

# News From the Hill

A Newsletter for St. Peter's Preschool

Stacy Warkentine, Director

February 2017

Dear Parents,

Writer's block. Yup, that's what I keep having when I sit down to write February's Newsletter. One thing that has been churning over and over in my mind as I think (and overthink) is a term that I heard in the sermon at church this week.

"Relational Poverty". It can be interpreted different ways and attributed to different things, but a blog article by Dr. Barbara Sorrels entitled "Relational Poverty" summarizes the piece I am most struck by. She talks about the decline of the community and the idea of community responsibility. A quote from the article that so concisely summarizes this idea is "Many adults and parents no longer feel a responsibility for the children in their community and adopt the attitude of, "As long as my children are doing okay, that's all that matters.""

It seems like many people are trying to get back to finding a balance between extracurricular activities and family time (sit down dinners, game night, etc) which is a terrific start but I don't hear a lot about rediscovering communities. My church is doing a series about how every person deserves to be known and loved - really known and loved. Not a superficial version of this, but genuinely knowing people in your community. Really making a concerted effort to take the time to understand others or put yourself in their place.

When Ella was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade our neighbor's daughter was starting 5<sup>th</sup> grade – both Middle School in our district. My neighbors have to go into work early so I hesitantly asked if they wanted her to come to my house in the mornings before school, and they hesitantly accepted. I was hesitant because our family probably has different routines than them (or lack thereof - our mornings are pretty chaotic), I didn't want them to feel obligated to accept, and I didn't want to ruin our friendship if it didn't work out - I imagine she had some of the same reservations. In the end, I have to say that it has been the best thing I have ever done. I feel like her daughter is part of our family and it has brought all of us closer. I know that I can rely on them for anything and feel lucky every day to know them. If I hadn't ignored all of those hesitations, the connection might not be what it is now.

We are so very blessed at St. Peter's to have that type of community. Families helping carpool when someone is sick, celebrating milestones together, paying attention to the little things, and genuinely asking how someone is doing. If we can carry all of this over to our daily lives, we might make a positive influence where we least expect it. Our grocery store, our local library, our neighborhoods, and our churches are all opportunities to help make every person feel known and loved and part of a community.

Kindly,



Stacy Warkentine, Director

Important Dates Ahead	
Feb. 13	3-day Valentine's Day party!
Feb. 14	Pre-K and 2-day Valentine's Day parties!
Feb. 20	No school – Presidents' Day
Feb. 28, 5:30pm	St. Peter's Church: Shrove Tuesday Family Supper
Mar. 6 - Mar. 10	Rummage Sale Week
Mar. 11, 8am-noon	RUMMAGE SALE!
Mar. 12	Daylight Savings Time

## Registration is open now!

Registration for 2017-18 is open to the whole world, and I'm giving tours to families all the time; if you haven't already registered for next year and intend to do so, please DO so I know how much space we have for new people! If you have any reason to hold off on registration (possible move, work change, whatever), please talk with me so I know your situation and timeframe – I want to be able to keep your child's space available, but must also plan as accurately as I can for next year. This applies especially for those who have potential 2-day children: there's a lot of demand for this program.

## ...and Summer Camp registration is coming soon!

St. Peter's Lambs Flock of 2017 will begin to form in February! If you haven't been to St. Peter's Lambs yet, let me explain how it works: We have 6 one-week sessions beginning in early-June, and children may be registered for 3, 4, or 5 days of any session. This year, for planning purposes, we will require that you identify which days in the week you plan to come. You will still be able to add a day for an additional fee, but we would like to be notified of that at the beginning of the week. Look for camp registration flyers in the mailboxes in the very soon!

## What about colds?

When should I keep my child home? The criteria for keeping your child home are pretty clear-cut: fever within the last 24 hours; vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours; green or yellow goo emerging from any orifice; anything that requires treatment with antibiotics, until after the first 24 hours of dosage is on-board; anything contagious until it's no longer contagious.

But the criteria for our *strongly advising* you to keep your child home have to do more with his or her ability to enjoy and benefit from the preschool day, without getting in the way of other children's benefit or good health. A cold may or may not rise to this level. Everyone eventually gets the sniffles; in a cold's early or late stages, it may hardly slow your child down and is relatively easy for us to deal with at school, using tissues, hand-washing, and good covering-up practices. But that hacking cough? The runny nose that just won't stop? The tired eyes and grumpy demeanor that result from not sleeping well, or only sleeping well because of medication? Those are good reasons to keep a child home. And of course, please keep the health of other families in mind: we have elders living with some preschoolers who may be vulnerable to respiratory or other ailments, we have expectant moms, and we have new babies.



## Valentine's Day: How We Celebrate

Please note that each class will have a Valentine's Day party, and valentines will be exchanged; homemade and store-bought valentines are equally great, but please keep the "add-ons" (candies, pencils, etc.) to a minimum so that those children whose families choose to keep a low profile on this holiday don't feel that they're out-done. And every child in a class should receive a valentine from every other child in that class – parents, please don't allow your child to pick and choose which friends to acknowledge! That day will come, we know, soon enough.

Hints for first-timers: If you'd like your child to make or sign valentines, terrific! But be sure to start well in advance so it's not a valentine sweatshop on the night before your child's party. And there's no need to write individual classmates' names on envelopes or cards – keeping the cards "generic" streamlines the process of distributing the cards and ensures that no one is inadvertently left out. One easy approach to homemade cards is for *you* to cut out lots of hearts in different sizes and colors and let your child glue them to a pre-folded card. But if your child (probably Pre-K – cutting on a curve is pretty sophisticated for our younger children!) wants to practice cutting, what a great opportunity.

So have fun and be as creative as you and your child wish, but please don't stress over it. This is truly an instance where "It's the thought that counts."

## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

St. Peter's Church invites all the families of St. Peter's Preschool to come eat some pancakes on Tuesday, Feb. 28th at 5:30 pm! The tradition of eating pancakes on the day before Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins, arises from the even older tradition of spending Lent in a long fast or period of abstaining from rich foods. Pancakes, made with milk, eggs, and butter, would not be permitted in Lent in the old days. So many churches today - while they don't necessarily say we should abstain from eating rich foods - still mark the beginning of the season of Lent by having a big feast of rich foods the night before. (This is also where Mardi Gras - "Fat Tuesday" - comes from!) We hope you can join the church in their celebration!



## The Rummage Sale is Coming!!

The Rummage Sale is March 11th! Yes, we'll need your donations (more about that below), but this sale is 4-hours that takes one week of everybody's putting in some time. You'll see signups on the bulletin board near the little sofa in the Gathering Space for volunteers – a couple of hours sorting clothes or stacking board games or boxing up sale leftovers or working the cashbox goes directly to helping St. Peter's.

We'll need help every day of Rummage Sale Week (that's March 6th through March 10th) during preschool hours, sorting things that people drop off to donate. If you have a younger (or older) sibling with you, that's not necessarily an obstacle; you can certainly work in an area of the Barn where your child will be occupied. Then there's Sale Day! We need 3 people checking people out for the first "shift" (8-10am) plus a couple more to wander the sale floor looking helpful. Then, from 10 to noon, one or two people on the cashbox and one or two on the floor are usually fine. Finally, there's CLEANUP – the Barn needs to be a church again by Sunday morning, which means boxing and bagging whatever is left, moving it out to be transported, and sweeping up.

Donations: We can accept some furniture, books, tools, artwork, jewelry, household items, shoes, garden tools, clothing (\$5 per bag), toys, baby gear (umbrella strollers, exersaucers, bottles, high chairs, monitors, bassinet, walkers, bouncers, baby bath tubs and so much more), bikes, scooters, air hockey tables, china, collectibles and more!