

Administrators' Message

Happy New Year!

We hope your Christmas break was filled with rest, laughter, and meaningful time with loved ones. As we step into 2026, we are grateful for the opportunity to continue walking together as a faith-filled school community—one grounded in learning, kindness, and hope.

As we begin January, we continue to celebrate the Christmas season, which in the Church lasts until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday, January 11. This season invites us to reflect on the gift of Christ's presence in our lives and to carry the joy, peace, and light of Christmas into the new year. Epiphany, observed on January 6, reminds us of the Magi's journey to encounter the newborn Christ and encourages us to notice moments when God's presence becomes clear—moments of wonder, understanding, and grace that guide our daily lives.

We warmly invite all families to join us for our school's Epiphany Celebration on Friday, January 9 at 9:30 am, a wonderful opportunity to pray, reflect, and celebrate together as a community.

We also extend our sincere thanks for your support during our Movie Day fundraiser in November, part of our Dream Builders Challenge. Your generosity helped us raise \$661.46 for the Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation's Dreams for Kids Campaign, providing meaningful opportunities for students throughout our division. Our next campaign event, Bend-the-Rules Day, will take place on Thursday, January 29, and we look forward to another fun and successful initiative.

Finally, we are delighted to welcome a new member to our Good Shepherd family! Mrs. Binst (Miss Gabby) gave birth to Maya Maskosis Houle on December 4, joining three very proud big sisters. Congratulations to Mom, Dad, and the whole family!

As we embark on this new year, we pray that 2026 brings your family peace, joy, and abundant blessings. Thank you for your continued partnership and for all you contribute to our Good Shepherd community.





Jennifer Dimas
Principal



Beth Pecson
Assistant Principal



Sonia Schultz
Assistant Principal

Classes to Resume on Monday, January 5, 2026

Classroom instruction for all students after the Christmas break will begin on Monday, January 5, 2026.

Grade 6 Boys' and Girls' Volleyball Teams Excel at the STM Tournament!



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Big shoutout to our Grade 6 Saints volleyball teams!

They were absolutely *on fire* at the St. Thomas More volleyball tournament yesterday!

- Our Grade 6 boys rocked the court, winning 3 out of 4 games!
- Our Grade 6 girls dominated the tournament, winning every single game—including a victory over the Grade 7 St. Thomas More team!

Amazing job, Saints! We hope you had a blast—your sportsmanship and teamwork made us so proud.

A huge thank you to our awesome coaches: Mr. Fernandes, Mr. St. Arnaud, and Mrs. Millar!

Our School Charism: “Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn and Lead.”

Jesus our Shepherd gave His life for us.

God was in the heavens, holy and unapproachable by us fallen, sinful human beings. But two thousand years ago, God became a man, the man Jesus. The Lord Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life on earth, unlike any other person. He expressed God to humanity every place He went, with every action He took, and with every word He spoke. He ministered to people, full of compassion for the lost sheep of the world.

In John 10:11, before His death on the cross, Jesus told people what He would do: “I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” Jesus the good Shepherd willingly laid down His own life for the lost sheep of humanity. He made the ultimate sacrifice and accomplished redemption for us on the cross as our substitute. Surely no other shepherd is like our Lord Jesus! How thankful we are that He laid down His life for all of us lost ones.

Eucharist: Symbol or Real?

Each Sunday we meet our sisters and brothers in faith around the table of the Lord. We hear God’s Word proclaimed in the Scriptures—reflecting how God has chosen to enter human history, guiding us back to good relationship. After hearing the Word of God, we move to the table (altar) where we re-enact the ritual of the Last Supper, receiving and sharing the Body and Blood of Christ for our salvation and the salvation of our community. For some Christian denominations, the breaking and sharing of bread takes on symbolic meaning; it is a meal of thanksgiving and remembrance. For Catholics our Eucharistic meal becomes at the words of institution, the Real and Present Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The symbol of bread and wine; common elements to most of human beings, is transformed into the real body of Christ through the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Because we believe that these simple elements are no longer bread and wine, but the Lord present among us, we approach the Eucharist with a sense of humility, gratitude, and solemnity. The Eucharist (meaning “meal of thanksgiving”) is the pinnacle of our communal life together: We pray, we heal and are healed,

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and we allow ourselves to be changed intrinsically by the actual reception of the Body and Blood of our Lord. For this reason, we should teach our students to come before this Sacrament of God's grace appropriately disposed to encounter and receive the Lord into body and soul; and nurture an attitude of respect, humility, and deep reverence for the Eucharist.

Thank You for Supporting

The Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation!



Edmonton Catholic Schools Dream Builders' Campaign

Thank you for your participation in our "Movie Day". Our school community raised a total of \$661.46!

In supporting the Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation, you are preserving, protecting and strengthening Catholic education and providing financial assistance where needed to help remove challenges students face that may prevent them from having and achieving the best educational experience possible. Your support contributes to our "Community of Service". We thank you for participating in our Dream Builders' Campaign and understanding the value of this campaign has for many students in the Edmonton Catholic School Division.

Donations to the foundation go to support students in Edmonton Catholic Schools with school breakfast and lunch programs, to support student mental health initiatives, provide resources to schools, and to assist students and families in need in our schools. This is a charity we are very happy to support.

We have one more event scheduled for January:

Bend-the-Rules Day - Students can bring in a donation to bend rules that have been determined by their classroom teacher on **Thursday, January 29, 2026**.

We thank you for participating in the Annual Dream Builders Challenge and understanding the value of this campaign has for many students in the Edmonton Catholic School Division.

12 Days of Christmas Challenge

During the twelve days before we break for the Christmas holidays, students participated in a challenge each day to celebrate the approach of Christmas. Points were earned by each homeroom and we had three overall winners in each division (K - Gr. 1/Gr. 2 - 3/Gr. 4 - 6) at the end of the challenge. It was a lot of fun for both students and staff and was a chance for students to enjoy a little friendly classroom rivalry and some Christmas spirit. The results in each category were as follows:

Kindergarten/Grade 1 Division:

1. 1B – Mrs. Huang’s homeroom
2. 1C – Mrs. Platero and Mrs. Kim’s homeroom
3. 1A – Miss Rich-Carifelle’s homeroom

Grade 2/Grade 3 Division:

1. 3C – Mrs. Odediran’s homeroom
2. 3D – Mrs. Melo’s homeroom
3. 2B – Mrs. Pond’s homeroom

Grades 4-6 Division:

1. 4C – Mrs. Casebeer’s homeroom
2. 5A and 5B – Mr. Griebel and Miss Robinson’s homerooms

Congratulations to our first-place winners in each division! Your class will be celebrating with a **yogurt sundae bar on Monday, January 26**—a well-earned treat! 🍦 ✨

As part of one of our holiday challenges, each homeroom spread Christmas cheer by creating heartfelt cards for our elderly friends living in local retirement communities. These cards were delivered with love and brought so much joy to residents who were truly grateful to feel the Christmas spirit shared by our students and school community. ❤️ 🌲

We were delighted to share this kindness with the following communities:

- Touchmark at Wedgewood
- Riverbend Retirement Residence
- Lifestyle Options Riverbend.

Thank you to our students and staff for making this season brighter for others—what a beautiful example of faith, compassion, and community in action!

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A very special thank you goes out to Mrs. Melo, Mrs. Pond and Mr. Kay for all of their work in making December so much more fun for students and staff with their 12 Days of Christmas activities and challenges. They did a tremendous job!

Hot Cocoa Bar & Santa Visit – A Sweet Success!

Our December 15 Hot Cocoa Bar and Santa Visit was an incredible success! Students and staff alike enjoyed delicious hot cocoa and a special visit with Santa, who delighted everyone by visiting with them and handing out mandarins. The students had a lot of interesting questions for him! The event was filled with laughter, excitement, and the joyful spirit of the season.

A huge thank you goes out to our School Council, who organized this wonderful celebration, and to all the parents who volunteered throughout the day. Without your support and dedication, this event would not have been possible. Your efforts brought so much joy to our school community and created lasting memories for our students.

We're so grateful to everyone who contributed to making this festive day a truly magical experience for all!



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Good Shepherd Scholastic Book Fair

Thanks to our Good Shepherd families, the Good Shepherd November book fair was a huge success!!! Our families purchased \$10,736.62 in books, giving a rewards certificate of \$5099.90 for the school to use to buy new books and resources as needed. A huge thank you goes out to Mrs. Strelkov who put in many additional hours in order to organize, set-up and run the book fair. A sincere thank you also goes out to the many parents who volunteered to work the event and to the many families who supported the event through purchases!

School Plan for Continuous Growth

The December review of the Good Shepherd Catholic School Plan for Continuous Growth is complete and is available on the school's website at the following link:

[School Plan for Continuous Growth](#)

All staff worked on creating school-wide goals, strategies and actions for the year as well as reflecting on the progress of those goals.

Student Entry/Exit Doors

Please remember that school entry doors are opened by staff for **student access** into the building at 8:45 AM each day. **All students are expected to enter and exit the building using their designated doors.** Students line up at these doors and enter once a staff member is there to escort them in. Parents who pick their children up after school are asked to **wait outside student designated entrances**" (Page 6 of student agenda).

If you need to come into the school to talk to a staff member, "visitors to the school MUST sign in at the office and must obtain and wear a visitor's badge" (Page 6 of student agenda).

As a staff, we kindly ask all parents to remain outside during drop-offs and pick-ups of their child(ren). For the safety of our students, we teach them never to open an outside door to an adult who is not a staff member and also that there should never be adults in the building without visitor badges.

In addition, at the end of the day, it is very difficult for our younger students and their teachers to find parents/guardians when parents/guardians are attempting to come into the school while students are exiting. We are requesting for family members to please refrain from entering the school and to stand back so that students can easily exit the building and find their parents/guardians.

This aforementioned practices will not only ensure the safety of all students but also empower your child(ren) to become independent. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Kindergarten to Grade 3 Skating Program – Jan/Feb

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will have skating lesson this year. The dates for skating are as follows: January 14, 21, 28, and February 4 and 11. The skating lessons will be at Callingwood Arena, 17740 – 69 Avenue. Each child will need their own pair of skates, **a CSA approved helmet**, snow pants and mitts/gloves for the lessons. A few locations that sell used skates include Totem Outdoor Outfitters (7430 – 99 Street) and Play It Again Sports (13883 – 156 Street). Parent volunteers are needed to help with putting on skates. If you can help out, please contact your child's teacher.

Severe Weather Conditions & Bus Cancellations



Given the possible extremes of Edmonton weather and the potential for unexpected mechanical difficulties, it is impossible to guarantee buses will run on time or at all. A route can take 50% longer in adverse weather conditions. Parents are advised that if a bus does not arrive within twenty minutes of its scheduled time, they are to assume the bus is not coming. Parents must ensure that their child knows to return home or to a pre-selected location. Parents must then make alternate

arrangements to get their child to school. Parents should also ensure that:

- Children are supervised at the bus stop
- Children have a place to go in the event the bus does not arrive
- Children have alternate arrangements for getting to school should the bus not arrive
- Children are suitably clothed to withstand weather extremes.

Transportation Services normal operational procedures for delayed transportation also apply in severe weather conditions.

The Carrier is responsible for notifying the school and the Transportation Services office when a route is running late.

Parents then have access to 3 different resources (by calling either the school, the Transportation Services office, or directly contacting the carrier) to get an update on the status of a particular route.

CANCELLATION OF YELLOW SCHOOL BUS SERVICE FOR ALL PROGRAMS

The following radio and TV stations will carry announcements with respect to transportation cancellations due to inclement weather conditions:

RADIO STATIONS:

CHED/CHQT/CISN/JOE FM
CFRN 1260/THE BEAR/CFMG
CFCW
MIX 96 (96 X)

CHFA (CBC Fr.)
AM 930 (The Light)
SHINE FM

MAGIC 99
CJC K-97
CKER CBC



TV STATIONS:

CITY TV CFRN TV GLOBAL TV CBC TV

Every effort will be made to have messages broadcast commencing no later than 6:30 am.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Please call the offices
7:15 AM – 5:00 PM
780 441 6078

The BusPlanner Delays App

Please stay up to date with your children's transportation. The BusPlanner Delays mobile app is free and easy to use. It helps mobile users view notifications more quickly and easily.

Just like the BusPlanner Web Delays & Cancellations page, the app will display:

- Delay and cancellation notices for specific routes or runs.
- General notices for all subscribers.

Users can download and access the BusPlanner Delays App via the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) app stores.

For instructions on how to download the app, please access the following ECSD link:

<https://www.ecsd.net/page/34228/transportation-services-bus-delay-notifications>

Please note that our school office does not call or send text messages to families regarding bus delays since the school receives the same notifications as parents through the BusPlanner App.

School Council/Parent Advisory Association Meeting

Parents/Guardians are always welcome to join us for our School Council/School Fundraising Association meetings. We invite you to attend our upcoming meeting which will be held on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 6:30 pm. Meeting minutes can be found on our school website.

Parent School Handbook - Alberta Education



Alberta Education has created a parent school handbook with an online document entitled "My Child's Learning" (<http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/>). It is an online document which although not as comprehensive from a permeation viewpoint as the former Catholic school handbook, does provide a brief overview of the religious education programs available at each grade level and a preface describing the programs.

Good Shepherd Reading Superstars Program



Our monthly draw for our Good Shepherd Reading Superstars was held on December 16 and we are pleased to congratulate our lucky winners who enjoyed lunch with administration on Thursday, December 18. Our Kindergarten students got to “shop” for a new book of their choice.

- Kindergarten: Zayden, Ziora and Marcus
- Grade One: Adrian, Sophia B. and Liam
- Grade Two: Joaquin, Cooper and Grace
- Grade Three: Tyler, Brayden, Alexander and Celestine
- Grade Four: Jordana, Yaa and Kianna
- Grade Five: Sean B., Danielle and Tyson
- Grade Six: Bobby and Kevwe

The class who collected the most reading strips this month was 2A with 63 strips, 1A came in 2nd with 40 strips and coming in 3rd with 36 strips was 1C. Great job, Everyone!!!

Thank you to Mrs. Dimas for coordinating our Good Shepherd Reading Superstars Program and thank you to our parents for encouraging their children to read and participate!

The Seven Sacred Teachings/ Good Shepherd House News

In December, our school community focused on the Wolf House attribute of having humility. Students worked really hard to demonstrate this attribute and were recognized for being humble and placing the needs of others first. The three houses that earned the most rocks in December for having humility were as follows:

1st Place: Buffalo House – 152 Rocks Earned

2nd Place: Turtle House – 143 Rocks Earned

3rd Place: Wolf House – 133 Rocks Earned

In January, we will work towards the character trait of the buffalo which is Respect. Respect is often represented through buffalo or plains bison. At its very core, respect is shown for the land

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by all that we do to ensure it is protected for the next seven generations and beyond. It is the foundation for the relationship humans have with the land and honouring all that the land is and does for us.

The buffalo shows us the importance of respecting ourselves and others. By treating our colleagues as we want them to treat us, with respect and dignity, we take in consideration their values and ideas and, in doing so, enhance our own.

A big thank you goes out to Mrs. Strelkov for her work in continuing with The Seven Sacred Teachings initiative at our site.

Guided by the Star: Grade 4B Brings Bethlehem to Life

Mrs. McCoy's grade four students were invited to contribute a collaborative art piece for the Voices of Lumen concert series at the Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre, as part of a collection of ten canvas displays. Each student designed a unique mandala star and created a building from Bethlehem, coming together to form a stunning night-sky cityscape of Bethlehem. Their combined work beautifully reflects both creativity and community, shining brightly alongside the music of the concert series.







DREAMS^{for}KIDS
supported by
Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation

December 10, 2025

Jennifer Dimas, Principal
Good Shepherd School
18111 57 Ave.
Edmonton, AB T6M 1W1

Dear Jennifer, staff and students:

On behalf of the Board and staff of Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation, I thank you, the dedicated staff, and the wonderful students of Good Shepherd School for the generous donation of \$661.46 to our 2025 *Dreams for Kids* campaign, which we recently received through our website. We are very grateful for your gift. We are humbled and inspired by this kind and thoughtful donation from your students, who themselves, have so little, and yet, share so much from their beautiful spirits that are motivated by selflessness and communal love.

As one of the six *Funds* supported by our annual *Dreams for Kids* campaign, in calendar 2025, our *Conquer Hunger Fund* will provide financial support for 6,934 children at 28 Edmonton Catholic Schools, so they may benefit from a healthy school snack, breakfast, or lunch program.

Here are testimonials from an administrator, a couple parents and two students who benefitted from a *Conquer Hunger* grant from the Foundation:

- ♥ ***"My husband lost his job 3 weeks ago and I am still in school. We really appreciate the help to feed my daughter breakfast and a snack".*** (Parent, St. Pius X School)
- ♥ ***"Thank you for providing my child with food in the day. There are many struggles to manage in my home, but I know that she is being taken care of at school."*** (Parent, St. Leo School)
- ♥ ***"The nutrition program makes me feel happy! It helps me focus."*** (Student, St. Bonaventure School)
- ♥ ***"As administrators, we are so grateful to the Conquer Hunger program and the impact the grant has had on our students. We see more smiles and gratitude from students each day, fewer behaviours, healthier lunches and happier teachers."*** (Assistant Principal, St. Hilda School)
- ♥ ***"My mom does her best, but there is not a lot of food in the house. The breakfast and snack program helps our family because I am fed and taken care of. I learn better when I have a full tummy."*** (Student, St. Bonaventure School)

Again, I thank the Good Shepherd School family for entrusting us with your donation. Your gift will give our students a loving 'hand-up' in their journey of becoming the best that God created them to be.

I pray that you, your staff, and your students/families, all enjoy a holy, happy, and peaceful Christmas.

Sincerely,

Marc Barylo
Executive Director

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.

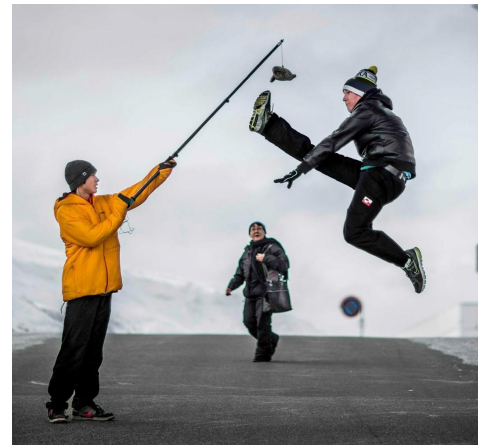
Arctic Winter Games

This month, students will be getting active and having fun with traditional games through a campaign called Arctic Winter Games. Here is a summary of the activities.

What are the Arctic Winter Games?

The Arctic Winter Games is a biannual international event that formally began in Canada on January 18, 1968. The Games strengthen sport development, promote the benefits of sport, build partnerships, and promote culture.¹

The Games include a wide variety of sports, including dog mushing, volleyball, and snowshoeing. This month, students will learn how to play 5 different traditional games.



Traditional Arctic Winter Games in the classroom

Side Reach – one of many Inuit games that helped to develop physical skills like flexibility and balance, important for a land-based, traditional way of life.²

Kneel Jump – an Inuit game used to get people ready for life on the land. An elder stated that this game was used to prepare hunters for conditions they may face on land or frozen water.¹

Snow Snake – well-known game in many indigenous cultures across Canada. It helped develop technical skills used for hunting.²

One-Foot High Kick – considered one of the most important Inuit games played today. It was often played in the communal house during long winter months.²

Sledge Jump – a physically challenging activity. Rather than a test of power, Sledge Jump is a test of an athlete's endurance.¹

Go to www.youtube.com to see any of these games in full action.

References

¹ <http://www.arcticwintergames.org/index.html>

² <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/programs/participaction-150-play-list>