



St. Alexander – Newsletter



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*St. Alexander Catholic Elementary is proud to be part
of the Notre Dame Catholic Family of Schools*

DECEMBER 2024

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Called by Name: "Come, Follow Me"

In the Gospel we hear the calling of Jesus' Apostle Matthew. Matthew was a tax collector and, just like now, tax collectors weren't especially popular. But this didn't stop Jesus from calling Matthew to be His disciple. Jesus saw the potential in him and this was enough for Matthew to leave his job and immediately begin following Jesus.

Jesus sees the potential in each of us, despite the mistakes we make. By choosing to follow Jesus, we are turning away from sin and striving to become the saints He calls us to be.

As the song says, Christmas can be the most wonderful time of the year. It can also be a challenging time of the year as we may feel that we are pulled in too many different directions. There are many demands that are put on our time and our limited resources. It is during these times that we can be like the wise men lost in the desert. Unaware of where they should go, they looked to find the Lord our God. Please take the time during this Christmas season, especially during those busy and frantic times to remember the reason we celebrate Christmas. The birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

When Charlie Brown yells "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?", Linus responds by saying, "Sure Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about:"

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were so afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2: 8-14

"That's what Christmas is all about Charlie Brown."

Merry Christmas!

Mr. Venzon



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKqF9yUIOwg>

WHY IS ADVENT IMPORTANT?

Preparation for Christmas is an important theme for Advent, but more is involved. Advent gives us a vision of our lives as Christians and shows us the possibilities of life.

The vision of life that Advent gives us is twofold; it looks back to the first coming of Christ at Bethlehem, and it looks to the future when Christ will come again. In the interval between these two events we find meaning for our life as a Christian.

First we celebrate Christ becoming human. We view His life and experience his presence as a human being in our history. Christ came to show us what life can and should be. He gave us true and valid principles by which we can live true and valid lives. But Jesus knew that the human heart could not live in isolation. He formed the Church around the concept of a people held together by love. In that community we discover unlimited possibilities and meaning. Alone we can do nothing. Together we find real meaning.

When Christ left this earth, He did not abandon us. He remains with us in his Spirit, the Church, the sacraments, the Scriptures and each other. He lives in community with us and keeps His vision of life before us.

When Christ comes again, His presence will no longer be hidden behind the signs and symbols of the liturgy or the words of the Scriptures. His presence among us will be revealed in all its fullness, a presence that will never end, a presence that will perfect and complete our community.

This is the "greater significance" of Advent. In these few short weeks we take in the sweeping panorama of time - from Christ's birth to his Second Coming. The season of Advent brings us the magnificent vision of life and hope for the future given to us by Christ.

Advent is our time to become more involved, more caught up in the meaning and the possibilities of life as a Christian community. Thus we are preparing not only for Christmas but also for Christ's Second Coming. This means that when He comes again, we will be awake and watchful. He will not find us asleep.

CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE FOR PELHAM CARES

The community of St. Alexander has been very generous in donating items to those in need throughout the years. Our previous donations filled both the hearts and the pantries of those in need. During this Christmas season, Pelham Cares is running low on many items. We have been asked to donate cereal, canned pasta, crackers, cookie boxes, and juice boxes.

We will be accepting donations for the Christmas Food Drive from December 2nd – 18th. Please donate if you can. Let's see how many items we can collect for Christmas this year!

Please send donations to school with your child by Wednesday, December 18th, 2024. Thank you for your support!

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

St. Alexander staff and students (in grades 1 - 4) are excited to announce the upcoming Christmas Concert Performance, Uncertain Poor Shepherds! The performance will take place at St. Alexander School on Wednesday, December 11, 2024. There will be two shows, 12:30 pm and 6:30 pm in the school gym.

Due to capacity restrictions there will be a limit on the number of tickets allotted per family (see the email that was sent home earlier). Each family has the option to get two tickets total for either showtime, and we will collect tickets at the door during performances. We will determine the amount of tickets being used and let families know if they can get more tickets to the show based on our numbers and capacity.

There is not cost for the tickets, but we ask you to please bring a non-perishable food items or household items admission for Pelham Cares during the performance. Thank you!

We look forward to an amazing performance!

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

With the arrival of winter, we can expect colder temperatures and more snow. The Niagara Catholic District School Board will make every attempt to keep schools open during periods of inclement weather. Only in exceptional circumstances will schools be closed part way through the day. If your contact information or pick-up arrangements have changed, you are asked to please contact our secretaries at the office so the necessary updates can be made. Announcements concerning school closures or cancellations will be made on all local radio stations beginning at 6:00 a.m. You can also check the Board website at www.niagaracatholic.ca

WINTER WEATHER AND WINTER RULES

Parents should be advised that going out for recess during the winter season will be a normal thing each day. In extreme weather cases, children will remain indoors. Proper attire must be worn, i.e., boots, gloves, hats, scarf, etc. As is always the case, it is imperative that we all emphasize the dangers of throwing snow in any form. Please make sure your children are aware of the possible dangers of throwing snow at school. No one wants anyone seriously hurt. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. Please remember that snow is fun to be around, but should be left on the ground.

HEAD LICE

Head lice crawl from person to person by direct head to head contact. They do not spread disease. Anyone can get them. They are more common in children as their heads frequently touch when they play together or share hats, combs or brushes. Itching is the main complaint. Parents are asked to check their children's hair weekly for head lice. Check more often if your child has close contact with someone who has head lice. Please do not send a child with head lice to school until he or she has had the first of the two required treatments. If one person in the family has head lice, it is possible that other family members will also have them. We appreciate letting the school know if your child has head lice. We can then send out letters informing the class so other parents can be notified to check their children's hair. An untreated source among close contacts is a common reason for getting head lice again. You are always welcome to call Public Health should you require more information.

SCHOOL BUS RULES – All Elementary

At the Stop	Be 5 to 10 minutes early, and stand on the inside of the sidewalk/ shoulder away from the roadway.
When the Bus Arrives	Line up in a straight line, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the doors to open, and never touch the outside of the bus.
Getting on the Bus	Get on the bus one at a time, hold the handrail as you climb the stairs, and go directly to your seat and get settled.
Riding on the Bus	Sit with your back to back of the seat and your bottom to the bottom of your seat with your school bag on your lap, and use your quiet speaking voice so that the bus driver can concentrate on driving.
Getting off the Bus	Stay in your seat until the bus comes to a complete stop, only get off the bus at your school or at your bus stop, look for your parent/ guardian before you get off the bus if that is your routine, and always tell the bus driver if you do not see your parent/ guardian at the bus stop waiting for you if that is your routine or if you missed the stop.
Crossing in Front of the Bus	Watch and wait for the bus driver to signal to you to cross the road once it is safe to do so.

Schools may contact their NSTS Transportation Coordinator for support addressing student transportation safety and behaviour concerns. NSTS can provide seating plan or letter templates to support school administrators experiencing bus issues.

Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

Holiday Expectations

The holidays may be a difficult time for your child. A change in routine and different holiday expectations can be stressful and isolating. Here are some tips and resources to share with your child throughout the holiday season:

- 1. Validate Feelings:** Let your child know it's okay not to feel happy during the holidays. Their thoughts and emotions are valid. Encourage open conversations about any concerns.
- 2. Find Quiet Relief:** When things get overwhelming, suggest to your child that they find a quiet place to take a break. This can help alleviate anxious feelings.
- 3. Explore Support:** Help your child discover available support services and guide them in accessing what they believe will be most beneficial. Use this time to prepare them for post-high school life and independence.

For more information about the different services available for

Youth in Niagara visit: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/schools/youth-services.aspx>

Reminder to Report your Child's Vaccines to Public Health

Don't forget to let Public Health know about your child's vaccinations! Sometimes, even if your child is all caught up on shots, Public Health might not have the record.

Report your child's vaccines

Each time your child receives a vaccine, report it to Public Health.

Health care providers don't do this for you.

If there is a disease outbreak, Public Health uses the vaccine information to:

- Identify children at risk
- Reduce the spread of disease



niagararegion.ca/vaccines OR
905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425



For more information about the different services available for Youth in Niagara visit niagararegion.ca and search "Services for Youth"

Niagara Region



Every time your child receives a vaccine, be sure to report it:

- [Online](#)
- By phone: 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425 or
- Fax: 905-688-8225

[Find out which vaccinations are required and recommended](#) for children attending school.

Giving Back

Supporting families in need during the holiday season is a wonderful way for a school community to come together and make a positive impact. Here are some charities and organizations in the Niagara region, or those that have a presence in the area, that you can consider supporting:

[Community Care](#)

[Newark Neighbours](#)

[Salvation Army Community and Family Services](#)

[Pelham Cares](#)

[The HOPE Centre](#)

[Project SHARE](#)

[Grimsby Benevolent Fund](#)

[Port Care Reach Out Centre](#)

[Open Arms Mission](#)

[United Way Niagara](#)

[Jammies for Families](#)



Niagara Parents

[Niagara Parents](#) provides a variety of services to help you raise a happy and healthy family. Individuals can connect with a Public Health Nurse instantly in whichever language they are most comfortable speaking.

Services offered:

- Questions or concerns about parenting, your child's health, or pregnancy.
- Parenting classes, breastfeeding support, prenatal appointments and more.
- Postpartum support.
- Links to services within the community.

Connect with a Public Health Nurse Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. through phone, live chat, video call, or email. Live chat is available in 90 different languages.

Find Niagara Parents on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) for different activities you can do with your kids, relevant resources and virtual events for parents.



Providing supports & services to help you raise a happy and healthy family

Connect with Niagara Parents

Live chat or speak with a public health nurse in **90 different languages available:**

niagararegion.ca/parents

905-684-7555
or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7555

parents@niagararegion.ca

Niagara Parents

[niagaraparents](#)

Niagara Region



Educational Resources

Notice and Identify – ONE CALL

Teachers are vital in helping students who are facing difficulties by connecting them to the resources they need for success. Identifying issues early can prevent future mental health issues. [School Mental Health Ontario](#) has developed **ONE CALL** to guide teachers in supporting their students. The **ONE CALL** process offers educators a clear step-by-step approach to help students showing emotional or behavioral issues.



**School
Mental Health
Ontario**

To learn more information check out the [ONE-CALL desk reference](#) a resource created for educators.