



The Cornerstone



Ephesians 2:20-21 Fall 2023, Ed. 29

A St. Casimir's School Alumni Newsletter

2023-2024 Faculty:

Ethel Aranda
Josh Edwards
Jinger Woodring

2023-2024 Instructional Assistants

Hannah Goette
Heather Woodring

2023-2024 Home and School Association Council:

Wendy Chirpich
Kristen Dulas
Danielle Elg
Nikki Feist
Hannah Goette

Principal:

John Hengel

Tri-Parish Pastor:

Rev. Gregory Havel

School Philosophy Statement:

With Christ as model and guide, St. Casimir's School strives to develop academic excellence integrated with the truths and values of the Gospels. With the belief that each child is special, their unique talents and needs are recognized to develop in them a feeling of dignity and self-worth.

Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year at St. Casimir's School!

Dear Alumnus,

As the new principal of St. Casimir School, I welcome the opportunity to introduce myself to the school's alumni and to welcome you to this edition of The Cornerstone. Prior to joining the staff of SCS, I served at St. Clair Public Schools where I taught third-fifth grade students, worked with the Title program while also coaching high school basketball and softball. My wife and I live on a farm near Minnesota Lake where our family is blessed to be able to grow corn and soybeans. We have two adult children and one grandchild. In our spare time, we love going to the lake and riding on the pontoon.

In regards to the current school year, as news accounts of the teacher shortage crisis made national headlines again and again this summer, we have had to become creative in our goal of continuing the level of quality education that the school has provided in the past. Therefore, we adjusted to this dilemma with the addition of instructional assistants to aid our teachers in their multi-grade classrooms. As you will read later in an article by one of our teachers, this opportunity has provided unforeseen blessings for our students. God is good and continues to meet us in our need!

Another sign of God's provision is the re-introduction of the band program for our older students and the additions of a keyboarding class and an after-school chess club. Add these blessings to the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) sessions that were introduced to our curriculum last year, and our St. Casimir's School students are not only enjoying the well-established gifts of our small school, they are also receiving several value-added benefits as well!

As mentioned in The Shoemaker's Appeal letter, there is a joy amongst the students here that is wonderful to experience. Our recent All Saints Day party, saw each student sharing with others the aspects of the life of their favorite saint that they would like to emulate. In doing so, it is hoped that our students will one day join the growing ranks of celebrated saints. Can you imagine the effect on families, friends and communities if we did the same? Let's move into the seasons of Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas with this goal in mind!

Joyfully in Christ,

John Hengel

SCS Principal

**Be strong and courageous.
Do not fear or be in dread of them
for it is the Lord your God who goes with you.
He will not leave or forsake you.**

Deuteronomy 31:6



Faith in Education at SCS--

Hello from the Mary, Mother of God Classroom!

Our eclectic group includes kindergarten, first and second grade students, and together we are thriving in our multi-level classroom and becoming one big family. While teaching a multi-level classroom may be a unique experience in our modern culture, I've already experienced the benefits of what SCS can provide for students in this setting. The older children have stepped up to model good behavior and leadership skills for the younger children, while the younger children quickly picked up school rules and expectations that normally take a few weeks to implement. This structure also allows me to combine children into classes that meet their current educational needs rather than having to hold them at their grade level. One of my favorite experiences occurred while teaching Math to the second graders while a kindergarten student was paying very close attention to the instructions I was writing on the board. Before the second grade class could answer my question, the child correctly blurted out the answer. Imagine everyone's surprise to hear that! These children are listening and learning even if they are not actively being taught a lesson at their level. I'm excited to see the opportunities our students will have this year.

Our daily schedule includes a heavy emphasis on reading and phonics first thing in the morning with the younger children learning sounds, blending letters and starting to read while the older children are refining their reading skills, learning grammar and spelling rules. We read aloud longer books and do individual reading with each child daily on their own level. Math is our second biggest subject and one that all the children get excited about. Our religion class is broken up into several small segments throughout each day allowing us to focus on prayer, memorization, Bible stories, learning hymns and studying the Saints. Our day is rounded out with social studies, art, science, music, phy. ed. and the all-time favorite class of recess! I guess some things really never change! Submitted by Ms. Jinger Woodring



Ms. Woodring and a few of her K-2 students.



During a recent STEM session, the younger students were challenged to create a better bubble blower. Would the best blower be the biggest one? One with the most straws? Not sure? Ask our students for the answer!

Did you know chess helps kids retain information, improve test scores and solve problems? They also learn to win graciously and not give up when encountering defeat. The kids have really enjoyed this new activity!



Chess Club



Figuratively and Literally!

Fall Family Fun Fest!



A Time for Advent:

With the first day of Advent arriving on December 3rd, plans are well underway to make sure that our students not only observe this season, but LIVE this season! Activities that have already been planned include:

- Advent Family Night in which the school will host learning centers for families
- Advent caroling at the senior care facilities
- Advent Food Collection: Items will be collected and taken to the Wells Food Shelf where the students will receive a tour and learn how the center fills a great need in our communities.

These are just a few more ways in which we are making saints-in-waiting! May this season of Advent be a time of growth and hope for you as well!



Ben Bushlack Scholarship Award:

This memorial scholarship is provided by Ben's family and friends to students who exhibit the qualities that represented Ben's infectious personality including his strong faith-filled life, the giving of self to others and his love of the educational environment. Ben was the perfect example of how we must face adversities in life in an enthusiastic, optimistic and unselfish manner.

Ben's former teacher, Linda Raimann, presented the awards this year to two SCS students stating, "The Lord gave Ben so many special blessings...and Ben was a friend to everyone— young and old alike. He was always there to offer a helping hand and occasionally get into a bit of mischief himself! When we have the love of Jesus, Jesus will use us to be a blessing to others, even when things get difficult. Ben had that love."

Ms. Raimann went on to present the awards saying, "I am very honored to award the first scholarship to Abby Chirpich and Ben's second award goes to Calvin Jewison." The Ben Bushlack Scholarship award comes with a financial gift that is applied to the selected student's family tuition. Abby is the daughter of Kyle (SCS Class of 2000) and Wendy Chirpich, and Calvin is the son of Nicholas and Laura Jewison. Congratulations to both students!



Second Sunday Socials: As an outreach to our sponsoring parish, the SCS Home and School Association hosts a coffee and rolls event following the St. Casimir Church Masses on—you guessed it—every second Sunday of the month during the school year. Doing so has proven to be a wonderful way for our school community to interact with our parish communities. ***Please feel free to join us if you are in the area on the second Sunday of each month September-May!***

celebrate together in an educational environment for children of various faiths.



**Please join us for our
St. Casimir's School
Christmas Program!**

December 14, 6:00 PM
SCS Gymnasium
330 2nd Ave. SW
Wells, MN

*Merry Christmas from
St. Casimir's School!*

