

# News From the Hill

A Newsletter for St. Peter's Preschool

Stacy Warkentine, Director

December 2016

Dear Parents,

The Preschool has been bustling with activity recently. The span from Halloween to Grandparents Day, to Thanksgiving and now on to Christmas - it's all a blur. In my own life it has been the same - sports, musicals, pageants, and school work. I have a recent teenage daughter in my house and all that goes with it, which just adds to the chaos. My daughter has always wanted me to learn to French braid her hair and my attempts are always a disaster! And yet, we keep attempting the near impossible. Ella insists I can do it and is my consummate cheerleader, hair-holder, and brush-passer. On another crazy busy morning Ella asked me to try again, suggesting a different approach this time. We sit down, take a deep breath, work together and FINALLY attain success. And this isn't a slightly disheveled, crooked or uneven French braid - this is a semi-professional (at least from our perspective) French braid. With confidence, perseverance, teamwork, and determination we officially mastered the French braid!

I share this story with you because it reminds me what the children of St. Peter's leave our preschool with: confidence, perseverance, teamwork and determination. "Learning through play" is a term used in education and psychology to describe how a child can learn to make sense of the world around them. Through play children can develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence required to engage in new experiences and environments. Learning through play is the fundamental of St. Peter's preschool and how I personally raised my children. I see the benefits every day in how my children handle challenges, situations and daily life. They are adaptive, respectful, thoughtful, and compassionate - all with a quiet confidence. What started in preschool as a discussion on the best way to create a building - what materials to use, how tall to make it, who was responsible for what, and how to include everyone - has blossomed into how to navigate life as a teen or tween. Don't get me wrong, my children are far from perfect, but with the right tools they are able to solve problems and discuss how to avoid, or correct, mistakes. All of this we, as a family, owe to the basics of learning through play.



Important Dates Ahead	
Dec. 9	Books for The Clinic due
Dec. 13	Giving Tree Items Due
Dec. 14	3-Day Christmas Party
Dec. 15	2-day & Pre-K Christmas parties
Dec. 16, 9:30	2-day, 3-day & Pre-K children report to the Historic Church for the Christmas program
Dec. 16, 9:45	Christmas program and Reception
Dec. 19-Jan. 2	Christmas break - NO SCHOOL

St. Peter's motto is "Children First," and we believe down to our very core that the way we approach early childhood education is the way that is best for our children. Preschool need not be a challenge; life is enough of a challenge for a child. Preschool, we believe, should be a place where a child can explore with great freedom, nurtured by loving adults who understand that learning takes place through a child's whole body experience, not just his eyes and ears. That's what we provide at St. Peter's every day.

That being said, registration for the 2017-18 school year will open after the Christmas break. If families with preschool-aged children have moved into your neighborhood or your older child's school, please steer them our way. I know that this really goes without saying, because just as Ella has been my cheerleader, our families have always been St. Peter's biggest cheerleaders. We are a primarily word of mouth preschool and our families continue to sing our praises to anyone looking for a preschool.

I know that I say this often, but particularly at this time of year, I feel truly blessed to have such incredible families at St. Peter's. We are humbled that you entrust us with these precious little people every day, and we know that is no small thing. What a blessing it is for us to come to work and see these little faces every day and see the wonder with which they approach the world and everything they do in it.

Wishing you many blessings,

Stacy Warkentine, Director

St. Peter's Preschool is an outreach ministry of St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley.



## Christmas Program Notes

2-day, 3-day, and Pre-K children will be learning songs and so forth in our short December because on December 16th at 9:45am, you and yours are in for the cutest thing ever: our littles will put on a great program for everyone! Please do bring guests, as many as you wish.

That being said, here is what you need to know about our preschool holiday program: we put no pressure on children to perform. Period. Some schools do, and I am well aware that some parents like it this way – but we're St. Peter's, and while we encourage and cheerlead and urge, we will not require any child to sing, to "do the hands" or whatever motion accompanies the song, to smile, or even to participate. I spend a good bit of time reminding our children that the people in the audience on this big day will be their own loving families and friends, but (as anyone who has spoken or performed in front of an audience already knows) there's a huge difference between knowing that the audience is on your side and looking out at *all those faces*.

So please, do not be (a) embarrassed, (b) upset, or (c) anything but supportive of your child if he turns his back on the audience, if she stands like a statue instead of singing, if he comes out crying and just wants to sit on your lap and watch, if she yells the song at the top of her lungs. Just enjoy it: these are our children, at this time in their lives; it'll never be exactly like this again!

## Outreach in the Classroom

### Books for The Clinic

Our Outreach at St. Peter's Preschool will be at the forefront of our thoughts in December. We have a project that has become a tradition for us, and we will continue it this year: we ask each family to bring in one inexpensive, new children's book to donate. We make wrapping paper for these books, mark the wrapping paper with the appropriate age of the child to which each book should be given, and bring the books to The Clinic in Phoenixville to be distributed to their youngest patients during the winter. Pre-K children are encouraged to do extra chores around the house to "earn" the book they are to donate, so start thinking about jobs you can give your young ones! (Matching socks, setting silverware on the table, folding napkins, or putting all toys away. Even entertaining a younger sibling for fifteen minutes so Mom or Dad can do something else.)

Please bring in your books by **Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>**!

Info on The Clinic can be found at the web address below:

<http://www.theclinicpa.org/>

### The Giving Tree

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Outreach opportunity is something that started last year and seemed to be really successful. We will have a "Giving Tree" in our gathering space with labeled paper ornaments on it. Pick an ornament from the tree and your family can bring the item on the ornament to the school – wrapped or unwrapped (food items for the PACS pantry unwrapped).

We shall pass the items on to Phoenixville Area Community Services (PACS) and the Chester County Youth Center.

Please bring in your items by **Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**!

Info on the two programs where the donations will go can be found at the following web addresses:

PACS <http://www.pacsphx.org/donate/products>

Chester County Youth Center <http://www.chesco.org/912/Non-Secure-Shelter-Program>

**\*\* We will be making our ornaments for the tree on Tuesday December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am in the upstairs meeting room. Anyone is welcome to come and help!**

## Registration for 2017-18 coming up...

Can you believe it? It's already that time again! Last year, many of you were just seeing St. Peter's (and we you) for the first time. Now we're getting ready for the 2017-18 school year!

In January, **registration** for the **2017-2018** school year begins! St. Peter's Preschool families have two weeks to themselves – from January 3– 18 to register before we open registration to all. Remember, that \$100 registration fee is non-refundable. We also offer a discount for second and subsequent children attending St. Peter's at the same time, and tuition assistance is usually available for those who need it. Tuition information will be available no later than our return to school in January, and earlier than that if I can get it together!

Even though I know that most of you are very familiar with our eligibility requirements and enrollment details for each program, but since we always have some questions, I thought I'd just put it out there again.

The details are as follows:

- **2 ½-year-olds' class** - Children aged between 30 (or so) and 36 months are eligible; toilet training is not required. Meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 11:45, this is a lightweight introduction to the world of preschool; it follows a structure similar to that of our older children's programs, but has learning goals appropriate for the child who is not yet 3.
- **3-year-olds' class** - Children must be at least 3, and not yet 4, by Sept. 1 of the incoming school year. (Children in the Phoenixville Area School District have a different age requirement – 3 by Sept. 30 – because of their district's kindergarten age requirement.) This class meets on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 to 11:45. Developmentally appropriate learning goals emphasize socialization and lots of preschool skills.
- **Pre-K class** - Children must be at least 4 by Sept. 1 of the incoming school year, with, again, Phoenixville ASD children's age cutoff being Sept. 30. The core program meets Monday through Thursday from 9 to 11:45. There's an optional Friday enrichment program for families who want to add a fifth day to their child's preschool week; our Pre-K teacher has carefully designed the curriculum of this optional day to complement the week's activities without compromising the completeness of the core program.

Pre-K children also learn in a rich hands-on environment with play as its foundation; their holistic development is its focus, just as in our younger children's programs. But lest parents worry that more "academics" will be necessary to prepare children for kindergarten, we stay in close contact with area kindergarten programs to ensure that we are teaching what children need to learn: not just academics (though they learn letters and their sounds, numbers and their uses, context and culture and science), but also collaboration, problem-solving, effective communication, empathy, and all the other building blocks of their future "big school" education.

**\*\*Summer camp registration will also open soon as well!**

## *Advent & Christmas at St. Peter's Church – lots to do!*

Regardless of whether you're a member of St. Peter's Church, or even an Episcopalian, there are many ways in which St. Peter's observes Advent and Christmas that your family may want to consider sharing with us!

- **Dec. 18th, 10am – Lessons & Carols:** a quiet, candlelit service of music and readings that tell the story of Christmas from Creation to Bethlehem. All ages are welcome. The service will be followed by brunch.
- **Dec. 24, 4pm – Family Christmas Eve Mass:** This is the big, noisy church service of Christmas at St. Peter's. Parish children act out the Christmas story. It's crazy, but both fun and full of Christmas carols!
- **And of course –** for those who wish a quieter church service, St. Peter's celebrates Christmas Eve at 7:30pm (the Mass begins at 8, but you won't want to miss the music beforehand) and at 10:30pm (same story – Mass at 11, but the music is beautiful) too. Christmas morning, there is just one service, at 11:00 in the historic Church.

And even if you are not moved to attend a church service here, do stop in to see the Church and Barn in their festive greens! The St. Peter's Flower Guild is "all hands on deck" in this joyous season, and their work, always astonishingly beautiful, is transcendent at Christmas.

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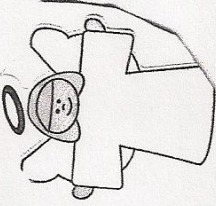

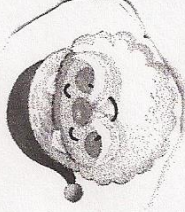


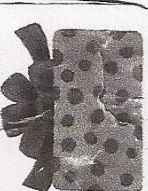
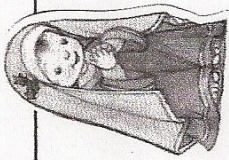

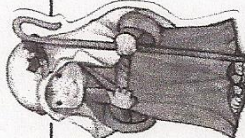

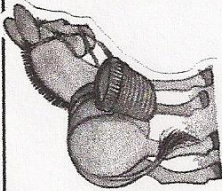
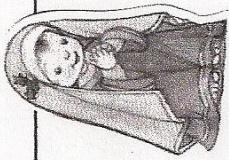

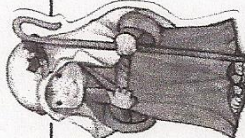

2475 St. Peter's Rd., Malvern PA 19355

<http://preschool.stpetersgv.org>

610-644-2261



**Pre-Kindergarten Class - December, 2012**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>Bible Verse: "I bring you good news of great joy."</p>	<p>3 Happy birthday, Kyle! <i>Countdown To Christmas</i> Counting chains Cake pan stars</p>	<p>4 <i>Inside A Barn</i> Make angels Make wrapping paper</p>	<p>5 <i>Santa's Christmas Surprise</i> Paint candy canes Science</p>	<p>6 <i>Chanukah Lights Everywhere</i> Paper menorrah</p>	<p>7 <i>Christmas Lights</i> Paint Christmas lights</p>	
	<p>10 <i>The Reindeer Christmas</i> Handprint reindeer Music</p>	<p>11 <i>Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer</i> Reindeer ornament Share Day - holiday item</p>	<p>12 <i>Santa's Noisy Night</i> Napkin santas Chapel</p>	<p>13 <i>Wake Up, Santa Claus</i> Bake Christmas cookies Heart-shaped trees Library</p>	<p>14 <i>Get Well, Santa!</i> Pepper print wreath</p>	
<p>"God loved us and sent His Son."</p>	<p>17 <i>Are You Grumpy, Santa?</i> Fork paint trees</p> 	<p>18 <i>'Twas The Night Before Christmas</i> Ice cream cone trees Christmas party pinata</p>	<p>19 9:30 Christmas Program</p>			
	<p>25 Happy birthday, Ethan and Owen!</p> 					
						



## Pre-Kindergarten Class – December, 2012

**Thank You** – Thank you so much to everyone who helped in any way this month – to Ashley’s grandma, Yaya, and to Kyle’s mom for reading in the library and to Ashley, Elsa and Kyle’s moms for sending in delicious healthy snacks. Thanks, too, for all your support for the hopathon! A special thanks to Mrs. McCardle for the special science classes she’s been giving to the pre-K class. We appreciate all the many ways you help.

**Themes** – Our December themes will be Advent, Christmas and the holidays. We will talk about different customs and traditions. We will read the Christmas story and talk about the spirit of giving. We will be making gifts and surprises and practicing for our Christmas program.

**Share Day** – Share day will be Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. Children should bring in an item which reminds them of the holidays.

**Christmas Program** – Our Christmas program/party will be held on Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Family and friends are invited to join us for a short performance of songs and skits followed by refreshments. Children should be in the Church hall by 9:30 to meet their class and teachers. The program will begin at 9:45.

**Special Project** - This year we will be doing a special service project - donating books to the Clinic in Phoenixville. We felt this was a good opportunity to help the children understand the joy of giving at Christmas time. We are asking each child to bring in a book costing about five dollars by Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. We will make wrapping paper in class and the children will wrap the books for needy children. We will be explaining to the children that they can “earn” those books by helping you with extra chores at home.

School will end on Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, after the program and will resume on Monday, January 7th. We wish all of you a blessed and happy holiday season.



3-Day

◀ Nov 2012		~ December 2012 ~					Jan 2013 ▶	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
						1		
2 	3 Book – Christmas Angels Craft – Angels		5 Book – Hanukkah Lights, Hanukkah Lights Craft – Menorah		7 Book – Rudolph The Red Nose Reindeer Craft – Rudolph	8		
9 	10 Book – Christmas Tree for Ruby Craft – Christmas Tree Music		12 Book – Santa's Workshop Craft – Elves Chapel		14 Book – The Christmas Story Craft – Stable Library	15		
16 	17 Book – Santa's Suit Craft – Santa Christmas Party		19 Christmas Program 9:30 Children Arrive 9:45 Program Starts		21 No School	22		
23	24 No School		26 No School		28 No School	29		
30	31 No School							



### **3 Day Class – December, 2012**

Can you believe it's December already? I can't, but I assure you that I am very excited and ready for this busy month with your kids!

Lots of thanks to all of you this month. Healthy snacks were great – thanks to Moms of Annelisa, Ryan, Luke and Declan. Thank you to Shannon Mannon for reading to us – the kids loved it!

Grandparent's Day was a huge success, it was so wonderful to see your children's expressions (as well as grandparent's) when they met each other in the church. They all munched on their snacks and boasted to each other about their grandchildren – as well they should! I know it was a big effort to get to school for some of the kid's grandparents, but, as you will see from the pictures, it was well worth it.

Our Thanksgiving Feast was very exciting, we celebrated with Mrs. Furin's class and it was such a sight to see all our Indians and Pilgrims feasting together. They gobbled down all the delicious food that all of you were so kind to send in. I think our sign-up sheet was full of donations and signatures in about 5 minutes. We have a very generous group of parents – thank you! Speaking of generous parents ... our 3 Day Class Christmas Party is on Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup>. Please look for the sign-up sheet to be posted in the gathering space. Thanks so much.

Our theme this month is Christmas. We will also be learning about Hanukkah.

St. Peter's has been involved in a service project for several years with "The Clinic" in Phoenixville. We have the children donate a book (no more than \$5 dollars) to this special organization that offers free medical services and counseling to those in need in the Phoenixville and Paoli area. We would like to have your donated books in by December 7<sup>th</sup> – thank you!

We will close out our month of December with our Christmas program on Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. The Children will gather in the



original church hall at 9:30 and our program will begin at 9:45. All family and friends are welcome.

As Christmas is around the corner, I would like to thank you all for the gift of your children – I always say to my family and friends “I can’t think of a better way to start my day” – they are truly a blessing.

Happy Holidays!

Patty Brown  
610-246-4038

Christmas break: December 20 to January 6<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy!

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# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 	4 Ho Ho Ho! Christmas Trees	5	6 Twas The Night Before Christmas Santas	7 	8
9	10	11 I Have A Little Dreidel Dreidels	12 	13 Green Share Day A Special Christmas Eve Garlands	14	15
16	17	18 Christmas Party Jingle Bells	19	20 School Closed For Christmas Vacation	21	22
23	24	25 See You January 8, 2013!!	26	27	28	29
30	31	<b>December's color is Green</b> Important Dates/Times: 12/13 Green Share Day 12/18 Christmas Party				

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		12/19 3 Day and Pre K Pageant 12/20 - 1/8 School Closed for Christmas Break
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Dear parents,

Hello! December is here, one of my favorite months. My mom calls me her “Christmas elf” because I love this holiday so much! My tree goes up at Thanksgiving and my daughter is tired of me singing Christmas carols by about the first week of December. Hopefully, since your kids don’t have to live with me, they will indulge my holiday spirit.

Speaking of holidays, although we are an Episcopal school, we celebrate the fact that we have students of many faiths and customs. We will learn a little about Hanukkah and if your family has any other celebrations or traditions, we’d love to learn about them – and not just in December! We are always happy for an excuse to celebrate, so please educate me.

Our color this month is Green and our Green Share Day is December 13<sup>th</sup>.

Our Christmas party is Thursday December 18<sup>th</sup> and we will put a sign- up sheet in the Gathering Space, so everyone can contribute. That will be our last day of school for the year.

Have a wonderful holiday and we’ll see everyone back on Tuesday January 8th!

Miss Sarah