



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

June

Saint Leo the Great Catholic School

2025-2026

## Greetings from Mrs. Miller

*As we close the 2025–2026 school year, we reflect with gratitude on the many blessings God has given our St. Leo the Great Catholic School community. We ended the year with a beautiful Mass on Friday, June 5th, celebrating our students, families, faculty, and staff, and giving thanks for another wonderful year together. It has been a joy to watch your children grow academically, spiritually, and socially throughout the year. They are truly gifts from God, and we are so thankful that you share them with us each day. We cherish the opportunity to help guide them as they continue becoming the best version of themselves.*

*As summer begins, we pray that your family enjoys a restful, joyful, and safe vacation filled with special moments together. May this season provide time for renewal, laughter, and continued faith-filled experiences. Thank you for your partnership, support in, and commitment to Catholic education throughout the year.*

*I will truly miss seeing the children's smiling faces each morning, hearing their laughter in the hallways, and witnessing the joy they bring to our school each day. While they will certainly be missed over the summer months, I look forward with excitement to welcoming everyone back in August for another wonderful year at St. Leo the Great Catholic School!*

*Mrs. Jennifer L. Miller*



## Staff Spotlight

### Happy Retirement - Dr. Joan Withum

During her tenure at St. Leo, Dr. Joan Withum, said the school has taught her something. "I have learned more about my faith by teaching at St. Leo than I ever have before," Dr. Withum said. "It's such a faithful school."



Now, after seven years as a Language Arts and Religion middle school teacher at St. Leo, Dr. Withum is closing out her 38-year career as an educator. While she will no longer be in the classroom, Dr. Withum said she will carry students close to her heart. "It's been all about loving them and getting them to love themselves," Dr. Withum said. "One of my goals was to always have my students know how important they are." Before joining St. Leo, Dr. Withum served as an assistant principal at Landis Run Middle School and has taught at Manheim Township High School.

She started her career at Queen of Peace Catholic School in Flushing, New York where she taught a multitude of subjects including English, science, and social studies. Dr. Withum then taught at Holy Cross, an all-boys school, also located in Flushing. As she grew in her career, Dr. Withum has worked with students on all academic levels and has made student accountability a large part of her teaching style.

When students have told her that they can't complete difficult assignments, Dr. Withum provided them with a challenge. "I hope I have helped students become more confident," Dr. Withum said. "I've always told them they can do the work; they just must work hard. I've taught them to ask questions when they don't understand."

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### News Around Campus

#### Dr. Joan Withum

Dr. Withum's impact on St. Leo has been enormous, in terms of helping students thrive in their studies and in aiding in their social and emotional growth. So much so, that the graduating eighth-grade class dedicated the 2025-2026 yearbook to Dr. Withum where students thanked her for her patience, love, and kindness.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Withum has also served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion during School Mass every week.

In retirement, Dr. Withum plans to catch on her reading and travel with her husband, Larry. "I'm ready to not be so busy and am looking forward to doing things I haven't been able to do yet," she said.

#### Happy Retirement - Michele Tappany

As our amazing IU13 school counselor, Michele Tappany retires at the end of this school year, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for her years of dedicated service to our school students, and many others.

For the past five years, Michele has served the students of Saint Leo the Great School as our IU13 school counselor, following her work with students at Our Lady of Angels School in Columbia. Her compassion, guidance, and unwavering support have made a lasting impact on countless children and families. We thank Michele for her commitment to nurturing the whole child and wish her abundant blessings, joy, and fulfillment in her well-earned retirement!



### Employee of the Month

We are proud to recognize Joanna Spicer as our April Employee of the Month: Builder of Community. Joanna consistently fosters a sense of unity, collaboration, and inclusivity within our school family.



In her art room, every student is seen, valued, and encouraged. She approaches each child with a calm, caring, and loving demeanor, creating an environment where students feel safe to express themselves and take creative risks. Joanna truly believes in every student and their ability to create something meaningful, and that belief shines through in her daily interactions and instruction.

Beyond her classroom, Joanna builds strong connections with students and contributes to a welcoming school culture that is fair, firm, and rooted in respect. She celebrates individuality while also bringing students together through shared experiences in art. Her patience, consistency, and positive presence make a lasting impact on both students and colleagues. Joanna exemplifies what it means to be a Builder of Community, and we are grateful for the warmth, creativity, and connection she brings to our school each day.



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### May Crowning



On May 8<sup>th</sup> St. Leo School participated in a special May Crowning where 29 second graders in Miss Emily Fix's and Mrs. Katie O'Dell's class, who recently received their First Communion, recited The Rosary with the help of eighth graders in front of fellow students, teachers, and parents.

Each spring as the warmer gets warmer the Catholic Church turns with love to the Blessed Virgin Mary – our Mother and Queen. One of the most cherished devotions of this season is the May Crowning, a centuries-old tradition that lifts our hearts toward heaven through Mary, who always guides us to her Son. The blossoming earth mirrors the spiritual flourishing that Mary inspires in the hearts of believers.

For decades, parishes and Catholic schools have marked the month of May with processions, hymns, and flower offerings in honor of Mary. At the heart of these celebrations is the crowning of a statue of the Blessed Virgin—a poignant sign of our love for the one who is both Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.

At the end of the Crowning, second graders sang "Thank You God." We crown Mary because she is, in every way, a queen – not in the worldly sense, but in the kingdom of God. As the Mother of Jesus, Mary holds a unique and exalted place. Her perfect discipleship, her faithful yes to God's will, and her enduring presence with the Church make her the crown of all creation.

Before the Crowning, St. Leo Principal Jennifer Miller, asked students, teachers and parents to reflect on the special women in our lives. "Let's pray for all the strong intelligent women around us," she said.

### Fruit of the Spirit of Self-Control

For May, we focused on the virtue of Self-Control, inspired by the example of St. Teresa of Avila. Self-control helps us to pause before we act, to make thoughtful choices, and to respond with patience and wisdom even when situations are difficult. It reminds us to manage our words, actions, and emotions in ways that reflect kindness, responsibility, and respect for others.

We are so proud of our Virtue Recipients, who consistently demonstrate self-control in their daily lives. They showed perseverance when tasks were challenging, used calm and respectful words with classmates, and made positive choices even when faced with frustration or temptation. Like St. Teresa of Avila, they are learning to grow in faith through discipline, prayer, humility, and trust in God's guidance.

Our May Virtue Recipients have truly lived like St. Teresa through their thoughtful actions, positive attitudes, and ability to lead by example. Their self-control helps create a peaceful, respectful, and Christ-centered school community.



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**We're Not in Kansas Anymore**

Hushed anticipation fell over St. Leo School as the curtain opened for the spring musical *Wizard of Oz Youth Edition* on May 15th.

During the hour and a half school show, students were moved by the charismatic portrayals of Dorothy, played by eighth-grader Eliza Gemmill; the Scarecrow, portrayed by Thomas Richards, sixth grade; and The Wicked Witch of the West, played by Becca Nigon; eighth grade.

The audience was spellbound by brightly colored bedazzled costumes of the munchkins and jitterbugs as they danced across the stage in Parish Hall.

The performance garnered chuckles from the audience as the Lion, played by eighth-grader Jude Kerr and sixth-grader Noah Costello, who portrayed the Tin Man, finally found courage and a heart.

St. Leo music teacher, Mrs. Emily Paterson, said the show came together nicely. "It was awesome," Mrs. Paterson said. "Casting was really strong and students were super confident." More than 70 students participated in this year's school musical.

Congratulations to the talented actors and stage and lighting crew for making this year's musical so memorable!

Before both weekend public performances, family and friends of St. Leo students walked the school halls and admired the many pieces made by the students in the school's annual art show.

Artwork varied according to grade level and included paper masks, paintings and various drawings.

**Imagine**

Having faith and being able to forgive are essential in our journey to become closer to God. Sixth graders reflected on this as they watched *I Can Only Imagine 2*, a movie that shows how God helps us work through very painful parts of our lives to bring healing and hope.

The movie tells the story of Bart Millar, lead vocalist of contemporary Christian music band MercyMe, and his teenage son, Sam as they grapple with Sam's poor management of his Type 1 Diabetes.

Sam's constant neglect of his own health puts enormous strain on Bart and Sam's relationship, until band newcomer, Tim Timmons, shows them the power of love, hope, and faith.

The movie explores family struggles, hurt, disappointment, and questions about life – but also depicts how painful experiences can be overcome with faith in God and that life's challenges can lead to growth, healing and purpose.

After the movie, students reflected quietly wrote and wrote about moments in their own lives where they felt gratitude and grief. Later in the day, students made colorful gratitude posters together where they depicted some of their favorite things and why they are grateful for them.

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### A Mother's Day Celebration

This May our Kindergarten students were delighted to celebrate the special women in their lives during our annual Mother's Day celebration. Mrs. M's and Mrs. Baak's classes had a beautiful morning honoring their moms with songs, poems, handmade cards, flowers and special memories. The children proudly performed for their mothers and shared thoughtful gifts they had lovingly prepared in class.

We were excited to welcome Karen from The Craft Factory LLC who helped the children and their mothers create beautiful jewelry trays and jewelry pieces together. Each tray featured the special message, "Love One Another," reflecting both the message of Mary and the love we strive to share within our families and school community. Families enjoyed refreshments, special photo opportunities, and a joyful morning spent making memories together. Mrs. M and Mrs. Baak were grateful to continue this cherished kindergarten tradition celebrating both our mothers and the example of Mother Mary during this special month of May.



### Field Day Fun!

The heat couldn't stop the fun at Saint Leo's annual Field Day! Students spent the day enjoying sunshine, laughter, and plenty of exciting activities. From relay races, tug-of-war, kickball, softball toss, volleyball, the bounce house, face painting, popsicles, the dunk tank, and so much more, there was something for everyone to enjoy.



Our students made wonderful memories while celebrating the end of another successful school year with their classmates and teachers. A special thank you goes to Mrs. Kauffman, our dedicated school aides, and our amazing parent volunteers who worked hard behind the scenes to make Field Day a success. Their time, energy, and commitment helped create a day full of fun, friendship, and school spirit for all of our students.



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### Moving Up and Moving On

Proud St. Leo parents and family members watched seventh and eighth graders being acknowledged for their academic success, service, and contributions to the school community and beyond during St. Leo's Annual Junior High Awards Ceremony on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

During the ceremony, Jennifer Miller, school principal, announced dozens of award recipients including the President's Award for Academic Excellence. The award is presented to a student who has a 98 percent or higher grade point average in the Diocesan required subjects with no average less than a "C" in any marking period in any subject. Eighth grade students recipients of this award are Alex Anspach and Ellis Lin. Seventh-grade award winners are Claire Bunty and Lillian Doheny. St. Leo teachers Danielle Cox and Elise Grignon presented each award winner with a certificate and pin.

A host of academic awards in middle school subjects in religion, algebra, science, history, Spanish and language arts including STEAM were also given. In seventh grade, Logan Stritch was awarded for his achievements in STEAM as well as eighth-grader, Ellis Lin. Students were also honored for their contributions as altar servers and mass lectors. St. Leo Service Award recipients are eighth graders Clare Algeo, Audrey Altimare, Delaney Smith and Adrienne Hoover for helping to bring recess equipment out daily. Adrienne and eighth-grader, Kelly McMahon, were also acknowledged for leading the school's afternoon prayer and announcements. Seventh-grader Tyler Kotarba also earned the award for helping to direct morning car riders.

Mrs. Miller also introduced a new award -- *The St. Leo Lifer Award* -- presented to graduating eighth graders who have attended St. Leo School since preschool. Recipients of the St. Leo Lifer Award are Audrey Altimare, Alex Anspach, Matthew George, Owen Grignon, Adrienne Hoover, Jude Kerr, Emily McCrabb, Eliza and Harper Gemmill, and Reid Zachery. Congratulations to all of our deserving middle schoolers!

Immediately after the awards ceremony, fifth graders took part in Bridging Ceremony, a new tradition, where eighth graders present students with a tea light and walked them across a wooden bridge on the stage in Parish Hall.



The tradition marks how eighth graders have carried the light in the school and now are passing that light to incoming sixth graders.

*Welcome sixth grade!*



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### To Our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduates

As you leave Saint Leo the Great School and begin a new chapter in high school, know that you carry with you much more than the knowledge you have gained in the classroom. You carry the faith, values, friendships, and memories that have shaped you throughout your years here.

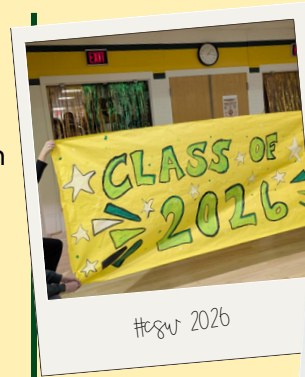
As you move forward, remember the words of Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know well the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope." Trust that God has a purpose for each of you and will continue to guide your path.

Be courageous in your faith, kind in your actions, and steadfast in your character. Continue to seek truth, serve others, and use your gifts to make a difference in the world. High school will bring new opportunities, challenges, and experiences, but remember that the foundation you have built at Saint Leo will help guide you every step of the way.

While your time at Saint Leo may be ending, you will always be a part of our school family. We are proud of all you have accomplished and excited to see all that you will become. May God bless you, protect you, and lead you throughout your high school years and beyond.

Congratulations, Class of 2026! We will be praying for you as you begin this exciting new chapter.

*Congratulations, Class of 2026!*



#sgw 2026



class of 2026



class of 2026



field trip



washington dc



one last field day



8<sup>th</sup> grade talent show

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### Saint Leo's Welcomes Back the Class of 2022

Saint Leo the Great School was honored to welcome back members of the Class of 2022 as they prepared to graduate from Lancaster Catholic High School on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. As part of the cherished Senior Walk tradition, these graduates returned to the halls where many of their educational journeys first began, proudly dressed in their caps and gowns.

As the seniors walked through the school, current students, teachers, and staff lined the hallways to cheer them on and celebrate their accomplishments. The visit served as a powerful reminder of the strong foundation built at Saint Leo the Great and the bright futures that await our students.

For the graduates, it was a meaningful opportunity to reflect on how far they have come since their elementary school days. For our younger students, it was an inspiring glimpse into what can be achieved through hard work, perseverance, and faith.

We are incredibly proud of these young men and women and all they have accomplished. We congratulate the Lancaster Catholic High School Class of 2026 and pray that God continues to guide them as they begin the next chapter of their lives. May they continue to carry with them the values, faith, and spirit of Saint Leo wherever their journeys lead.



SLTG/LCHS Class of 2026



SLTG Class of 2022



kindergarten graduation



celebrating mom!



all saints day



1st grade fun



3rd grade presidents tea



lunch with friends