

# THE LION'S PRIDE

## NEWSLETTER

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

December

Saint Leo the Great Catholic School

2025-2026

### Greetings from Mrs. Miller

*As we begin the month of December and enter the holy season of Advent, we are invited to pause, reflect, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. This is a beautiful time of anticipation, a time when the darkness of winter is slowly brightened by the hope, peace, joy, and love that Advent brings.*

*In our school community, Advent offers countless opportunities to grow spiritually together. Our students are engaging in daily prayer, acts of kindness, and service projects that help them understand the true meaning of this sacred season. It is inspiring to see their enthusiasm as they reflect on how they can bring Christ's light to others, both in our school and in the world around them.*

*December is also a busy and joy-filled month on campus. From classroom celebrations, special liturgies, and our Christmas programs, this time of year reminds us of the blessings of community. I am deeply grateful for our dedicated teachers, our supportive families, and our wonderful students who make our school a place of faith, learning, and love.*

*As we move through Advent and approach the celebration of Christmas, may your homes be filled with peace, hope, and the joyful expectation of Christ's birth. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.*

*Wishing you and your family a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas.*

*Blessings,  
Mrs. Jennifer L. Miller*



### Staff Spotlight

#### Welcome to Mrs. Joanna Spicer

I am a Lancaster County native, and earned a BFA from Moore College of Art & Design, Philadelphia. I attended SLTG church in my youth and I'm now a parishioner at MMOC. Throughout my career, I have taught Art to students ranging in ages from 3 to 95! In addition to teaching at SLTG and PCA&D's CCE, I am the Program Administrator at Lancaster Creative Factory. LCF is a local non-profit art organization where I work with the community & other non-profits to create programs & workshops, as well as coordinate classes in-house, and support the artists and staff.

I love Art and sharing my passion with others! I have worked on mural projects and I'm always looking for the next opportunity for creative collaboration. When I'm not spending time with my husband, Matthew, and our children, I love to weave, play with fabric, color, and create designs for future projects. We spend a lot of family time out in our boat on the Susquehanna River during the warmer months, and around our fire pit at home during the colder ones!



### Important Dates

#### December

- o 12/1-12/8 Ignatius Book Fair 📖📖
- o 12/2 December Birthday Dress Down Day 🎉
- o 12/3 Spirit Day 🍷
- o 12/5 Free Lunch Friday 🍔🍕
- o 12/6 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade First Reconciliation ✝️
- o 12/8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass 9:00 am ☑️
- o 12/15 Christmas Concert Grades Pre-K - 5 at 6:30 pm 🎵
- o 12/17 Christmas Breakfast 🎅🍪
- o 12/19 School Mass 9:00 am ✝️
- o 12/22-1/4 Christmas Break 🎄📅
- o 1/5/26 Classes Resume 📢



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### News Around Campus

#### Celebrating Saint Leo the Great

St. Leo students celebrated the Feast of St. Leo the Great on Nov. 10th by attending a special Mass commemorating Pope Leo I.

Pope Leo I, who was the first pope to be given the title "the Great," reigned from A.D. 440 to 461. This ancient commemoration carries a new resonance under the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV, the fourteenth successor of St. Peter to take the name Leo. While the new pope says he chose the name mainly out of admiration for the teachings of Pope Leo XIII, this feast recalls the very first Pope Leo, whose legacy helped shape the office of the papacy itself.

After Mass, Mrs. Miller announced students who earned the Fruit of the Spirit of Joy Award for October. Great job Leo Lions!

#### Fruit of the Spirit Joy

For the month of October, we celebrated the beautiful virtue of **Joy** – the grace of finding delight in everyday moments and sharing that light with others.



We are incredibly proud of our Virtue of the Month Recipients, who shined so brightly throughout October. Your smiles, laughter, positive attitudes, and kind hearts have lifted the spirits of everyone in our school community.

Thank you for reminding us that joy is a gift from God meant to be shared. Keep letting your light shine!

#### Employee of the Month

We are so proud to recognize our October Teacher/Staff Member of the Month...Mrs. Angel Quinn!

This honor is so well deserved. Mrs. Quinn consistently brings creativity, enthusiasm, and joy to her classrooms. Her lessons are engaging and hands-on, filled with energy and excitement that inspire her students to love learning. The children can't wait to see what she has planned each week, whether it's a fun activity, a story that connects to their lesson, or a new way to explore a familiar topic.

Mrs. Quinn arrives each day with her wagon and a huge smile, ready to give her best to her students and her school community. She embodies the spirit of Saint Leo the Great with her positivity, dedication, and passion for teaching!

Please join us in congratulating Mrs. Quinn for being our October Teacher/Staff Member of the Month!



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### A New Pledge

We are excited to share that our school has adopted a new pledge inspired by our patron, Saint Leo the Great. Each day, our students will be invited to reflect on what it means to live and love like Saint Leo, with courage, compassion, and a deep commitment to following Jesus.

The pledge emphasizes three core values that guide our school community: faith, respect, and responsibility. By reciting it together, students are reminded that they are children of God and are called to show kindness in their words and actions, treat others with respect, and do their best in all they do. This new pledge supports our mission to help children grow not only academically, but also spiritually and morally. It connects our daily routines with the example of Saint Leo the Great, who led with wisdom, protected the vulnerable, and encouraged unity in the Church.

We look forward to partnering with you as we help our students carry these values into their classrooms, friendships, homes, and the wider world. Thank you for continuing to support our shared mission of forming disciples who shine with Christ's love.

### Mrs. Werts' Class Adopts A Cow

This year marks Mrs. Werts' fourth year participating in the "Adopt A Cow" program sponsored by Discover Dairy - an annual highlight that brings agriculture, science, and a sense of wonder into the classroom. Through this engaging program, students not only learn about farming but also grow in gratitude for God's creation and the people who help nourish our communities.

This year, the class adopted a calf named Fudge, who comes from Kurtland Dairy Farm in Elverson, PA. Fudge was born on September 16th, weighing 85 pounds and standing 29 inches tall.



Each month, students receive updated photos, growth measurements, and special notes from Farmer Paige, who shares stories and insights about life on the farm.

Discover Dairy supports classrooms with videos, virtual tours, and educational resources that help students understand dairy farming, animal care, and how food makes its way from local farms to our tables. These lessons naturally connect to our Catholic values by teaching students about stewardship - our responsibility to care for the Earth, respect living creatures, and recognize the dignity of the work done by farming families.

Mrs. Werts shared her enthusiasm for the program, saying: "We have fun learning with the Adopt A Cow program all year long. We learn all about dairy and the different breeds of cows, and we also learn about our host farm family. The students love knowing that our calf came from a farm in our own state. It sparks their curiosity about the dairy industry and gives them a new respect for farming and where our dairy products come from."



In our Catholic school community, the Adopt A Cow program beautifully reinforces lessons about gratitude and God's abundant creation. As the students follow Fudge's growth, they also learn to appreciate the farmers who care for the land and animals with such dedication. This experience helps them see how faith, learning, and real-world understanding come together - reminding us that even ordinary things, like a glass of milk, are part of God's extraordinary gifts.

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### 8th Grade Sweatshirt Tradition

The 8th-grade sweatshirt is a beloved and relatively new tradition at our school, beginning just two years ago. The idea was inspired by the Catholic grade school Mrs. Werts attended, where a similar tradition marked the transition into the final year of elementary school. Bringing that memory forward, our own sweatshirt tradition now reflects the spirit, pride, and leadership we hope to cultivate in our oldest students.

This unique sweatshirt is the only piece of apparel outside our standard school uniform that students are permitted to wear throughout the year. Its purpose is simple yet profound: it sets our 8th graders apart, reminding them, and all who see them, that they are leaders in our building. Whether guiding younger students, modeling respectful behavior, or contributing to the daily rhythm of school life, these students wear a visible symbol of the responsibility entrusted to them.

Thanks to the generosity of our S.E.E.D. sponsorship program, each 8th grader receives a personalized sweatshirt featuring our chosen lion artwork and our annual school theme. Their individual names and class year are embroidered on the front, making each sweatshirt not just a uniform piece but a keepsake, something they can carry with them long after they leave Saint Leo's.

Our 8th graders also gathered for a special blessing from Father Kappes. In this quiet and reverent moment, he prayed over them as they embark on their final months at Saint Leo's, asking God to guide their choices, strengthen their character, and help them shine as examples of faith and kindness. The blessing serves as a reminder that leadership in a Catholic school is not just about responsibility—it is about discipleship, service, and walking with Christ.

As they wear their sweatshirts proudly throughout the year, may our 8th graders be continually reminded of the legacy they are building and the younger students who look up to them. May their final journey at Saint Leo's be filled with growth, gratitude, and grace.



### Food Fight!!!

Middle School students rocketed food to those in need this Fall by entering Food Fight, a new Diocesan wide competition. Food Fight was organized by the Going the Extra Miles Foundation, which is a 501(c)(3) organization founded by York Catholic sophomore Miles



Murdocca. In Food Fight, students had to collect food donations, create a display of that food creatively, and present it to judges. Middle school students created posters to advertise the competition to younger students and they were able to collect over 300 food items. With donations going to the Hempfield Area Food Pantry, we especially focused on collecting canned Tuna and Chicken as requested for those in need. Using the collected food, students were able to create a Rocket, which the judges noted had great organization and symmetry, thanks to the generous donations. 6th Graders Chase Gauvain, Liam MacLaughlin, Paul Squierdo, and Thomas Richards gave up a Friday afternoon after school to build the Rocket, making sure it was stable but impressive. Judges and Miles Murdocca himself visited on November 11th and were wowed by the Rocket display and a slideshow presentation created primarily by Chase. Great job to all of our students who helped make the first Food Fight a roaring success!