**Prayer Space**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – 15th March**

**United in Christ**

This week we celebrate the feasts of St Patrick and St Joseph. We reflect on St Patrick, his office as bishop and teacher and we celebrate the Irish Catholic heritage of the Catholic Church in Australia.

We also remember the great love, protection and self-sacrifice of St Joseph, husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus.

Both saints found their purpose and strength in the service of Christ. May our lives be in deep communion with Christ.

**A Prayer for St Patrick**

Christ be with me,  
Christ within me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ beside me,  
Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet,  
Christ in danger,  
Christ in the hearts of all who love me,  
Christ in the mouth of friend and stranger.

Amen

Adapted from St Patrick’s Breastplate.

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**Key Dates**

**Week 8**

**Wednesday, 18 March**
PSG Meetings

**Thursday, 19 March**
Parent/Teacher Interviews

**Friday, 20 March**
Foundation – Gr 2 fun day

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**Coming Up**

**Thursday, 26 Mar**
Parent/Teacher Interviews with Mrs Jean

**Friday, 27 Mar**
Earth Day
Food For Life Day – more information in next week’s newsletter.  
Last day of Term 1  
2.30 p.m. finish

**Monday, 13 April**
First day of Term 2

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St Francis Catholic Primary School acknowledges the Bangarang and Yorta Yorta people, the traditional custodians of the land on which our school is situated. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside Aboriginal people for reconciliation and justice.
Dear Parents and Friends of St Francis

Last week I had the pleasure of attending two exceptional professional development opportunities that will help to further enhance the learning potential of our students.

On Tuesday and Wednesday both Veronica Williams and I attended a Google Apps for Education (GAFE) PD held in Shepparton. GAFE provides infinite possibilities for enriching the use of technology in schools and can be easily integrated throughout the curriculum. Applications such as Google Drive allow students and teachers to create ‘live’ documents and presentations that can be easily accessed, stored and used to assess or view student work. Other applications such as Google Calendar allow us to sync our mobile devices to multiple calendars making it easier for staff or students to keep up to date with school events. We were shown how to create ‘online’ forms to gather information and to read and interpret stored data, and to look at Google Maps in a more creative and practical way other than just getting from ‘a’ to ‘b’. We look forward to our next GAFE training days later in the year and to introducing our staff and students to using Google as a powerful and creative tool for education.

On Thursday 12 March and Friday, 13 March Kerry Conroy, Jo Ormand and myself (Thursday only) attended a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden introduction and training PD. Wow! This program is fantastic and it is exciting to think we have the potential to make it part of what we do and who we are at St Francis. The philosophy behind the program is quite simple; to grow, harvest, prepare and share produce. We have an already established garden ‘patch’ at school; a chook shed and room to move in regards to extending our veggie patches and growing more produce. The next part of the program is to harvest and prepare meals using our food. We will be sharing more of our findings and wonderings in the coming weeks and would like to invite volunteers to become part of a committee to help steer and further develop the project. There are many ways to be involved. Thank you to Kerry and Jo for beginning the journey.

Yesterday our staff attended an ESCIP Enhancing School Catholic Identity Project data analysis day at St Joseph’s Numurkah. Maria Weatherill and David Walker from the Catholic Education Office led us in a vigorous exploration of the data we collected last year from across our school community. It was reassuring to see our data compares with those from other schools in the diocese. The purpose of the day was to look at our strengths and weaknesses and to focus our attention on improving and further developing the Catholic Identity of our school. Thank you to all of our staff who were able to attend and for sharing their thoughts and expertise.

Last Thursday our 3-6 students attended an AFL Football Clinic at the Nathalia Recreation Reserve. By all accounts our students had a fantastic day meeting members of the North Melbourne Football Club and learning new skills. We are lucky to have had this opportunity and I thank all staff and students for making this an enjoyable experience.

**Nathalia Learning Community (NLC) Early Careers and Mentor Teachers Dinner and Social Night.**

Last Wednesday Anna Newman, Elii Mestrom, Veronica Williams, Jade Graham and myself attended the NLC Early Careers and Mentor Dinner held at SMOTA. This was a fantastic opportunity for all ‘newbies’ and mentors within the Nathalia Learning Community to come together to share a meal, socialise, listen to guest speakers and make connections from across the four schools. We are incredibly lucky to have such close connections within our schools and the opportunity for our staff, students and parents to work and learn together give perspective to the potential only found in rural communities. We are grateful to the hospitality and service provided by the catering students from SMOTA and the Nathalia Secondary College. It was a great night.

You will notice I have left a few advertisements in this week’s newsletter to continue to highlight some of the events on the horizon. These include:

- **Easter Egg Donations** ~ Please continue to donate Easter eggs for our raffle. This is our major fundraising event for the term. Thank you to those families who have already donated eggs.
- **Parent Teacher Interviews** ~ Thursday 19th March. Please call the school to book a time to visit your child’s classroom teacher. It is an extremely important part of our reporting, assessment and communication process.
- **Food for Life Day ~ Friday 27th March**
- **Sandhurst Switches Off ~ Earth Hour Friday 27th March**
- **Last day of school ~ Friday 27th March**
- **School Finishes at 2:30pm**
St Francis Community Group ~ A New Way of Thinking!

At our recent Parent Community Group meeting (formally St Francis Parents and Friends Club) it was suggested that we trial a new way to operate our Parent Community Group and move away from the traditional structure of parent associations or P&F. We are in forever changing times with the busyness of families, work commitments, generally people being time poor and people finding it difficult to commit to a ‘permanent commitment’ of president, secretary, minutes taker etc. A treasurer is a position that does need to be held and we ask for a parent volunteer to come forward to take this on.

So... a number of people have been thinking outside the square and have put forward a proposal we can trial for this year. A summary of these proposals is listed below.

a. Meeting free (or limited) Community Group Meetings ~ our technological age means we can use email, Facebook or flyers to promote events and activities.
b. Coordinators running different events ~ these coordinators and key personnel will allocate ‘Team Members’ or volunteers who will help run events or activities.
c. A checklist will be prepared for each activity so coordinators and team members will be able to run designated activities effectively and with confidence. Coordinators, with the help from Lonky will put these together.
d. Documentation of activities, costings etc with be maintained through the office with all correspondence of emails, etc being sent to Lonky who will document these in a central folder.
e. Opportunities for parents to be involved in events and activities will be advertised continuously throughout the year with the ‘main’ events for each term being sent out via a flyer and in the newsletter.
f. A weekly ‘barometer of success’ will be presented in the newsletter highlighting where we are at with our goals of money raising.

This proposal will take effect in the coming weeks with an events flyer and information on who to contact to become part of a team. We hope to involve as many parents as we can and please feel free to contact the school for further information.

Barometer of Success

As part of Stewardship of Resources for St Francis, each year it is expected that our school will commit to raising additional funds. These funds will be put towards improving the educational needs of our students through hardware or programs and/or improving school grounds and facilities. This year our Community Group is aiming to raise $6000 for our school. A barometer of success will be displayed in our newsletter in the coming weeks to motivate and keep our focus on raising the required funds. There are many exciting events, initiatives and activities that we can all get involved in, many of which won’t require monetary donations. Please join us as we strive to actively involve our community and make our school the best it can be.

Easter Egg Donations ~ More Eggs Needed!!

A major fundraiser for our school is our Easter Egg raffle. The best part about this Easter Egg raffle is that parents don’t have to sell the bulk of the raffle tickets! These are sold on Easter Saturday at the Easter street market. We do ask though: Please donate Easter Eggs to add to our baskets for raffle. Thank you to those who have donated Easter eggs already. Please keep them coming! Easter Egg raffle tickets available to be purchased at the school office: $1.00 each or 3 for $2.00.

Parent Teacher Interviews ~ March 19th

Please be aware we are conducting our parent teacher interviews this week on Thursday March 19th. These are a great opportunity to meet with your child’s teacher to discuss their progress and to set learning goals for the coming term. Interviews will commence at 2.00 p.m.

** Please note: Due to a clash of dates Shirley Jean and Lisa Booth’s grades 3/4 will be having interviews the following Thursday 26th March.

Sandhurst Switches Off ~ Earth Hour ~ Friday 27th March

Earth Hour 2015 will be held on Saturday, 28 March between 8:30pm and 9:30pm. The event is held worldwide towards the end of March annually, encouraging individuals, communities, households and businesses to turn off their nonessential lights for one hour as a symbol for their commitment to the planet.

On Friday, 27 February St Francis will participate in Earth Hour activities by switching off the lights in the school for the whole day. We look forward to more information from our sustainability team in the coming weeks.

Have a wonderful week everyone.
Stephanie Alexander Information:
A revolutionary approach to food education

Children learn best through doing, positive examples and trial and error. We need to capture their interest, curiosity and energy as well as their appetites! The garden and kitchen provide a real-life context for learning, interweaving the theories and practices behind growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing fresh, seasonal foods.

Kitchen Garden School students discover the pleasures of hands-on food education, through regular classes in a productive vegetable garden and a home-style kitchen classroom. Students learn to build and maintain a garden according to organic principles, and to grow and harvest a wide variety of vegetables, fruits and herbs. An abundant school vegetable garden is created to provide edible, aromatic and beautiful resources for the school kitchen. The garden creation and care teaches students about the natural world, its wonders and beauty and how to cultivate and care for it.

In the kitchen, students prepare a range of delicious dishes from their harvested, seasonal produce. The meal is arranged with pride and care on tables set with flowers from the garden. The shared meal is a time for students, specialists, teachers and volunteers to enjoy the fruits of their labour, and each other’s company and conversation.

The Philosophy:
The aim of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation is to introduce pleasurable food education into as many Australian primary schools as possible. The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Program emphasises the flavours as well as the health benefits of fresh, seasonal food. Dishes cooked reflect the vegetables, herbs and fruits grown, season-by-season, by the children in their organic gardens. Kitchen Specialist instructors emphasise balance and moderation, and endorse the concept of preparing fruit-based desserts ‘sometimes’ only.

The Program is designed to be fully integrated into the primary school curriculum as it offers infinite possibilities to reinforce literacy, numeracy, science, cultural studies and all aspects of environmental sustainability. In addition, pleasurable food education delivers observable social benefits to all students, including those with special needs.

ST PATRICK DAY SHENANNIGANS!