Dear Parents, Guardians, Students and other Parishioners,

This is the final newsletter for 2014 and I hope that you are finding some peace and quiet amid the rush to sit with your Advent thoughts. We need to make time for ourselves as we move towards Christmas to think about the real reason why we have this wonderful festival. What is the meaning of the Christmas story?

For me it is a story about generosity. Most important of all it is about God’s generosity in giving us his son. His son took human life so that we could learn how to live. Then it’s the generosity of the Innkeeper who gave what he could, a stable. It’s not much, but it was all that he had to give. Think of the Shepherds’ generosity, they only had time and they had themselves and they gave both their time and themselves. In doing so they supported the family of Mary and Joseph and Jesus who were strangers in this town. I love the generosity of the Wise Men, who gave their gifts and saw a meaning in the stable situation that caused them to give precious things like Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. They probably gave their reputation too, as they had set out to see a mighty king but settled in the end for the babe in a manger. They had insights based on wisdom, not other people’s expectations.
The story of Christmas is about the generosity of Joseph who gave away his doubts and misgivings and indeed, his reputation to stand by Mary and Jesus. He gave his standing in the community to support the woman he loved. It’s about Mary who also gave her reputation and her place in her family community to bear this special child. She let God into her life and her life changed dramatically. She totally gave her life to God.

Advent gives me a time to wonder, am I generous in celebrating this story of Christmas? Do I give of my talents and wisdom to the community that I belong to? Do I make a place in my family for strangers? Do I reach out to those who have no opportunity to celebrate? Do I stop first to think of what other people will think of me before I do things differently to respond to someone else’s need? Do I give my time to those who feel they are not listened to? Do I let God work in my life?

Christmas is a children’s story, but it taps into our hearts and stays there because its message is profound. As adults, we are called to go deeper into its significance than the children can, and that is why we need to make Advent time for ourselves now. We need a time for reflecting, a time for thinking, a time for listening to our inner selves, in the place where God dwells and we need to do it now, before we get to the day itself.

CAROLS NIGHT
A huge thank you to all who came, sang and enjoyed the night. Congratulations to Mrs Popowycz for organizing this annual event!

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY
Thank you to all who have supported the school this year. Many of you volunteer your time and energy but all of you support us by sending your children here each day ready to learn in so many ways. Your support is what makes this a great place to be. Our thanks for every action, big or small, they have all helped to build our community of learners.

I want to mention three people especially. Some of you would have been here when Ms Gillian Sladen was a teacher here. In the 3 years since she has left us as a teacher, she has been a regular visitor to the Nook, covering books and sorting things with Trixie. How generous! Thank you!

The other people that I want to mention are two parents who have been fantastic supporters of our school in many, many ways. I know that neither of them seek the limelight but Sonya Ware and Chrisa Carvignese need to be acknowledged for their outstanding contributions. Both of them will stay as friends of St Elizabeth’s, but will become past parents! Many people help us, but these ladies have always been there to run events, organise activities and generally make sure that everyone has uniform, Mothers and Father’s day gifts, raffle tickets etc. You name something that needed to be done at our school and you would have found them working towards it. We wish them both a wonderful Christmas, a smooth start to their children’s secondary school adventure and health, happiness and joy. We are very grateful for all they have given our community. Sonya and Chrisa, you will always be welcome to stay involved, you leave as parents but not as parishioners!

NEW STAFF 2015
We are very pleased to have engaged a new LOTE teacher for 2015. Ms Julia Jianghui Guan will be our LOTE teacher for 2015. Julia has recently taught LOTE at Caulfield Grammar and East Doncaster Secondary College. We congratulate Mr Han Hung on his appointment as LOTE teacher at Watsonia PS.

We have also engaged Ms Bianca Lentini as Technology Teacher. Ms Lentini has been teaching at Mater Christi College and is skilled both in using technology as a learning tool and in using technology as an artistic medium. I think this will give our students another way of viewing the potential of their eLearning tools.

We wish all our staff a very Happy Christmas and ‘Good Fortune’ to those moving on.

Farewell to all our Yr6 students and for those who have no siblings following them, we wish their families all the very best for the future. To the few students who are not in Yr6, but are moving schools, we also send our good wishes. Have a safe and peaceful Christmas. I hope time with friends and families brings joy and your homes are full of love and laughter. Please note the Christmas Mass times elsewhere on the newsletter.

We will begin 2015 on January 28th for staff, on 30th for Yr1-Yr6 students and Foundation students will join us on February 2nd.

God Bless You All!

Christine Ash / Principal
The Stepfather and the like reflection upon the Gospel being used of our Christmas celebration.

The Stepfather

The pain was stronger this time. It wouldn’t be long now until the baby came. Joe gave my hand a reassuring squeeze, but avoided looking at me. I don’t blame him. He was trying to cope with his own pain. Trying to deal with the fact that his wife was about to give birth to a baby that wasn’t his.

“Are you ok?” I whispered.

“Shouldn’t that be my question?” he replied.

And this time he did look at me and gave a small smile. But it didn’t hide the sadness in his eyes. The next wave of pain hit, stronger. I was grateful for the excuse to look away.

It wasn’t supposed to turn out this way. A short time ago we had been happy. We met, fell in love, became engaged. Then I fell pregnant – but the baby wasn’t Joe’s. Trembling I told him, although I understood his anger. “Why? When? Who?” he demanded, his face flushed. What could I say? No excuse or explanation could take away the pain, the confusion. One thing hadn’t changed though.

“I still love you,” I said simply, with no tears, no pleadings. He stared in disbelief, then walked away.

I knew it was over between us. For days Joe avoided me. I’d heard through the grapevine that our engagement would be called off, and soon. Which didn’t surprise me, but I was scared – for the baby, for the future. How would I cope?

When Joe came to see me one evening I expected the worst. Surprisingly, he took me in his arms. “I still want to marry you,” he declared. Why did he change his mind? I didn’t dare ask, afraid that by asking, I’d make him leave me again.

We married soon afterwards in a simple ceremony. Foolishly, I thought we could go back to a normal, uncomplicated life. But it wasn’t to be.

The whispers all around the place were the worst. Wherever I went, everyone knew. Nothing was ever said to my face, but you just know when you’re being talked about. When you walk by, people stare. You enter a room that suddenly falls silent. If Joe was subjected to this behaviour, he never told me. But often, during the evening meal, he was quiet and thoughtful, stroking his short beard absent-mindedly.

Then one day, Joe said we had to pack up and leave.

I cried aloud as another burning pain hit, driving all worries aside. I no longer felt the chill in the air of this strange town. Even the sounds and odours of our surroundings faded and I was only aware of pushing and pain. Joe held my hand, wiped my brow. My cries filled the air and he whispered encouragement. And at last the baby came into the world.

Exhausted, I lay back, the baby in my arms. A beautiful boy. I loved him instantly, but that’s natural, isn’t it? I am his mother. Joe knelt beside me, gazing at the placid baby, a strange look in his eyes.

“He’s beautiful, isn’t he?” I said. Joe nodded.

“Here. You hold him,” I said, holding out the baby. A look of shock crossed Joe’s features and, for a moment, I thought he might refuse. Then, carefully, he took the baby into his arms. A myriad of emotions crossed his face and the baby stared at him with wide, curious eyes. I blinked away tears. My heart ached for us to be a family. But that was up to Joe.

I watched silently while my husband struggled. With an awkward hand he stroked the baby’s cheek. The baby gurgled. Joe extended a finger and the baby grasped it tightly with one tiny hand. Then, and I swear it’s true, the baby smiled.
Joe smiled back and whispered, “Hello, my son,” and my heart swelled with joy.

Gently he handed our son to me and said, “His name?”

“You know his name already,” I said softly. “He’s going to be called Jesus.” Joe embraced me and I hugged him fiercely. “It takes a special man to be a father to a baby not his own,” I whispered.

Joe’s eyes shone with fatherly pride. “No, Mary,” he said. “All it takes is love.”


Transition Mass Yr6

On Sunday 14th December the Yr6 children will gather at the 10:30am Mass. This is a time for them to gather and celebrate the time spent as part of the St Elizabeth’s School community and all that lies before them as they move into Secondary schooling. We look forward to sharing this Mass with ALL students in Yr6 who will be moving on to secondary schools next year. We celebrate with our Parish and our Parish community prays for their success in their transition to secondary school and gives them their blessing.

End of Year School Mass

On Wednesday 17th December, we will gather for the End of Year School Mass. This Mass will begin at 9:15am and will give us the opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for all that we have shared throughout the year.

Carols Night

A very big thank you to everyone who participated in our wonderful Carols Night. It was a beautiful and reverent evening that began with the Story of Christmas. Our Foundation students did a wonderful job of acting out the main characters of Christmas and were well supported throughout the story with the entire school community leading us in the traditional carols.

We all then moved onto our novelty Christmas songs which was just amazing. Every community presented a variety of novelty songs that engaged all of us and made us sing along! A great way for our school community to all come together and be festive.

Thank you to all the students, staff, parents and parish for making our carols night successful.

I would like wish everyone very happy and holy Christmas.

God Bless.

Maria Popowycz
Religious Education Leader
popoma@sedandenongnth.catholic.edu.au
Dear Parent:

I know. You’re worried. Every day, your child comes home with a story about THAT kid. The one who is always hitting, shoving, pinching, scratching, maybe even biting other children. The one who always has to hold my hand in the hallway. The one who has a special spot at the carpet, and sometimes sits on a chair rather than the floor.

You’re worried that THAT child is detracting from your child’s learning experience. You’re worried that he/she takes up too much of my time and energy, and that your child won’t get his/her fair share. You’re worried that he/she is really going to hurt someone some day. You’re worried that “someone” might be your child. You’re worried that your child is going to start using aggression to get what he/she wants. You’re worried your child is going to fall behind academically because I might not notice that he/she is struggling to hold a pencil. I know.

You see, I worry all the time. About ALL of them. I worry about your child coming home in tears. I worry that his/her parents are in the middle of a horrible divorce, and he/she has been staying with his/her grandma. I worry that one’s coat is not warm enough, and that another’s dad yells at her/him for printing the letter B backwards.

But I know, you want to talk about THAT child. I want to talk about THAT child, too, but there are so many things I can’t tell you.

- I can’t tell you that he/she was adopted from an orphanage at 18 months.
- I can’t tell you that he/ she is on an elimination diet for possible food allergies, and that he is therefore hungry ALL. THE. TIME.
- I can’t tell you that his/her parents are in the middle of a horrendous divorce, and he/she has been staying with his/her grandma.
- I can’t tell you that I’m starting to worry that grandma drinks.
- I can’t tell you that his/her asthma medication makes him/her agitated.
- I can’t tell you that he/she has been a witness to domestic violence.

That’s OK, you say. You understand I can’t share personal or family information. You just want to know what I am DOING about That Child’s behaviour.

I would love to tell you. But I can’t.

- I can’t tell you that he/she receives speech-language services, that an assessment showed a severe language delay, and that the therapist feels the aggression is linked to frustration about being unable to communicate.
- I can’t tell you that I meet with his/her parents EVERY week, and that both of them usually cry at those meetings.
- I can’t tell you that the child and I have a secret hand signal to tell me when he/she needs to sit by himself/herself for a while.

- I can’t tell you that I have been meticulously tracking his/her aggressive incidents for 3 months, and that he/she has dropped from 5 incidents a day, to 5 incidents a week.
- I can’t tell you that I have stood up in a staff meeting and, with tears in my eyes, BEGGED my colleagues to keep an extra close eye on her/him, to be kind to her/him even when they are frustrated that she/he just punched someone AGAIN, and this time, RIGHT IN FRONT OF A TEACHER.

The thing is, there are SO MANY THINGS I can’t tell you about THAT Child. I can’t even tell you the good stuff.

- I can’t tell you that his/her classroom job is to water the plants, and that he/she cried with heartbreak when one of the plants died over winter break.
- I can’t tell you that she/he kisses her/his baby sister goodbye every morning, and whispers, “You are my sunshine” before mum pushes the stroller away.
- I can’t tell you that when a classmate is crying, he/she rushes over with his/hers favourite stuffy from the story corner.

The thing is, dear parent that I can only talk to you about YOUR child. So, what I can tell you is this:

If ever, at any point, YOUR child, or any of your children, becomes THAT child …

- I will not share your personal family business with other parents in the classroom.
- I will communicate with you frequently, clearly and kindly.
- I will make sure there are tissues nearby at all our meetings, and if you let me, I will hold your hand when you cry.
- I will advocate for your child and family to receive the highest quality of specialist services, and I will cooperate with those professionals to the fullest possible extent.
- I will make sure your child gets extra love and affection when he/she needs it most.
- I will be a voice for your child in our school community.
- I will, no matter what happens, continue to look for, and to find, the good, amazing, special and wonderful things about your child.
- I will remind him and YOU of those good amazing special wonderful things, over and over again.

And when another parent comes to me, with concerns about YOUR child … I will tell them all of this, all over again.

With so much love,

Teacher.

Nan Perazzo
Wellbeing Coordinator
What a sensational year of learning our students and teachers have had! Some of the highlights have been:

- As a school we have introduced Google Apps for Education to support organisation, communication and collaboration.
- Our Cross Arts performances shared the learning of our students: Yr5 & Yr6 showed us the power of resilience and standing up for yourself, Yr3 and Yr4 taught us about weird science and Yr1 and Yr2 students showed us that it really is a small world after all.
- Our Foundation students wowed us with what they had learn in only 100 days at school.
- Investigations in the F-2 classes were once again very popular with the students. Some of the favourite centres included the vet, canteen, school, reading corner, collage and science areas.
- In Chinese, students learnt some words to identify parts of the body and how to count using both words and finger gestures.
- The iPads were in demand throughout the year. Students learnt how to take photos, make movies and share their learning in creative ways.
- Students in Yr5 and Yr6 held a hugely successful Market Day raising funds for Matutinao Elementary school in the Philippines. This reflected earning of budgeting, marketing, time management and organisational skills.
- Mathletics was trialled for 2 weeks and students in Yr3-Yr6 now have a personal account that can be used at school or at home. Students look forward to these activities and improving their mathematical knowledge. Students in Yr2 have their accounts ready for when they move into year 3 next year and can use these over the holidays.
- Social justice has once again been a big focus as we support students in the Dandenong Homework Tutoring Club and Matutinao Elementary School.
- Our trial of Chromebooks has been a great success and we look forward to using these in the Yr3 and Yr4 area next year.

As we end a busy year, take time to celebrate the achievements of your children. What were their highlights of 2014? What do they see as the next steps in their learning?

Rebecca Gage
Learning and Teaching Leader
gagere@sedandenongnth.catholic.edu.au
In the last Sports News edition of 2014 I would like to thank the many volunteers that assisted and added value to our sports and P.E program. To all of those who came down to watch our kids compete in inter-school sports, to those who helped set-up equipment well before the events even started, to those who umpired and coached, to those who transported our students to and from events and all of the others that contributed in the many different ways.

In particular I would like to thank Andrew Gibbon and Sue Hatley-Smith for their efforts for the year.

Yours in Sport
Dean Andrew

Parents and Friends

Christmas Raffle.
We would like to thank The Dandenong Club (Heatherton Rd, Dandenong) for Sponsoring our Christmas Raffle. We would also like to thank everyone who has contributed by donating goods to this raffle, especially Mulgrave Country Club.

Congratulations to:
First: Patriz Agujar (Florianne Agujar 1/2RH)
Second: Nerise Perera 5/6KK
Third: Christian Giuseffi 5/6DL

Congratulations to Jamie Truong FLA for winning the Bicycle Raffle.

2015

The first meeting for 2015 will be held on Monday 9th February 2015, in The Nook. 2:20pm. The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 23rd February. Role descriptions will be in the newsletter beforehand.

School Banking

The final school banking for 2014 will be Monday 15 December.

In 2015 the school banking day will be moved to every TUESDAY commencing Tuesday 3 February.

Please note that the Shark Pencil Case, Penguin Key Ring, Swimming Bag, Dollarmite Tin Money Box and Projector Cup are no longer available to select as a reward. These items are out of stock and no longer available.
Reconciliation:  Monday 22nd December 7pm  
Tuesday 23rd December 7pm

Christmas Eve:  Wednesday 24th December (no morning Mass)  
Carols from 6:45pm  
Family Mass 7:00pm  
Carols from 11:30pm  
Midnight Mass

Christmas Day:  Thursday 25th December  
Dawn Mass 8:30am  
Mass 10:30am  
(note there will not be an evening Mass)

Weekend Mass:  27th/28th December  
Feast of the Holy Family  
Saturday :  6:30pm  
Sunday :  8:30am  
10:30am  
5:00pm

New Years Day:  Thursday 1st January 2015  
Mass 10:30am
**St Elizabeth’s pre Christmas**

**Holiday Program December 2014**

*For more information, please contact Elarine 0422 803 709*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANT INFORMATION</th>
<th>Thursday 18th December</th>
<th>Friday 19th December</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children are required to bring:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Big Day In</strong></td>
<td><strong>Celebrating Christmas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A hat, morning and afternoon snacks and a healthy lunch to the program daily. Program will operate from: 7am—6pm</td>
<td>Activities include:</td>
<td>Activities include:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>♦ Christmas Activity Books</td>
<td>♦ Metallic Christmas pictures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>♦ Sponge painted gift wrap</td>
<td>♦ Colouring exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Cool Christmas pictures</td>
<td>♦ Chrissy decorations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Games of:</td>
<td>♦ Bingo</td>
<td>Games:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>♦ Musical Games</td>
<td>♦ Gift relay</td>
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<td></td>
<td>♦ Balloon Games</td>
<td>♦ Pin the nose on Rudolph</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday 22nd December</th>
<th>Tuesday 23rd December</th>
<th>We Wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sparkling Christmas Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Merry Christmas</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities include:</td>
<td>BYO Your Wheels</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Star wall hangings</td>
<td>♦ Bikes, Scooters, Roller Blades, <em>Helmets</em> and safety pads are <strong>COMPULSORY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Glitter pictures</td>
<td>♦ Make a Groovy Party hats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoy making a yummy Chocolate Ripple cake</td>
<td>♦ Christmas Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Games:</td>
<td>BYO Packaged food for lunch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Volleyball</td>
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### Contact Details ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elizabeth's Out of School Hours Care Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111 Bakers Road, Dandenong North</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ph: 0422 803 709 / 0426 282 721</td>
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*Before School Care:*
- **Permanant:** $12.00 / **Casual:** $13.00
- 7.00am to 8.55am Monday to Friday during school term, excluding all Victorian public holidays.

*After School Care:*
- **Permanant:** $13.50 / **Casual:** $14.50
- 3.15pm to 6.15pm Monday to Friday during school term, excluding all Victorian public holidays.

*Vacation Care / Pupil Free Days:*
- **Per Day:** $45.00
- 7.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. (No vacation care available in January.)

*Late Pick Up Fees: Per minute* $1.00

For enquiries or further information, please contact Elarine on 0422 803 709 or 0426 282 721 during session times.

### Weekly Activities ...

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Beginning: 15 December 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Foam and felt ornaments</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothespin ornaments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>OSHC Christmas Party</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas activity books, sponge painted gift wrap, cool Christmas pictures</td>
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<tr>
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