remember that SPEED LIMITS are respected when entering the property. Many are entering racing in and losing sight of others. This continues to be dangerous. No one wants an accident. We ask that all parents follow procedures and once you enter the zone that all caution be taken. Please continue to follow all rules and procedures. Remember it is for your child's safety as well as the others. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Uniforms:** As we enter cooler weather it is important to remember the policies in reference to proper uniform. A few reminders : Students may wear the warm-up suit with the St. Luke logo and t-shirt. Warm-ups are not permissible for Mass on Thursdays. Girls in K3-6th grade are allowed to wear the navy blue pants or tights (red, navy or white) under their uniform. **Leggins** are not allowed. All students are asked to wear proper shoes to school.

Shoes must be worn with ankle socks (white or navy). Students are asked to wear dress shoes or athletic shoes for P.E. and recess. No boots or wheelies are allowed. Jackets may be worn to school. Once inside the school, students are asked to wear a red sweater, sweat top or hoodie during the school day. Finally, a complete uniform is always necessary such as belts and ties. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Communication:** A child's total education is built by a team. The team includes the student, parent and the school community. It is essential to keep a positive environment and communication with home and school. It is necessary to keep the lines open and to know that it is our intention to be open to the total needs of your child. Teachers and I are open to meet with you at any time. Feel free to visit the school as well. Please do not hesitate to ask questions and make suggestions. We are here to work together. Check out our web page and communicate with your child's teacher through School Notes.

## Gym Renovations

Good News! The Bishop has approved the renovations for the gym. At this time, bids are being collected by the architects and waiting approval from the Diocesan Building Committee. The project is a joint effort with the parish and the entire projected cost of the renovation and additions are over \$400,000.00. Current and future fundraisers will assist in completing the necessary funds for the project. The school and the parish have been able to save monies from previous year's fundraising efforts for this very project.

Blueprints of the plans are on display in the front foyer of the school. The construction is slated to begin in the upcoming months within this school year. With the project complete it will provide a more comfortable multipurpose building with extra meeting/event space, kitchen, and storage. The new plans will also provide a covered walk-way for families during cold and rainy weather.

This is exciting for all! We thank you for your patience and continued support.