Dear Parents and Carers,

This Sunday we will begin the season of Advent – the time set aside in the calendar of the Church to prepare to celebrate Christmas. It is a time for us to prepare ourselves spiritually to welcome Jesus again. This can be so very challenging as we become caught up in the other trappings of Christmas – gifts, food, extra guests, holidays, travel, family tensions – but still the Church calls us to recall the reason for Christmas.

This Sunday the First Reading is from the Prophet Isaiah. This section of the text ‘They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!’ can be found in the United Nations Building in New York. It seems that now more than ever our thoughts and prayers should be focused on peace and turning our implements of violence into tools that care for the needs of others.

Imagine coming face to face with the Prophet Isaiah, climbing the mountain to see him. He may well ask what dreams we hold for the world. We know what Isaiah dreams to beat swords into ploughshares. He dreams of peace, of life and of hope.

What are the swords in our hearts that need to be changed? What are the swords that we carry that cause us wounds and stops us for journeying closer to our God? This week we are called to give these swords to Isaiah and ask his help to change them into something that gives life.

Isaiah says to us ‘I will change your swords into ploughshares so that we can till the soil of our souls and know that God is with us. Are we ready for this dream to be real? We can look into the eyes of the dreamer and say Yes. Yes, I am ready. Isaiah will then take our hands and invite us to walk with him in the light of the Lord.

May you always be aware of the mercy of God’s love,

Claire Frazer
Principal

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Monday 14 - Friday 25 November
Kinder and Year 1 swimming lessons
Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre

Monday 21 - Friday 25 November
Sabbath Week

Wednesday 23 November
Year 6 leaders to George Forbes House

Friday 25 November - Friday 2 December
Booking System Open for Optional Parent/Teacher Interviews

Friday 25 November
Advent Liturgy - 9am

Monday 28 November - Friday 9 December
Year 2 swimming lessons
Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre

Monday 28 November
Second Hand Clothing Pool Open
9am to 10am Lowe St MPR

Tuesday 29 November
Semester 2 reports sent home with students

Wednesday 30 November
Year 5 Camp - Jindabyne

Thursday 1 December
Year One orientation to MacQuoid Street
9am to 11am

Friday 2 December
Advent Liturgy - 9am

Monday 5 - Thursday 4 December
Optional Parent/Teacher Interviews

Monday 5 December
Second Hand Clothing Pool Open
9am to 10am Lowe St MPR
Junior Christmas Carols
10am to 11am St Gregory’s Hall

Thursday 8 December
Year One orientation to MacQuoid Street
1pm to 3pm

Friday 9 December
Advent Liturgy - 9am
End of School Year Mass
9:40am St Raphael’s Church
From the Principal......

**PRAYERS:** As we begin the Christmas Season we keep in our thoughts and prayers those people who struggle at this time. Perhaps this time brings unhappy memories, reminds them of family tensions or brings financial strain. May we offer not only our spiritual support but also our practical support by contributing to local charities. Please keep in your thoughts and prayers Silvano Rech - father of Candice 6 Blue.

**CONGRATULATIONS:** To the students of Year 4 who represented St Gregory’s at the Social Justice day hosted by St Vincent De Paul at the Australian Catholic University last Friday. My thanks to Lauran Macdonald who accompanied the students.

**KINDERGARTEN CHRISTMAS TREE:** If you are a friend on our school Facebook page you will have seen the beautiful tree now on display at Riverside Plaza. The ornaments were handmade by our clever Kindergarten students. My thanks to the Kindergarten teachers who decorated the tree – good luck with the voting.

**SWIMMING PROGRAM:** The Kindergarten and Year 1 students continue their swimming program this week. This would not be possible without the support of parents and grandparents who accompany the classes to and from the pool, not to mention assisting with dressing and collecting belongings. Next week the Year 2 classes will begin their program.

**SABBATH WEEK:** This week is Sabbath Week, for the teachers a week without meetings and for students a break from home learning tasks. This does not mean that reading should be abandoned. Students should be engaged in a reading activity every day. Please read to your children, with your children and in front of your children. Perhaps this week it could be reading and interpreting the rules of a board game or the instructions for making a model or a recipe to follow. Practical reading!

**OPTIONAL PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS:** Semester 2 reports will be sent home with students on Tuesday, 29 November. From Monday 5 December until Thursday 8 December teachers will be available for interviews. There will be no interviews held for 5 White. Bookings can be made online from this Friday 25 November until Friday 2 December. Click the PTO link on the school website home page or under the Notes tab. Your PIN is the same as used earlier this year. Please contact Jane King (6297 2221) if you are unsure of your PIN or have misplaced it. Teachers are generally available in the mornings from 8:15am and after school till 5:00pm provided they do not have a duty or are not involved in other meetings.

**DROP OFF AND PICK UP:** A reminder to the parents and carers of Lowe Street. The 10-minute parking zones work well up until about 8:45am when the bays become full with cars remaining till well after 9am. In the afternoon generally cars are only parked for 10 minutes or less. The School Safety Officer has suggested that parents be reminded of the parking restrictions at Lowe Street. **Following this fines will be issued when cars are parked beyond the time limit.** The officer also noted a number of parents who do not use the available pedestrian crossings and has asked that you are reminded that this is a much safer option for you and your children.

**SCHOOL CALENDAR:** There have been some enquiries about upcoming activities such as STEP UP afternoon. All activities are listed on the Google Calendar on our website which is continually updated. The STEP UP afternoon will be on Thursday 15 December. Any students who are not at school that day will have the letters of introduction from their 2017 teacher/s posted.

**YEAR 1 ORIENTATION PROGRAM:** To prepare the Year 1 students for the change of campus next year parents are asked to note the following:

- Thursday 1 December – all Year 1 students will begin the day at MacQuoid Street. They can be dropped off or catch the bus. They will walk to Lowe Street to be back by 11am.
- Thursday 8 December the students will end the day at MacQuoid Street. They need to be collected at the bottom gate – near the pedestrian crossing on MacQuoid Street or catch the bus home.
- Thursday 15 December they will participate in the whole school STEP UP afternoon and will again end their day at MacQuoid.
ST GREGORY’S QUEANBEYAN NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal

The Queanbeyan Vinnies group prepares several food hampers for local residents each week. Help us to support others, especially at Christmas, by donating Christmas hamper items. When you are grocery shopping in the next couple of weeks please add an extra item to your trolley.

The following is a suggestion; however, you may wish to also include pasta and sauces, drinks, tinned fish or special Christmas items such as tinned hams, mince pies, cakes, puddings, custard, jams etc:

Kinder: Candy canes or bon bons
Year 1: Shortbread biscuits or packet jelly
Year 2: Tinned corn, beetroot or pineapple
Year 3: Savoury biscuits/crackers
Year 4: Chips, Cheezels, Pringles, corn chips
Year 5: Tinned fruit
Year 6: Sweet biscuits or long life custard

Baskets have been distributed to classrooms and will be in classes for two weeks. They will be presented to St Vincent De Paul on Friday 9 December at the end of school year Mass.


Thank you for your support - Lauren Macdonald, REC

CHRISTMAS TREE

Riverside Plaza are holding their Christmas Tree decorating competition. St Gregory’s Kinder students have made many beautiful decorations and the tree looks amazing.

Please visit Riverside Plaza and vote for St Gregory’s Tree. Voting slips are also available at the school offices.

LIBRARY NEWS

Author Buzz Reading Challenge

During Term 4 students in Kinder to Year 3 have been invited to complete the Author Buzz Reading Challenge. They will have been given an entry sheet during library sessions. Spare forms are still available from the offices and libraries at both campuses.

Please return the completed form (including child’s name and class and parent signatures) to the school by the end of this week for a chance to win a small prize.

In the challenge students have been asked to choose fiction books from their favourite authors. This is a great opportunity to develop a love of reading through best literature and inspiring children’s authors. Books on the Premier’s Reading Challenge reading list can be added to the 2017 PRC challenge. All the necessary information for the challenge is on the reading form.

End of Library Borrowing

Last week was the final week for borrowing from our libraries for this year. This is because we are getting ready for our annual stocktake. The focus now is on returning all the borrowed books back to our libraries. Classrooms will also be returning all books back to the library. So, if your child’s books have been mixed up into the classroom books they will be returned from their borrowing list. Children’s names will be placed into a lucky draw to win a prize when they have returned all their borrowed books. There will also be another reward for the class at each campus who is the first to return all their books.

During the stocktake all books present in the libraries will be scanned and accounted for. You will be notified of books that have not been found by the end of the stocktake and invited to contribute to the cost of their replacement.

- Helen Carroll, Melissa Greentree & Ros Wythes

SPORT & CULTURAL PHOTOS

The St Gregory’s Primary School Special Groups photos are now available to order. If you wish to order please collect an order form from MacQuoid Street office. Photos are $15 each and are to be ordered online direct with MSP by Thursday, 1st December, 2016.

CANTEEN NEWS

Volunteers at Lowe Street Canteen this week are:

Thursday 24 November    Erika O’Brien
Friday 25 November      Maureen Ward

JUNIOR CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Kinder, Year 1 and Year 2 students will be singing their favourite carols on Monday, 5 December. This will be held in St Gregory’s Hall from 10am to 11am. Parents and carers are warmly invited to attend. The junior students may wear Christmas coloured/themed clothes on this day.
TERM DATES 2017

TERM 1
Tuesday, 31 January          Students return for Term 1
Wednesday, 1 February    No school for Kinder students
Wednesday, 8 February    No school for Kinder students
Wednesday, 15 February  No school for Kinder students
Friday, 7 April          End of Term 1

TERM 2
Wednesday, 26 April      Students return for Term 2
Friday, 30 June            End of Term 2

TERM 3
Tuesday, 18 July         Students return for Term 3
Friday, 22 September   End of Term 3

TERM 4
Tuesday, 10 October    Students return for Term 4
Friday, 15 December  Last Day for Students

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

For parents of BAPTISED children who will be in Year 3 in 2017.

Your child should have brought home registration paperwork for the Sacrament of Reconciliation which will be celebrated in April 2017. Please return the registration form before the 17 February 2017 to the parish office email at queanbeyan.sacramental@cg.org.au or via the school. Please keep the Schedule of Events handy for important dates in preparation for this sacrament. If you do not have a registration form, please download from our parish website at: http://www.stgregorysparishqueanbeyan.com/

Please call the Parish Office on 6299 4611 if you have any questions regarding this sacrament. Thank you.

HOME READERS

This week is the last week for home borrowing. From the beginning of Week 8 please return all books to the learning support rooms at either campus. All families are encouraged to maintain a reading regime during the holidays – it is amazing how much progress can be lost if reading is abandoned during the long Christmas break. Don’t forget to read in front of your children – this is a very powerful message. Thank you.

YEAR 2 LEARN TO SWIM PROGRAM

The Year 2 Learn to Swim Program will commence on Monday 28 November and continue every day until Friday 9 December. Swimming lesson times are as follows:

12:00pm – 12:30pm  2 Red
12:30pm – 1:00pm   2 White
1:00pm – 1:30pm    2 Gold
1:30pm - 2:00pm    2 Blue

All students will walk to and from the pool and will leave school approx. 30 minutes before their lesson time.

Qkr! for Payments

St Gregory’s School has Qkr!
Qkr! makes school payments a breeze. Parents can pay school fees, pay for items purchased from clothing pool and order lunches from either school canteens using their mobile phone. Download Qkr! from either the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.