



# Newsletter

## St. Matthew's Lutheran Day School

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Dear Parents,

Before I go further, I've neglected to mention the wonderful result of our Christmas ELCA God's Global Barnyard project. We collected \$1,385: 1 Sheep, 6 Goats, 10 Ducks, 12 Pigs, and 400 Chicks! Thanks to you for "providing families around the developing world with food, funds, and fertilizer – all for a better future."

This note contains information about early 2010-11 registration for Day School families, notes on **Valentine's Day**, a reminder of the **Kindergarten Meeting** next week, AND **Carpool** tune-ups. Unfortunately the "Carpool Tune-ups" kind of took over, but we do want to keep everyone safe, so perhaps you will forgive the lecture. On to more cheerful things!

**Early Registration opens to Day School families on February 22 at 10 AM.** We'll send home registration materials next week so you can have the registration form filled out when you arrive. If you're not registering for next year, please pass the information to a friend or neighbor with a preschooler. Prospective Day School Parents are coming in now to visit before registration opens to the community on March 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have a friend who's considering St. Matthew's please suggest they come in for a tour and to have their questions answered. Most call based on your recommendation, and for that we thank you. It's good for them to see first-hand though, and helpful if their child has seen the children in action.

**Lunch Bunch.** The other day I heard a comment about our extended day program that raised a benefit I'd not considered – eating lunch at school. This mom thought about it as one more thing her child could cross off the list of kindergarten "unknowns." Consider signing your child up to be a Lunch Buddy next year, especially if it's their pre-kindergarten year. AND it's a great program!

**Valentine's Day.** We try to wring love and literacy out of Valentine's Day while avoiding the calories and cavities! With that in mind, we ask that you NOT send in goody bags or sweet treats to be given to the children. It's tempting and well meant, but imagine 20 totes bulging with 20 bags of sweets –Halloween dé jà vu.

On the love and literacy front, the children have been singing, "Love is something [that] if you give it away, you end up having more. It's just like a magic penny – hold it tight, and you won't have any. Lend it spend it and you'll have so many – they'll roll all over the floor; for Love is something if you give it away, you'll end up having more." What a wonderful thought to send heart-ward. They've also been talking about friendship, and actions that show love. (We hope words they speak/sing become ideas in their brains, and result in a life of loving heart-felt actions.) They've been making cards (an outpouring of language and literacy), and some are fashioning love tokens to share with family and friends (using fine motor skills to string beads for friendship bracelets).

The homework your teacher gave - to "sign your name" on each of your cards, should be underway – so the loving impulse isn't too sorely tested. (My grandson proudly showed me a spidery drawing of his "B," enough to identify Benjamin's cards. I hope his pleasure lasts through 18 cards!) On the big day, the children will be practicing one-to-one correspondence as they distribute their cards (one tote, one card; next tote, next card; etc.).

**Carpools.** Not all corrections to the carpool system come from "inside" the building. I occasionally hear from parents who have been scared, worried, or exasperated by an incident. I also hear from parents thanking the teachers for a job well done. (I know that on those terribly cold windy days, you appreciated them mightily.) I share your suggestions or corrections with the teachers when it's something they control. Here

are some other “tune-ups” to carpool time. It started as a list of two, but has grown as teachers and parents added in their ideas. So . . . I’m going to “bullets.”

- It alarms both parents and teachers when a **car is driven too fast entering the lot**, and there have, in fact, been some close calls. Combine that with a cell phone in use, and you’ve got a very dangerous situation.
- It can be **dangerous to come into the lot by the first or upper entrance** (where the “Please Use Other Entrance” sign hangs). If there’s another car entering All Saints Place behind you, they are not expecting you to turn there. If you’ve slowed down to make the turn safely – unexpectedly to the following driver – you could get hit. We’ve seen a couple quick stops to avoid a rear end collision there.
- Another “near miss” occasion occurs after cars leave the lot at dismissal. If you’re stopping to buckle your child in, **turn to the right when you exit the lot**, rather than turning left and then pulling over to stop on All Saints Place. Cars coming out of the lot sometimes swing wide and nearly hit cars parked on the roadside, or don’t expect that a car will be stopped there.
- These concerns are multiplied when the driver is on a **cell phone** . . . I’m afraid to think of the tragic news that will finally motivate us (as a society) to curb our cell phone use. It’s just plain bad on many fronts. One of our teachers sets a great example for her kids. Her i-phone is everyone’s favorite toy, but when she gets into the car to drive, she deliberately lays it on the console, signifying that it’s not in use during the drive. Her ring tones are programmed to signal who is calling without her needing to look. She’s enjoying (most times) the moment with her children, teaching them that their well-being is the most important thing to her, and modeling how to prioritize matters when they’re behind the wheel in ten more years.
- Any time the carpool line backs-up onto Old Bridge Road, there’s danger. Inside the building we’re stressing the need to take up our carpool posts early before the line gets out of hand. However, there are often **large gaps between cars** already in line around the building. Remember to **pull up tight** while waiting and move forward as the line begins to move. Let’s try to get everyone safely on the lot.
- **Cars parking** to walk children into or from the building can also stall the carpool when incoming traffic and the exiting carpool line must be held up for cars un-parking and waiting to pull out. We’ll work out a priority system for the traffic directors to follow, but if you’re parking so you can get in and out in a hurry, please try to arrive early enough to be one of the first cars in line instead. You’ll get away even sooner. If you’re coming in to help, take care of business, or meet with the teacher – bless you. We’ll help you out.

**We’ve enjoyed such great carpool-parent volunteer support this year! Thank you.** In the olden days, a carpool was a car POOL. A teacher would open the door and 4 or 5 children would tumble out. I guess it was the “tumble” part that motivated the insistence on child safety seats. That’s a good thing, but it restricts the number of children we have riding with a buddy or two. Having extra pairs of hands at arrival and dismissal time keeps the line moving. On behalf of all the drivers, THANK YOU!

**Bookworm Central.** Do you know about this place? It’s a fabulous “book store” (more of a warehouse really) in Manassas. The owner is committed to HIGH QUALITY children’s book titles. (Not just young children, you’ll find books for middle grades and high schoolers, too.) I wouldn’t advise taking a young child there. For one thing books are not shelved for child-browsing, for another it will take you some time to go through it methodically. The good news is that they have a website <http://bookwormcentral.com>. There value of book reading is multiplied when the books you’re reading to your child are of high quality – rather than those that are commercial or product-associated. Bookworm Central is a good source of good literature.

**Facebook.** I wonder about the Day School having a Facebook page. Any thoughts? Write me at [stmatthews@stmatthews.us](mailto:stmatthews@stmatthews.us) with Facebook in the subject line. I’d like to know how it could be of benefit, and what we should guard against.

Think Spring!!!

Mary-Catherine Deadman