

# Newsletter

## February 2026

### Administrators' Message

As we move into February, we are reminded that this season invites us to pause and reflect on love, compassion, and the ways we care for one another as a community of faith. While Valentine's Day is often associated with cards and treats, its deeper roots point us toward a powerful witness of courageous, selfless love.

St. Valentine, a priest in 3rd-century Rome, lived his faith boldly during a time of persecution. By supporting young couples through marriage and sharing the message of Christ—even while imprisoned—he demonstrated a love grounded not in convenience, but in conviction. His life reminds us that love, when rooted in faith, calls us to act with courage, generosity, and care for others.

At our school, this message resonates deeply. Guided by the teachings of Jesus, we strive each day to create a community where kindness, respect, and inclusion are not just ideals, but lived experiences. On Friday, February 13, students will mark Valentine's Day in age-appropriate ways that celebrate friendship, gratitude, and the joy of belonging.

February is also a time of looking ahead. As we begin planning for the 2026–2027 school year, we are pleased to welcome new registrations and new families to our community. Our Kindergarten Open House will take place on Wednesday, February 4, at 6:30 PM, and we encourage you to share this information with friends, neighbours, or family members who may be considering our school.

Thank you for your continued partnership, trust, and support. Together, we continue to nurture a school where faith, learning, and love grow side by side.

Blessings,



Jennifer Dimas  
Principal



Beth Pecson  
Assistant Principal



Sonia Schultz  
Assistant Principal



## Shrove Tuesday ~ Preparing our Hearts for Lent

### Tuesday, February 17

As we prepare to enter the season of Lent, students will be learning about the significance of Shrove Tuesday, a day traditionally marked by simplicity, reflection, and preparation of heart and spirit. Historically, simple baked foods were shared on this day as a way of using ingredients before the more prayerful and restrained season of Lent began.

To support this learning, students will be offered a small portion of a plain baked good, which serves as a tangible connection to this long-standing Christian tradition. This food is considered a “serve sometimes” item and will be offered in moderation, alongside a focus on gratitude, sharing, and reflection.

The emphasis of the day remains on faith formation and understanding the meaning of this important liturgical moment, helping students connect food, tradition, and spiritual practice in a thoughtful and age-appropriate way.

As we approach the beginning of Lent, students will be learning about the significance of Shrove Tuesday as a time of reflection, forgiveness, and preparation of heart and spirit. In the Catholic tradition, this day invites us to pause, examine our choices, and ready ourselves for the more prayerful and disciplined season of Lent.

Classroom lessons will centre on the meaning of Shrove Tuesday and how it helps us prepare to walk more closely with Jesus through prayer, generosity, and self-control. As part of this learning, students will be offered a small portion of a simple baked good, symbolizing the traditional sharing of food before the season of Lent begins. This item is considered a “serve sometimes” food and will be offered in moderation, with the focus remaining on faith, gratitude, and understanding tradition.

We extend a sincere thank you to our School Council for their generous support in providing the baked good for our students. Their continued partnership helps enrich faith-based learning experiences and strengthens our sense of community.

## Ash Wednesday Liturgy ~ Wednesday, February 18

Our school will celebrate Ash Wednesday on Wednesday, February 18, with a liturgy beginning at 1:15 pm in the gymnasium. Families are warmly invited to attend. Doors will open at 1:05 pm.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a special season in the Catholic Church dedicated to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as we prepare for Easter. During this time, Catholics are called to reflect on their relationship with God and others. The day also introduces the practice of fasting and abstinence, helping us grow in self-discipline and spiritual awareness.

We look forward to coming together as a school community to begin this sacred season.

## January 27 Summary Reports ~ Grades 1 through 6

The **January Summary Report** for students in Grades 1 through 6 are now available in **PowerSchool**. You can access the report by logging into your PowerSchool parent portal. Once logged in, click the **Report Card** icon in the left-hand menu, select **Current Year Report Card**, and then click **Launch Report Card**.

To help families understand the summary report and how to access it, the division has created a webpage with step-by-step instructions and additional supports. Please visit the [January Summary Report](#) webpage to learn more. While parents and guardians can access real-time assessment information in PowerSchool at any time, the summary report provides an overview of your child's progress and learning this year. It highlights achievement levels in relation to the learning outcomes and includes feedback on learner skills, along with comments from your child's homeroom teacher.

For your reference, please refer to the division's [Parent Guide to Assessment and Reporting, Kindergarten-Grade 6](#).

On the right are the levels of achievement used to report on outcomes in the summary report:

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's homeroom teacher or the school office.

LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT (GR 1 - 12)	CRITERIA THE STUDENT...
<b>STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE (SE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates an <b>in-depth</b> and/or <b>insightful</b> understanding of the learning outcomes from the program of studies</li> <li>Applies concepts in learning situations <b>deliberately</b> and/or <b>independently</b>; the student <b>reliably</b> transfers understanding to new contexts</li> <li>Demonstrates <b>precision</b> and/or <b>creativity</b> in applying skills and strategies between concepts to approach new learning situations</li> </ul>
<b>PROFICIENT STANDARD (PF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates a <b>comprehensive</b> and/or <b>thoughtful</b> understanding of the learning outcomes from the program of studies</li> <li>Applies concepts in learning situations <b>intentionally</b> and/or <b>logically</b> and can <b>routinely</b> transfer understanding to new contexts</li> <li>Demonstrates <b>flexibility</b> and/or <b>purpose</b> in applying skills and strategies to approach new learning situations</li> </ul>
<b>ACCEPTABLE STANDARD (AS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates a <b>rudimentary</b> and/or <b>satisfactory</b> understanding of the learning outcomes from the program of studies</li> <li>Applies concepts in learning situations with <b>scaffolded guidance and support</b>; the student is <b>inconsistent</b> in transferring understanding to new contexts</li> <li>Demonstrates <b>functional</b> and/or <b>straightforward</b> skills and strategies to approach new learning situations; application of skills and strategies may be <b>inconsistent</b> and/or <b>predictable</b></li> </ul>
<b>BEGINNING STANDARD (BE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates a <b>simpistic</b> and/or <b>minimal</b> understanding of the learning outcomes from the program of studies</li> <li>Applies concepts in learning situations with <b>repeated guidance and support</b>; the student is <b>not yet able to transfer understanding</b> to new contexts</li> <li><b>Lacks skills and strategies</b> to approach new learning situations; demonstrates <b>uncertainty</b> and/or <b>difficulty</b> in acquiring skills and strategies</li> </ul>

## Message from the Office of the Chief Superintendent

Superintendent Lynnette Anderson shares monthly messages with families, offering updates, insights, and encouragement about our school division. You can read her latest message [here](#).

## No Classes for Students on February 12, 16, 25, 26 and 27

Please make note in your calendars of the following dates when there will be no classes for students.

- **February 12 – PD Day**
- **February 16 – Family Day**
- **February 25 – Staff Faith Development Day**
- **February 26 – Teachers' Convention**
- **February 27 – Teachers' Convention**

## Pre-enrolment for the 2026-2027 School Year

Planning is already underway for the 2026-2027 school year, and we need your help! Sign into your PowerSchool account and click on "Pre-Enrolment for Next Year" to let us know if you will be returning to our school or where you will be attending as you move to junior high (Grade 6 students). The pre-enrolment process lets us know how many students to expect in September 2026 and helps us plan for staffing, class sizes, and programming. You can find more information about pre-enrolment on our website. If you are having trouble completing the form, please contact us at the school. To learn more, visit [ecsd.net/pre-enrolment](http://ecsd.net/pre-enrolment).

## Valentine's Day Festivities on February 13

As Valentine's Day approaches, we want to share some guidelines to ensure that all students can participate in the celebrations in an inclusive and healthy way.

If your child plans to exchange Valentine's cards with token gifts for their classmates, we encourage families to consider non-food items, such as stickers or pencils. While homeroom teachers cannot monitor these exchanges, choosing non-food items helps accommodate allergies, dietary restrictions, and our commitment to inclusivity through APPLE Ally School initiatives.

Additionally, for homerooms planning Valentine's Day festivities that include food, teachers will be in touch with families to coordinate contributions. We kindly encourage bringing items that align with our school nutrition policy and the Division's nutrition regulations (attached), focusing on "Choose Most Often" or "Choose Sometimes" foods to share with the class.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

## Valentine's Day Dance ~ Hosted by School Council

School Council is once again hosting a school dance for students during the day on Friday, February 13, when our students and staff will celebrate Valentine's Day. The dance schedule will be staggered since we cannot have all of our students in the gym at the same time and to ensure that morning and afternoon Kindergarten students can also participate. The dance schedule on Valentine's Day is as follows:

- 11:15 am - 12:00 pm: Kindergarten AM/Grades 1-3 in the gym for the dance  
Grades 1-3 will then follow the regular lunch hour schedule.
- 12:15 - 1:00 pm: Kindergarten PM/Grades 4-6 in the gym for the dance  
Grades 4-6 students will eat lunch in their classrooms from 11:55 am - 12:15 pm and then homeroom teachers will lead students to the gymnasium at 12:15 pm.

## School Council/Parent Advisory Association

Parents are always welcome to join us for our School Council meetings. Our most recent meeting was held on **Wednesday, January 14**. We invite you to attend our next meeting which will be held on **Wednesday, February 11 at 6:30 pm**. School Council meeting minutes can be found on our school website.

## Community of School Councils: What We Heard

In November, families and administrators from 89 ECSD school communities, including ours, gathered for this school year's Community of School Councils engagement. Families shared what matters most in four areas that will guide the next Division Plan for Continuous Growth. They told us that belonging and visible faith are important, that they value consistent, engaging teaching practices across classrooms and schools, that access to mental health supports matters, and that classrooms need strong supports for diverse learning needs. Their feedback has been shared with the Board of Trustees and will help shape the 2026-2029 Division Plan. Read the [summary report](#) on our website.

## Junior High Open Houses

Bishop David Motiuk – February 12 @ 6:30 pm

HE Beriault – February 19 @ 6:30 pm



St. Rose – February 5 @ 6:30 pm

St. Thomas More – Took place on January 29 @ 6:30 pm

## Grades 2–6 Intramurals Are Underway!

We are excited to share that our Grades 2–3 and Grades 4–6 intramural programs both began in January and will continue daily until March.

These programs provide a wonderful opportunity for students to stay active, build teamwork skills, and enjoy positive connections with peers during the school day. We strongly encourage all students to participate and take advantage of this fun and engaging extracurricular experience.

A heartfelt thank you to Mrs. Huang, Ms. Alucema, Mrs. Schultz, Mrs. Platero, and our Grade 6 leadership students for generously giving their time and energy to organize and run these programs. Their enthusiasm and commitment make experiences like this possible for all of our students!

## Checkmate! Join the Chess & Checkers Club

Grade 4 and Grade 5 students are invited to join our Chess and Checkers Club during lunch recess throughout February and March. It's a drop-in club, so there's no need to sign up in advance — students just need to come and be ready to play!

Students of all skill levels are welcome to practice, play, and learn new strategies while enjoying friendly competition with classmates.

The club is supervised by Mr. Griebel and Mrs. McCoy, who are generously volunteering their time to help students sharpen their thinking and enjoy a fun, engaging recess activity.

## February is Black History Month!

Black History Month is about remembering and honouring the contributions Black people have made in the past and continue to make in various industry sectors and regions across Canada. It is about embracing innovation, resilience, and togetherness towards a united country in which everyone has a chance to prosper. In December 1995, the House of Commons officially recognized **February** as Black History Month in Canada following a unanimous motion in the House of Commons.



## Random Acts of Kindness Week: February 14-20

**Why Kindness? (taken from <https://randomactsofkindness.org/>)**

We all struggle. We all stress. But, thankfully, we also all love (awww). In fact, we can't help but love! It's part of the human condition. You can't have 'humankind' without 'kind', after all.

The problem is that, when we get wrapped up in our own problems, we forget to take care of others – because our brains go into self-preservation mode. Taking care of yourself is super important: you can't take care of others without also taking care of yourself. We just need to remember to look beyond ourselves and see the need in others as well as ourselves. It can sometimes be hard, but it's immediately, demonstrably worthwhile... because it only takes one kind act to powerfully affect us. You know the sort of acts we're talking about. It's the person enthusiastically praising their co-worker's hard work, or the waiter covering a bill for struggling parents, or the window cleaner dressing up as a superhero at the children's hospital.

These are the little moments that have a big impact – and stay with you. That connect you back to your humanity, remind you how much love there is in the world, and feel so good that they inspire you to spread kindness yourself.

We know how important kindness is because we've all felt how important it is. But that's not the only reason we know. Scientific studies have shown that random acts of kindness are good for you! They improve your life satisfaction by increasing your sense of belonging and self-worth, and they improve your health by decreasing your anxiety, depression and blood pressure. And here's the best part: these benefits apply to the giver of kindness, the recipient of kindness, and anyone who witnesses the act! Every act improves the lives of at least three people.

So, why kindness? Scientifically? Because it's good for your health. Economically? Because it's free. Practically? Because it's easy. Socially? Because it improves the world.

But the real reason, of course... is that kindness is the key to lasting happiness. We believe kindness creates conditions which lead to a caring environment for students, teachers and community members. Everyone benefits when individuals, schools, and communities embrace kindness. For more information and resources regarding Random Acts of Kindness and how you can support the event at home, please check out the following website:

<https://randomactsofkindness.org/>

**Random Acts of Kindness Day is on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.**

## Pink Shirt (Anti-Bullying) Day ~ Tuesday, February 24

**PINKSHIRTDAY.CA**

Since there is no school on Alberta's official Pink Shirt Day, Wednesday, February 25, **Good Shepherd will be commemorating the event on Tuesday, February 24, 2026.** On this day, we encourage everyone to show their support by practicing kindness and wearing a pink shirt (or anything pink) to stand against bullying.

Pink Shirt Day originated in Nova Scotia, where two remarkable high school students took a stand against bullying, creating a powerful movement that continues to inspire us all. Here is a snippet of the *Globe & Mail* article that inspired Pink Shirt Day:

*“David Shepherd, Travis Price and their teenage friends organized a high-school protest to wear pink in sympathy with a Grade 9 boy who was being bullied [for wearing a pink shirt]...[They] took a stand against bullying when they protested against the harassment of a new Grade 9 student by distributing pink T-shirts to all the boys in their school. ‘I learned that two people can come up with an idea, run with it, and it can do wonders,’ says Mr. Price, 17, who organized the pink protest. ‘Finally, someone stood up for a weaker kid.’ So Mr. Shepherd and some other headed off to a discount store and bought 50 pink tank tops. They sent out a message to schoolmates that night, and the next morning they hauled the shirts to school in a plastic bag. As they stood in the foyer handing out the shirts, the bullied boy walked in. His face spoke volumes. ‘It looked like a huge weight was lifted off his shoulders,’ Mr. Price recalled. The bullies were never heard from again.”*



Will you join in by wearing pink on **February 24, 2026**? Have you made an effort to practice kindness and acceptance towards both yourself and others? Join us and show your support towards kindness and against bullying!

## Kindergarten Open House ~ Wednesday, February 4 @ 6:30 pm

**Our Open House for Kindergarten will be held on Wednesday, February 4 at 6:30 pm.**

This is a great opportunity for new families to learn about programming at our site and for them to see the great teaching and learning that is happening at Good Shepherd.

To register for Kindergarten, children must be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2026. We, once again, are projecting three half-day Kindergarten programs. If you know of anyone who is planning to register their child for Kindergarten or any other grade, please encourage them to check out our website and attend our Open House.

We know that our best form of advertising is sharing the good things happening at Good Shepherd. We thank you for passing on this information to any parents you know who may be considering our school for the fall. Thank you for spreading the good news!

## Winter Walk Day ~ February 4



Schools, community groups and workplaces around Alberta are taking time to walk for at least 15 minutes outside during Winter Walk Day which is being held on Wednesday, February 4, 2026. We are an APPLE School that promotes healthy living, so Good Shepherd students and staff will be participating too! The event is being organized by Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation SHAPE Program (safe, healthy, active people everywhere) in hopes of encouraging

people to find ways to keep active during the winter. The total amount of minutes walked by Good Shepherd students, staff, parents and guests will be logged in and added to the provincial total. We are looking to beat our total from last year! We can easily do this!

## 12 Days of Christmas Challenge Winners!!!

On January 23, our 3 winning classes in the 12 Days of Christmas Challenge, 1B, 3C, and 4C, enjoyed their winnings - yoghurt sundae parfaits! A special thank you goes out to our volunteers, Mrs. Hautmann, Mrs. Tauro and Sebastian Tauro for assisting with the serving!



Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn and Lead.





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## Good Shepherd Reading Superstars Program



Our monthly draw for our Good Shepherd Reading Superstars was held on January 30 and we are pleased to congratulate our lucky winners who will enjoy a pizza lunch with Mrs. Dimas and

Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn and Lead.

on Friday, February 6. Our Kindergarten students will get to "shop" for a new book of their choice.

- Kindergarten: Ethan, Elle and Harry
- Grade One: Nana-Ama, Emmett and Joella
- Grade Two: Asher, Gavin and Sasha
- Grade Three: Halley, Metro, Julianna and Julia
- Grade Four: Oliver D., Miller and Kianna
- Grade Five: Megan, Pippa and Valerie
- Grade Six: Elizabeth, Julia W. and Aeyl

Our students have been turning pages and stacking reading strips — and it shows! This month's top reading classes were 4A and 6A, who tied for first place with an impressive 109 reading strips each! 🌟

Coming in a close second place was 5C with 85 strips, and rounding out the top three was 6B with 68 strips. Way to go, readers! 🙌 📖

A huge thank you to Mrs. Dimas for coordinating our Good Shepherd Reading Superstars Program, and to our Saints Reading Superstars Leadership Team — Olivia, Audrey, and Isabelle — for counting up all the totals in record time! 🕒 🌟

And of course, thank you to our parents and families for encouraging reading at home and supporting your children's love of books. Together, we are raising confident, joyful readers!



## The Seven Sacred Teachings/Good Shepherd House News

In January, our school community focused on the Buffalo character trait of being respectful, respectful of the environment, of others and of oneself! Students worked really hard to demonstrate this attribute and were recognized. The three houses that earned the most rocks in January for being respectful were as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Raven House – 247 Rocks Earned

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Turtle House – 244 Rocks Earned

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Eagle House – 240 Rocks Earned



In February, we will work towards the character trait of the Eagle which is love. The Eagle teaches us love and that love must be unconditional. Love is a force that is undeniable. With love all things are possible. It is everyone's right to have and experience it.

To feel true love is to know the Creator. Therefore, it is expected that one's first love is to be the Great Spirit, God. The Great Spirit is considered the father of all children, and the giver of human life. Love given to the Great Spirit is expressed through love of oneself, and it is understood that if one cannot love oneself, it is impossible to love anyone else.

The teaching of love is found in all of the other teachings. To know love is to know peace. Love (represented by the Eagle) is one of the greatest teachings. Love returns freely to the one who loves freely. When we live by these teachings and see ourselves as the eagle does, we are able to love who we are. And once we have found that balance within, we can provide love to our family and community. For this reason, the eagle feather is one of the most sacred items and must be earned.

A big thank you goes out to Mrs. Strelkov for her leadership and work in implementing the Seven Sacred Teachings initiative at our site.

# A Bite of Health

As an APPLE school, we strive to build a healthy school community focusing on improving students' mental health, physical activity, and eating habits for life.

## Show Your Heart Some Love

This month, students are learning how to keep their heart healthy through a monthly campaign called Show Your Heart Some Love. Here is a summary of the learnings.

### What is heart disease?

It's a general term meaning the heart is not working properly. Some forms of heart disease are present at birth, and others develop as we age. Many forms of heart disease can be prevented by living an active, healthy lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>

### How can I prevent heart disease?

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada has 9 recommendations for reducing your risk of developing heart disease. This campaign will address 3 of them:

- Physical activity
- Eating a healthy diet
- Reducing stress

As an APPLE school, we strive to build healthy habits around these recommendations in our day-to-day life.



### A good place to start is to **GET STRESS FIT!**

**Give yourself a break**

**Eat a healthy diet**

**Talk it out with someone**

**Spend time with loved ones**

**Take time for yourself**

**Relax with a book or music**

**Exercise: walk, swim, bike**

**Set priorities**

**Schedule your time**

**Find new hobbies**

**Increase stress awareness**

**Take action**

#### References

<sup>1</sup><http://www.heartandstroke.ca>

[www.appleschools.ca](http://www.appleschools.ca)

Join our social community for the latest on our project

