

# THE LION'S PRIDE

## NEWSLETTER

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"*

January

Saint Leo the Great Catholic School

2025-2026

### News Around Campus

#### Fruit of the Spirit of Peace

For the month of November, we celebrated the beautiful virtue of **Peace** — the ability to bring calm, understanding, and harmony to others through our words, actions, and presence.



We are so proud of our Virtue Recipients who embodied this virtue throughout the month, helping to create a school environment where everyone feels safe, respected, and supported. Your peaceful hearts make a difference every single day — congratulations to each of you for being a true example of Peace! ✨

#### 60th Anniversary Gala

The Saint Leo the Great Catholic School 60th Anniversary Gala and Auction was a truly memorable evening that beautifully celebrated six decades of faith, education, and community. The event was a tremendous success, bringing together alumni, families, parishioners, faculty, and friends in a spirit of gratitude and joy.

Through generous sponsorships, spirited bidding, and heartfelt support, the gala raised significant funds to support the school's mission and future growth. Most importantly, the evening honored the legacy of Saint Leo the Great Catholic School while reaffirming our shared commitment to forming students rooted in faith, service, and academic excellence

#### Employee of the Month

This past month we were focusing on service to others, and no one embodies that spirit more than Denise Connor.



This month's recipient, Denise is always ready to serve others. She greets the kids every morning as they step off the bus, making sure each child starts their day with a warm smile and a friendly hello. As soon as the morning rush settles, she immediately gets to work prepping lunches with care and efficiency. She serves every student and staff member with genuine kindness, sprinkles cinnamon on their applesauce, and she always has a solution ready when someone forgets their lunch.

Denise doesn't just make sure we are all fed—she makes sure we feel seen. She knows everyone by name, remembers their favorite lunches, and notices when someone needs a little extra encouragement. She brings positivity to every corner of our building, often going above and beyond her role without ever expecting recognition. Whether she's lending a helping hand, offering a quick word of support, or simply brightening someone's day, Denise consistently demonstrates what it means to lead with heart.

Her dedication, reliability, and compassion make her an invaluable part of our school community. We are incredibly grateful for all the ways she shows up—every single day.

Congratulations, Denise! You are so deserving of this honor.

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### Greetings from Mrs. Miller

*As we prepare to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, I hope you and your family had a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year. May the light of Christ continue to guide our school community as we begin this new year together.*

*As always, please be sure to check the school calendar for important upcoming events.*

*It's that time of year! If we need to cancel school due to snow, we follow the Hempfield School District. You will receive a text message and an email with any updates, and we will also post the information on ParentSquare.*

*With the colder weather here, just a reminder that students do go outside every day unless the temperature is below 25 degrees. Please be sure your child comes to school with appropriate outerwear. May God bless you and your family with peace and good health throughout 2026.*

*Thank you for your continued support of our school.*



*Blessings,  
Mrs. Jennifer L. Miller*

### Important Dates

#### January

- 1/5/26 Classes Resume 📌
- 1/6/26 January Birthday Dress Down Day
- 1/6/26 STAR Reading Assessment
- 1/7/26 STAR Math Assessment & Spirit Day
- 1/8/26 Picture Re-Take Day
- 1/9/26 December Virtue Mass & Free Lunch Friday
- 1/16/26 - Early Dismissal 12:00
- 1/19/26 - No School - MLK Jr. Day
- 1/21/26 - Spirit Day
- 1/25-1/31 - Catholic Schools Week - stay tuned for more info!



### Staff Spotlight

#### Mrs. Kelly Mastrogiovanni aka Mrs. M

Everyone knows Mrs. Mastrogiovanni as Mrs. M! She developed Saint Leo School's first Preschool program and proudly served as a Preschool teacher for 18 years. She later moved to Kindergarten, where she found her true passion and absolutely loves teaching.

Mrs. M. believes children learn best when they are actively involved in their education. She is passionate about creating a classroom where students are encouraged to make choices, express their ideas, and grow in their faith.

Teaching at Saint Leo holds a special place in Mrs. M.'s heart. Now in her 28th year, she truly enjoys working alongside a dedicated and supportive staff and is grateful for the strong school community made up of caring parents and wonderful students. She considers Saint Leo's not just a school, but a family.

In 2023, Mrs. M. received the Golden Apple Award from the Diocese of Harrisburg, made possible through the generosity of the Donahue Family Foundation. This award recognizes a teacher's professional excellence, leadership, commitment to Catholic values, and dedication to Catholic education.

Mrs. M. is a proud Penn State University graduate and lives in Lititz with her husband, Dave, and their cat, Leo—who has a special connection to Saint Leo's after finding his way there during a rainstorm. When she's not teaching, Mrs. M. enjoys traveling, attending concerts, spending time with her family, and cheering on the Nittany Lions!



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**Enroll Now!**  
**K-8**  
**Saint Leo The Great Catholic School**

CATHOLIC | EXCELLENT | AFFORDABLE

Enrollment is now open for the 2026-2027 school year for Preschool-8th Grade.

If any of our Saint Leo the Great parents know of a family that should be attending our wonderful school, please reach out to them! If they enroll and attend Saint Leo's, the family that recommended them, will get a \$500 credit on their tuition.

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### 4th Grade Retreat

Fourth Grade participated in their Grade Retreat on Wednesday, December 3, with the theme of The Beatitudes! We started our day in Eucharistic Adoration and then we headed to the Weber Center where we spent time learning all about The Beatitudes (MT 5: 3-12) and how we are all called to listen to Jesus, and how He teaches us through His Sermon on the Mount how we are to live our lives, and in the qualities we are called to exemplify through our words and actions in the way we treat others. We are all called to live our lives like the Saints who followed Jesus' teachings by living out The Beatitudes in their everyday lives!

We played "Beatitudes Bowling," a fun new game we introduced where the students bowled in teams to help them learn the Beatitudes through everyday scenarios we presented where they had to identify the Beatitude being described and then aim for that bowling pin- it was a fun (and loud!) part of our day that everyone seemed to enjoy. Thanks to an interactive and entertaining Beatitudes Homily Video, we also learned a catchy way to help us remember each Beatitude and what it means, with hand motions to go along! I am sure the students would love to show you if you ask them- They had fun showing Fr. Kappes at the end of our retreat day!

Before our special pizza lunch, we ended the day with the students making their retreat craft: a Beatitudes Bookmark, where the students created a bookmark with the Beatitude that each of them felt they best exemplified, and wanted to strive to imitate in their everyday lives!



It was a special and fun day, where we learned how important it is to know the Beatitudes not only in our minds, but to know them in our hearts- so that we can strive to live them everyday!

Blessings,  
Spiritual Life Committee

### 2nd Grade First Reconciliation



Our second graders have been working hard to prepare for their First Reconciliation, which took place on the morning of December 6th. What a truly special and grace-filled day!

The children waited patiently for their turn some a little nervous and some very nervous, but after leaving the confessional, their faces told a beautiful story. They looked happy, relieved, and filled with peace.

The following Monday, we reflected together on the freedom and peace that the Sacrament of Reconciliation offers us. The children shared how good it felt to talk to Jesus and to know they were forgiven and loved.

May the faith and courage of these children inspire all of us to go to Confession more often and to receive the peace, mercy, and healing that only Jesus can give.

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### St. Leo's Favorite Music Teacher Has A New Last Name!

Mrs. Emily Paterson married her high school sweetheart, Will, on November 15 th at Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Middletown. Mrs. Paterson met her husband shortly before they both began their senior year at Lancaster Catholic High School in 2016.

Mrs. Paterson said she was thrilled that several students were able to attend the wedding. "It was very special that they could participate," Mrs. Paterson said. "It really means a lot." She said students and staff were very supportive as she prepared for the big day. "It's been a really exciting time," she said.

Mr. and Mrs. Paterson recently moved into their new home in Mount Joy.

Congratulations to the newlyweds!



### Christmas Concert

On December 15 th , our school community held its annual Christmas Concert! Students in grades PreK-5 th grade performed two songs each. The concert also featured our School Mass choir, an ensemble made up of 4 th -8 th grade students. Each grade had been learning two Christmas songs during their music classes and in their classrooms for several weeks. They worked extremely hard, practiced their singing, and worked on bowing as a group before they performed. Everyone did a great job!

### Christmas Breakfast Tradition

Students were given an extra boost to their morning on December 17th during St. Leo's annual Christmas breakfast. Students, teachers, and staff dined on pancakes, hash browns, sausage, fruit, and a variety of juices. Thank you to our stellar cafeteria staff for preparing this delicious and hearty breakfast!



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### Spring Musical

Every year, SLTG has an annual Spring Musical. The musical is a great opportunity for students to work together to bring a musical performance to life! There is a place for every student to participate, whether it's on stage, or behind the scenes.



From the set pieces, amazing choreographed dances, great dialogue, wonderful props, to the amazing lighting and stage work, every show is a great achievement! It takes hard work, talent, and teamwork to pull the musical together each year. In years past, St. Leo's has performed Mary Poppins Jr., Willy Wonka Jr., Shrek Jr., Frozen Jr., and more!

The musical is open to any student in grades 3-8. All audition materials, sign-ups, and more can be found on the Google Site that will be emailed soon. Students should practice and prepare their audition materials prior to their audition date.

The revealing of the musical is a bit different this year! This year, four musical posters were hung outside of the music classroom. These four posters represented the four choices, or possibilities, of musicals that could be the show in the spring. The week before Christmas break, at the end of each day, one of the posters was removed. That musical was then eliminated and not a possibility of being the show. The final show will be announced very soon, and we are very excited!

All students are welcome and encouraged to audition and be a part of this wonderful opportunity!

### Living out the Virtues



We'd like to take a moment to recognize some very special young ladies who have shown extraordinary kindness, caring hearts, and true leadership in our Pre-K classroom. Kindness is more than just being nice - it's seeing a need and stepping in, offering patience when someone is struggling, and sharing your time and love without being asked. Each one of them does this beautifully.

These wonderful young ladies go above and beyond. From helping with car line, end of day routines, special, fine motor activities, and even playtime, they comfort our students, guide them gently, and make them feel safe and valued. They show kindness in everything that they do.

Here at Saint Leo's we talk often about following the example of the saints - showing love, patience and compassion as they students do. Our goal is to get to heaven and be a saint, and each of these young ladies are growing into a young saint through the way they serve others. They truly live out the virtues that the saints modeled for us.

They are role models. They are leaders, and most of all they are young women whose kindness is shaping the lives of our Pre-K students in the most beautiful way.