

Mr. Huff

Miss Joy



Mr. S. Connican
Mrs. Wallace

Mrs. Brown

Merry Christmas to all our Families!

Mrs. S. Collins

Miss Dionne

Mrs. J. Fox
Mrs. Fox

Mrs. J. Almy

Mrs. Lee

Mrs. C. Mai

Mrs. G

Mrs. S

Cathy Kott

Mrs. Platt
Ms. Savage



Happy New Year to All!

From the Staff of Children of St. Martha

Mrs. Rodzinyak

Ms. Schmidt

Mrs. McIntosh

Miss. Boras

Miss Tracy

Mrs. Schmitt
Mrs. Wilson
Mr. Cornelia

Mrs. Smith
Mrs. Horgus

Mr. Snipek

Mrs. Chan


Mrs. Scott-Perry



December 2022



Joy to the World!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Nov.27th 1st Sunday  Advent	Nov. 28th Grade 5 starting the reverse Advent Calendar food drive. More info to come	Nov.29th Faith in action assembly 11:15 In the gym All are welcome to join us	Nov.30 9:30 am First week of Advent Liturgy all are welcome to join us	1 Parent/ Teacher interviews 4-8 pm Please sign up with Conference manager or the office	2 School Pd no school for students	3
4 2nd Sunday  Advent	5 Dental cleaning for Kindergarten to gr.2 10:15 am Second week of Advent	6	7 Christmas concert day & Evening performance 1:00: & 6:30 pm 	8 Science Sizzle after school for gr6 who signed up	9	10
11 3rd Sunday  Advent	12 11:15 am 3rd week of Advent liturgy	13	14 Turkey Dinner For staff and Students put on by school council 	15 9:00am Mass at St. Martha Parish	16	17
18 4th Sunday  Advent	19	20	21 12:30pm 4th week of Advent Division Board Meeting 6:00	22	23 Pajama  Day! Faith in Acton assembly 9:15 Bingo 10-11:10 Last day before Christmas holidays	24
25 Christmas Day 	26 Boxing Day Christmas holidays until January 9th	27 Christmas holidays until January 9th	28 Christmas holidays until January 9th	29 Christmas holidays until January 9th	30 Christmas holidays until January 9th	31 New Year's Eve 

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

PRINCIPAL MESSAGE:

As we prepare for the “coming” of Jesus, this Advent season,
We are mindful of the virtues of hope, faith, joy and peace.
The
circular shape of the wreath, without beginning or end,
symbolizes God’s complete and unending love for us. It
also
represents eternal life which becomes ours through faith
in Jesus Christ. Each of the four candles of the Advent
wreath signifies the coming of our Savior. During the first
two weeks of Advent, we light the first two purple
candles. The Third week of Advent we light the Rose
candle that is used to signify joy; and on the fourth week
of Advent, the final purple candle is lit to mark this week of
prayer and penance (<http://www.catholic.org>).



We, as Catholics, also celebrate December as the month dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The feast of the Immaculate Conception takes place on Thursday, December 8th, 2022. This feast invites us to meditate on the virtue of purity as it harmonizes perfectly with the significance of the Advent season. Throughout the Advent season, our students will be leading liturgical celebrations on a weekly basis. When we light the candles of our Advent wreaths, we trust that Jesus will bring new hope to our world.

May God bless you and yours during this Christmas season!

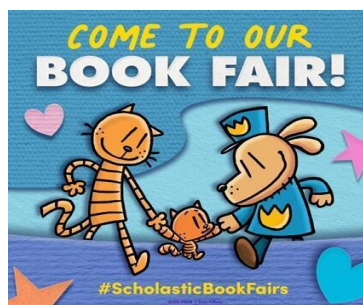
Mrs. Shannon Collier *Mii ss ta Ki an nis Ki a Kii*
CSM Principal





The Christmas Concert

We are very excited to announce that we're having a Christmas Concert this year! We're looking forward to welcoming friends and family to this special event on **Wednesday December 7th**. There will be an **afternoon** performance at **1 pm** and an **evening** performance at **6:30pm**. Further information regarding clothing and performance details will be coming home in a letter in mid-November. It's going to be great!



Book Fair

Monday, December 5, 10:00 am to 3:00

Tuesday, December 6, 9:00- 11:45 AM.

Cash, Credit and Debit Cards will be accepted.

If you wish, you may order online at;

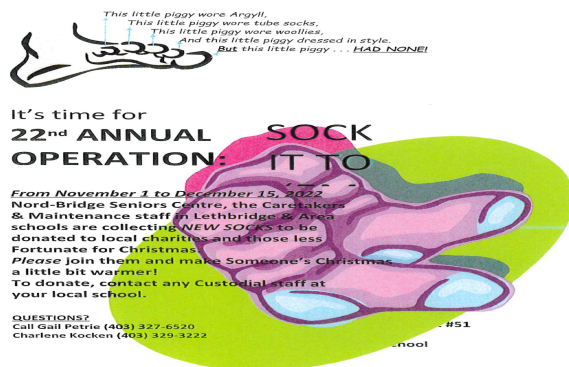
<https://virtualbookfairs.scholastic.ca/pages/5179695>

If you have any questions, please call me at the school 403 381-8110.

Esther Rodzinyak/ Library

If possible please bring a new pair of socks to help our support staff and maintenance staff on our annual drive. We also are collecting food for the food bank. As well we are collecting mittens, hats and scarves to decorate our Christmas tree at the front, and then it will be taken to the shelter.

Thank you for your generosity!

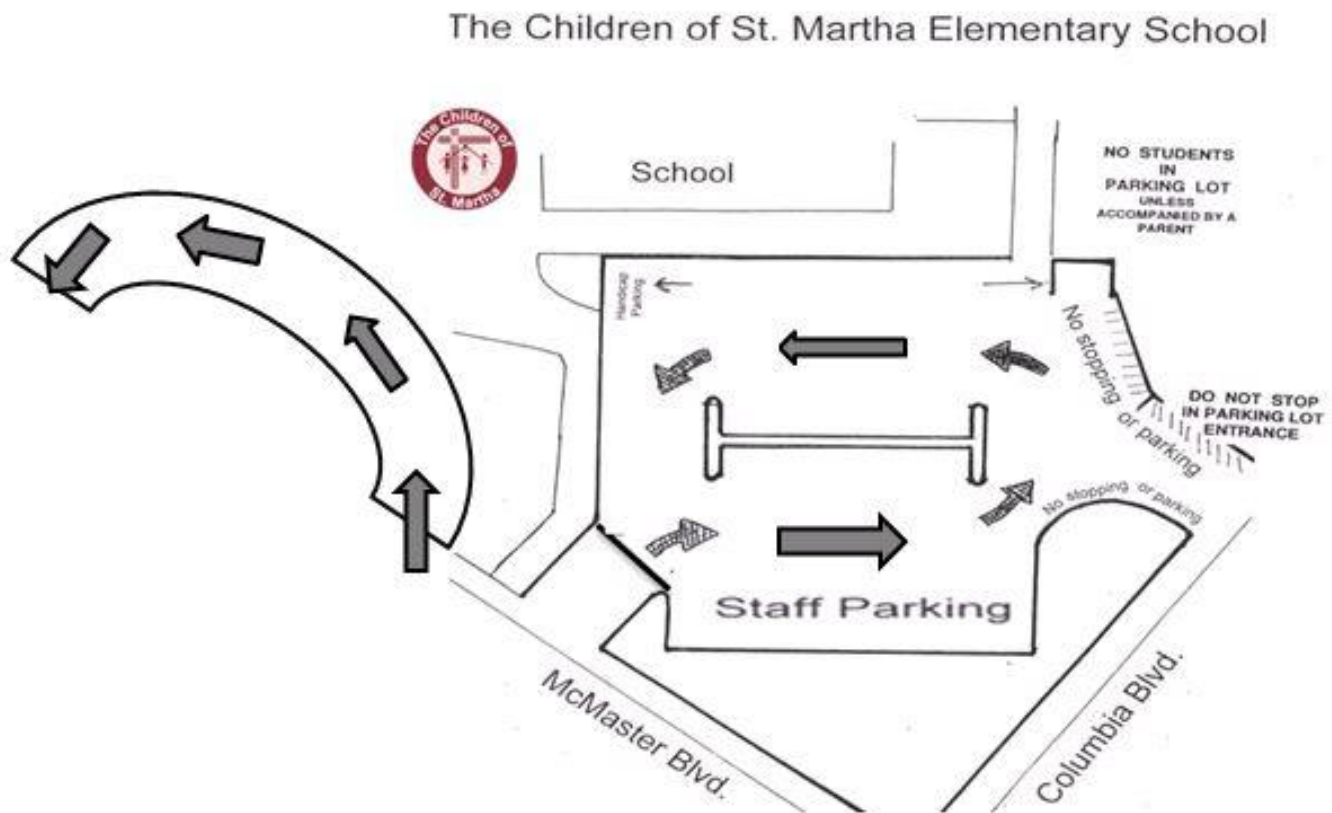


Parking Lot & Loop Procedures:

At the start and end of the school day, our parking lots as well as the loop become congested. We need your assistance to keep things going without incident. Please be mindful that “stopping” in the main parking lot has the potential to back up traffic and cause congestion. We ask that if you are choosing to use the parking lot that you park your vehicle instead of stopping to let your child(ren) out. The loop is a safer alternative for those that would like to stop for a shorter period of time while dropping or picking up children. You will notice that both our parking lot and loop are “one way”. It is important for everyone to follow the proper direction in both the parking lot and the loop. Also, we have a few stalls, closer to the school, which are designated as handicap parking. Permits are required to use those stalls.

St. Martha Parish has indicated that families are more than welcome to park in their lot (across the street) for school functions and during times of congestion.

We are truly grateful for your support while keeping our parking lot and loop a safe and friendly environment.



FAITH IN ACTION

November: Peace in naih tssi yi



December Staff

Christina Fox -Native Liason

My name is Christina Fox. My traditional Blackfoot name is litsisaanoowa which is translated to "Vision Beyond". I am a proud Grandmother, Great Grandmother and Elder from the Blood Tribe who teaches at Children of St. Martha School in Lethbridge, Alberta. I am honored to to be the author of "My Suitcase: Nii Sookayis". It is my story of my beautiful grandparents, my Blackfoot values and my beloved suitcase that was taken at residential school. My grandparents taught me so many important lessons when I was a girl. They taught me **miinoomattskoohsit** (don't give up) and **aksimoyihkan** (pray) which are two values that brought me to where I am with you today.

I believe that there is a "who" and a "what" within all of us. The "what" is in our heads and the "who" is in our hearts. Let me tell you about who I am...

I am a self- taught singer, writer and musician whose heart and spirit are fueled by music. I believe that every person is a gift to this world and that every day is a gift of life. I am a teacher and a leader in my community who believes in sharing her gifts and talents with the world. I listen to my heart and I am passionate about keeping our circle strong and never leaving anyone out. I believe in courage, being kind to ourselves and one another and that our beautiful, traditional values will bless us all.



Esther Rodzinyak- Librarian

I am the Librarian at Children of St Martha School until the last day of school in December.

I have been very Blessed these last 36 years, to be able to work with incredible students and Staff members at Holy Spirit Catholic Schools.

It will give me more time to spend with my husband, two children and 5 grandchildren. I like to find fossils, crochet, stained glass, lawn bowl and aqua -size at the YMCA.

Hope you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy, healthy 2023.



Vilma Chan-custodian

I am very happy and blessed to work at Children of St. Martha's School.

It is a pleasure to see the smiling faces of our students and staff every morning.

I am married and have one daughter living in Edmonton.

I was born in the Philippines and it is always a pleasure to go back to visit with my family and friends. I hope to stay at this school for many years yet to come.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Sandra Cormican-Teacher

Hello! My name is Sandra Cormican and this is my 7 th year teaching Kindergarten here

at the Children of St. Martha School. My husband and my two children, Neala(16) and Seamus (12), moved back to Lethbridge 10 years ago. As a family we enjoy spending time outside and playing board/card games. I also like to read, bake, and craft.



Merry Christmas to all!





**All Saints Parish Registration for
First Reconciliation and First Eucharist Boot Camp
Grade 2 and up**

**Did you miss out on registration in the Fall for Sacraments?
No problem we will be running a Boot Camp for
First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.**

**The First Reconciliation Boot Camp will run:
Sunday, 29 January from 12:00 pm till 3:00 pm
at Assumption Church Hall.
Snacks will be provided.**

**The First Eucharist Boot Camp will run:
Saturday, 4 February from 9:00 am till 12:00 pm
at Assumption Church Hall.
Snacks will be provided.**

**Registration forms available on line at:
www.allsaintslethbridge.org
There is no cost for this class and for more information
please email Cyndi at educationallsaints@shaw.ca**



December

Arise! Pilgrims of Hope



“...to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
who is the Messiah, the Lord..”

Luke 2:11

St. Juan Diego 1474-1548 (Feast Day: December 9)

A beautiful picture of Mary can be seen on a cloak above the main altar in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. The cloak belonged to Juan Diego, an Aztec who lived more than 450 years ago. On December 9, 1531, when Juan was a 57-year-old widower, he was walking to Mass. A beautiful lady appeared. She told him she was the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and that she desired to have a shrine there at Tepeyac Hill. Mary asked Juan to tell the bishop of her desire.

The bishop didn't believe him, so Juan returned to the lady and suggested she send a better speaker. Mary told Juan that she chose him for this work and that she would bless him for helping her. Juan revisited the bishop. This time the bishop told him to ask his lady for a sign that she was the Mother of God. Mary then sent Juan to the top of the hill to gather the flowers growing there. Juan knew that nothing grew on that rocky hill, let alone in winter. However, Juan found gorgeous roses! He picked them and brought them to Mary, who arranged them in his cloak and told Juan to take them to the bishop. When the bishop saw Juan, he asked what he had in his tilma. Juan opened it, letting the roses fall. Imagine the bishop's surprise at seeing roses in winter! Yet he saw an even greater miracle: on Juan's cloak a beautiful, life-size image began to appear. Juan Diego remained poor, simple, humble, and devoted to the Eucharist. He spent the next 17 years traveling throughout central Mexico, bringing others to the faith and delivering Guadalupe's message that Mary loves us and wants to help us. Juan Diego was beatified in 1990 and canonized in 2002.

Holy Moments In Our Schools

St. Patrick Fine Arts Arise Wall! Staff and students chose a word to describe a gift or talent God has given them that helps them serve the world in positive ways, and contributes to the Body of Christ.



Advent

Beginning the Church's liturgical year, Advent (from, "ad-venire" in Latin or "to come to") is the season encompassing the four Sundays (and weekdays) leading up to the celebration of Christmas.

The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ's second coming at the end of time and to the anniversary of Our Lord's birth on Christmas. From the earliest days of the Church, people have been fascinated by Jesus' promise to come back. But the scripture readings during Advent tell us not to waste our time with predictions. Advent is not about speculation. Our Advent readings call us to be alert and ready, not weighted down and distracted by the cares of this world (Lk 21:34-36).

We see many seasonal devotions during Advent, including the Advent wreath and nativity scenes. This year, Holy Spirit is also releasing a weekly Advent video for your use.

Additional Resource:
[The Symbol of the Advent Wreath](#)



A beautiful picture of Mary can be seen on a cloak above the main altar in the [Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe](#) in Mexico City. The cloak belonged to Juan Diego, an Aztec who lived more than 450 years ago.

The Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness

One song that you may hear during the Advent and Christmas season is 'O Come, All Ye Faithful', which is usually the final hymn sung at Midnight Mass at the Vatican. In the original Latin version of the text, the title is *Adeste Fideles*. Our word faithful derives from the Latin word *Fidei*, which also gives us the word fidelity. We might think here of reliability, obedience, loyalty, truthfulness, or constancy. As Catholics, we know of God's faithfulness towards us, his people, and how his promises to us come true (especially shown in this Advent season). We are called to be loyal and trusting in God, and when we do that, even in little ways, our faithfulness is increased by the Holy Spirit.

Paul, in Hebrews, says that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Heb 11:1). The church has described this gift of faith, brought by Jesus, as the Light of Faith (*Lumen Fidei*). This was also the name of a Papal encyclical given by Pope Francis in 2013, in which he said:

In God's gift of faith, a supernatural infused virtue, we realize that a great love has been offered us, a good word has been spoken to us, and that when we welcome that word, Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, the Holy Spirit transforms us, lights up our way to the future and enables us joyfully to advance along that way on wings of hope.

As we near the manger at Christmas, may we see in the newborn Jesus the great love of God, and in our faithfulness may the Holy Spirit continue to transform our lives.



"Let not your heart be disturbed... Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything." - Our Lady of Guadalupe

Reflecting on the life of St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin...

Our Lady of Guadalupe

One of the most well known titles of Mary is Our Lady of Guadalupe, as she revealed herself to St. Juan Diego in 1531. His tilma is now housed in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, one of the most visited Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. The image, famous around the world in both Catholic and secular culture, shows a pregnant Mary, clothed in a star-covered mantle, eclipsing the sun and standing atop the moon, with a cherub carrying her train. There have been many studies on the tilma, including [detailed study of the locations of the stars and Our Lady's eyes](#), which reveal fascinating details. Our Lady of Guadalupe Patroness of Mexico and the continental Americas, as well as the namesake of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle, the group engaged in [renewing and fostering relationships between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#).

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!



St. Juan Diego Showed "Faithfulness"

"I am a nobody. I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, leaf..." St. Juan Diego

With these words to Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Juan Diego reveals to us his feeling of unworthiness after the bishop didn't believe him. Mary, of course, believes in him, and helps him to try again. Being told by the bishop to provide a sign, St. Juan Diego again returns to Mary and follows her instructions, in spite of the reasons not to. In each step, [St. Juan Diego](#) shows himself to be reliable, obedient, and trusting; the core of faithfulness. In each step, his faithfulness grows, and is rewarded in the end with the [miraculous tilma](#). His faithfulness becomes a model for not only the bishop, but all of the peoples of the Americas. When we find ourselves feeling small or tiny, or a nobody, we can recall the example of St. Juan Diego, whose faithfulness was multiplied exponentially and bore much fruit.

St. Juan Diego, pray for us!

Adapted from Franciscanmedia.org. [A Look at St. Juan Diego](#)

Gospel Readings

December 4, 2022 2nd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:1-12

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." — Matthew 3:3

John the Baptist cried out in the desert for repentance, for people to turn away from sin. He knew that true repentance would "make straight" the path for Jesus, who was coming to lead people back to God. By repenting, we make the mission of Jesus so much easier! He can reveal the truth to us, and lead us to live and act like he did when he was on earth - welcoming everyone, even those that others didn't like or approve of, teaching how to share so that everyone has enough, giving people a chance to start over when they admitted their mistakes and sins, and more. This Advent is an opportunity to admit our sins, go to confession, and "make straight" the path we are walking with Jesus so we can better live how he taught.

Father in heaven, thank you for giving us your Son to lead us in our journey toward eternal life. Help us enter into a spirit of humility and repentance this Advent!

Are there other things we can do to make it easier for Jesus to show us the truth? What gets in the way of our spiritual journey?

December 18, 2022 4th Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:18-24

"And they shall name him 'Emmanuel', which means 'God is with us.'" — Matthew 1:23

Do you know why your parents picked the name they did for you? Often parents pick a name because the name comes from an older relative, or from an important person they admire, or maybe because your parents really loved the sound of the name. Jesus got his name because the angel told Joseph what to name him. God chose the name "Jesus" which means "God Saves" for his son. The prophets knew also that Jesus would be called Emmanuel, or "God is with us." That was not going to be his given name, but it was going to be who he was! God came to us in the flesh, as a baby, and truly was "with us" then, and now is still truly with us. He will never leave us or abandon us!

Dear Father, thank you for giving us your Son, in the flesh. Thank you, Jesus, for giving us yourself in the Eucharist. You are truly "with us" now and forever!

Does it ever feel like Jesus is not with you? When that happens, think of Jesus like the sun. The sun is always there, even when we can't see its light at night or when it is hidden behind the clouds. Jesus is always still with you, even if you can't feel him.

December 11, 2022 3rd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared." — Isaiah 35:5

Jesus came to bring healing to the world. He began his ministry with many miracles, showing the power of God to heal physical problems, such as blindness and deafness. But "healing the world" did not mean that he was going to heal everyone's physical problems. He came to heal us from sin, anything that hurts our relationship with others, ourselves, and God. Sin can destroy the life of God that lives in our hearts, and for this reason it must be cured - over and over again! Rejoice today, for God sent his Son to bring life and healing to the world, to model how we can be and act in the world, and to cure our sin with his great love! Let us prepare to celebrate his birth with great excitement!

Dear Lord, thank you for sending us your Son to bring true healing, the kind that brings true life. Prepare us to celebrate the great gift of his incarnation at Christmas.

What are some ways we can rejoice this week, and show our thanks to God for healing us from sin?

Gospel Readings

December 25, 2022 The Nativity of the Lord

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-18

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news..." — Isaiah 52:7

What great joy this day brings to our hearts! We are surrounded by loved ones. We are sharing feasts and receiving presents. But are we seeking the newborn king as the shepherds did? Are we proclaiming the Savior's birth as the angels did? Isaiah reminds us today to bring the good news of Christ's birth to all we meet. We can do this through our actions, words, and even our thoughts. By doing this, we share the peace that is in our own hearts, and that can be one of the greatest gifts we give this year.



Father in heaven, thank you for the greatest gift that was ever given by anyone, your son Jesus. We sing his praises along with the angels this day, saying Glory to the newborn King!



Download this month's [Saint Prayer Card](#) - St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin



Sources:

[Saint Juan Diego. 1474-1548](#)

[What Is Advent?](#)

[The Fruit Of The Holy Spirit: What Is Faithfulness?](#)



Arise!

[Pilgrims of Hope Journal](#)

WEEK ONE

The second week of Advent is focused on Peace - what has brought you peace this week?



In God's gift of faith, a supernatural infused virtue, we realize that a great love has been offered us, a good word has been spoken to us, and that when we welcome that word, Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, the Holy Spirit transforms us, lights up our way to the future and enables us joyfully to advance along that way on wings of hope. - Lumen Fidei

[Home Page](#)

December

WEEK TWO

The third week of Advent is focused on Joy - what little moment has brought you joy this week?



WEEK THREE

The fourth week of Advent is focused on Love - when was a time this week that you felt God's love?



WEEK FOUR

Read Luke 2: 1-20 today. How can you be like the shepherds who spread the news of Jesus' birth?



A Prayer to St. Juan Diego

Beloved Juan Diego,
show us the way that leads to the Virgin,
that she may receive us in the depths of her heart,
for she is the loving,
compassionate Mother who guides us to the true God.
Amen.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mystical Rose,
make intercession for the Holy Church,
protect the Sovereign Pontiff,

help all those who invoke thee in their necessities,
and since thou art the ever Virgin Mary,
and Mother of the True God,
obtain for us from thy most holy Son
the grace of keeping our faith,
of sweet hope in the midst of the bitterness of life,
of burning charity, and the precious gift of final perseverance.

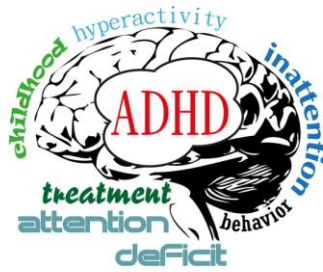
St. Juan Diego, pray for us.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us. Amen.

Division Parishes

“...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25

 <p>Assumption Church Lethbridge</p> <p>Father Kevin Tumback Father Derek Remus</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 5:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am (Live-streamed) 6:00 pm</p> <p>2405-12th Avenue S. Lethbridge, AB T1K 0P4 Tel: 403-327-8931</p>	 <p>St. Basil's Church Lethbridge</p> <p>Father Kevin Tumback Father Derek Remus</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 7:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 7:30 am 11:00 am</p> <p>604 13 Street N. Lethbridge, AB T1H 2S7 Tel: 403-327-8931</p>	 <p>St. Martha's Parish Lethbridge</p> <p>Father William Monis</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 5:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am 11:00 am</p> <p>355 Columbia Blvd. W. Lethbridge, AB T1K 5Y8 Tel: 403-381-8891</p>
 <p>Ss. Peter & Paul Parish Lethbridge</p> <p>Father Gary Sedgwick</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 8:30 am Mass (Sunday): 10:00 am</p> <p>643 12B Street N. Lethbridge, AB T1H 2L6 Tel: 403-328-4753</p>	 <p>St. Ambrose Parish Coaldale</p> <p>Father Ian Gagne</p> <p>Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am 4:00 pm</p> <p>1523-23rd Avenue Coaldale, AB T1M 1E2 Tel: 403-345-3400</p>	 <p>St. Catherine Parish Picture Butte</p> <p>Father Ian Gagne</p> <p>Mass (Sunday): 11:00 am</p> <p>762 Crescent Avenue Picture Butte, AB T0K 1V0 Tel: 403-732-4433</p>
 <p>St. Augustine Parish Taber</p> <p>Father Philip Van Tinh Le</p> <p>Mass (Saturday): 5:00 pm Mass (Sunday): 9:00 am</p> <p>5009-48th Avenue Taber, AB T1G 1T4 Tel: 403-223-2226</p>	 <p>St. Michael's Parish Bow Island</p> <p>Father Wojciech Jarzecki</p> <p>Mass: 9:00 am</p> <p>1101-1st Street E. Blow Island, AB T0K 0G0 Tel: 403-545-2023</p>	 <p>St. Michael's Parish Pincher Creek</p> <p>Father Myles Gaffney</p> <p>Mass: 10:00 am</p> <p>958 Christie Avenue; Box 339 Pincher Creek, AB T0K 1W0 Tel: 403-627-3071</p>



ADHD Parent Sessions

This is a program designed for caregivers of children who have been newly diagnosed or suspected of ADHD that want to learn more about ADHD. This is a 4 consecutive week closed group.

Being hosted by: AHS Children's Mental Health and Addiction

Sessions will include: What is ADHD? ADHD and medication. How to talk to children about their ADHD and understanding self-regulation. Tools for effective parenting of children with ADHD. ADHD and navigating the school system. ADHD and nutrition, sleep and exercise.

Location: Children of St. Martha's School (library)

Dates: Tuesdays, January 17th – Feb 7th

Time: 6-7:30pm

Childcare provided if needed.

If you are interested in attending please contact:

Kristine Savage

Family First Facilitator

403-894-2643



THE SOUTHERN ALBERTA SKATING ACADEMY

with support from  CITY OF Lethbridge

PRESENTS

Wishes

6pm ENMAX

FRIDAY DECEMBER 23rd

\$12

LOWER BOWL

\$17

ON ICE

\$40

4-PACK

Tickets available through the ENMAX Centre

Community Education Service



Improving emotional health and well being

Caregiver Self-Care and Co-Regulating with Your Child

**Tashia Christie, BA Psychology & Kelvin Ganpatt, BA Psychology,
Rocky View School Division & MHCB Stepping Stones to Mental Health**

The importance of self-care for caregivers, burnout, compassion fatigue, and helping children to practice self-care and regulate emotions.

**December 13, 2022
6:30-8:30pm**

**Click here to
register**

**FREE
online event**

This session is presented by the Community Education Service of the Mental Health Collaborative, Child & Adolescent Addiction & Mental Health and Psychiatry Program (CAAMHPP) of Alberta Health Services & **Rocky View School Division & MHCB Stepping Stones to Mental Health.**

CES@ahs.ca <http://community.hmhc.ca/> 403 955-4730



Set the foundation with physical literacy

Literacy skills help a child to use words to express their thoughts and feelings. It also helps them connect to other people and understand the world outside of them. Like reading and writing, physical literacy gives children the skills to learn, participate in, and enjoy physical activity.

If that's literacy, then what's physical literacy?

Physical literacy is moving with confidence and control in a variety of physical activities and settings. Children can learn movement skills through both unstructured free play and structured games or activities. Exploring and learning movement skills support brain

development, social skills, and builds self-esteem and confidence. Developing physical literacy in the early years helps children be physically active for life.

Why is physical literacy important?

Learning basic movement skills such as running, jumping, kicking, throwing and catching are the building blocks for physical activity.

Developing physical literacy gives your child the skills, confidence and motivation to try new things while also helping them build up physical activity minutes as part of their day.

Healthy Children

December 2022 Family Newsletter

Why is physical activity important?

In Canada, the [24-hour movement guidelines](#) recommend children get 60 minutes of heart pumping physical activity each day. These guidelines are based on research that outline the amount of physical activity that can improve and protect both a person's physical and mental health.

How can I help my child grow their physical literacy skills?

Build the foundation

Starting with basic skills like running, jumping and balancing is like learning the alphabet. Just as knowing the letters of the alphabet is needed to start to learn words, knowing some basic physical skills can lead to learning more advanced skills.

You can practice fundamental movement skills on the go! Moving with your child helps them understand that anyone can play and have fun at any age.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Skip with your child to the mailbox to check the mail
- Balance on one foot while brushing your teeth together
- Play catch with stuffed animals in the house or in the backyard
- Have a family dance party in the kitchen and try dancing up high and down low to the floor for an extra challenge!

For more ideas on how to practice fundamental movement skills at home, go to:

[Active for life: Activities for kids.](#)

Try different places and spaces

Developing physical literacy can include learning how to move in a variety of environments. This can include:

- *on the ground*: playing games, dancing, wheeling
- *in the air*: diving, gymnastics, swinging
- *on the snow and ice*: sledding, skiing, sled hockey
- *in and around water*: swimming, kayaking, canoeing

Moving in a variety of spaces and on different surfaces helps kids be more physically active, it also helps them develop basic life skills. For example, learning how to move on snow and ice is an important safety skill here in Canada, and can help prevent falls and injuries during the winter.

Spending time outdoors, all year-round, is an excellent way for children to develop physical literacy. Spending time in natural places can also support their mental health and overall well-being.

Dressing for the weather is important to children having a positive experience outside. If they feel comfortable—not too hot or too cold—they are more likely to want to do it again!

For tips on dressing for the weather, see [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca):

- [Clothing safety for children](#)
- [Wear proper clothing to prevent cold injury](#)

For ideas on how to stay active outdoors as a family year-round check out [Active for life: Recipe for an active year.](#)

Variety is the key to success

It can be tempting to focus in on your child's favourite activity, but variety is also important. Children who try a range of movements in different environments will become more physically literate. This opens the door for them to participate in a wide variety of activities throughout their lifetime. Specializing in one sport or activity too early can limit their potential and affect their long-term development. If your child wants to become better in one sport or activity, have them choose another sport or activity in the off season. Taking this approach also helps to prevent injuries, which is important so they can continue to play and be active.

Keep it Fun

If you are wondering what the best activities are for your child—ask them! The most important factor is FUN. When an activity is fun and helps build social connections, children are more likely to keep participating. Let them lead and join in where you can—for the fun of it!

For more information about physical activity and physical literacy:

- [Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines for children and youth \(5-17 years\)](#)
- [Quick tips: Getting active as a family](#)
- [Raising kids who love to move](#)
- [Developing physical literacy: A guide for parents of children ages 0 to 12](#)

For helping children with special needs develop physical literacy, see this article from Active for Life: [Special-needs children: 5 ways to help their physical literacy flourish](#)