Dear Families

For many of us, December is chaotic and filled with busy preparations for Christmas. We run breathlessly through crowded shopping centres trying to find the perfect present to please every member of the family. We bake dozens of Christmas cookies and goodies. We dust off boxes of decorations stored away in cupboards and sheds, and festively deck the house and string lights on the tree. We struggle to write last minute cards and holiday greetings to cherished friends. Each year it only seems to get more hectic.

As the shopping days decrease and our frantic pace increases, it is all too easy to lose sight of what these special preparations are meant for and to forget who it is we are getting ready to greet. Excitement fills the air and brightens our spirits as we hum snatches of Christmas carols, but our worries are still lengthy and the ‘to do list’ is still long and these weigh heavily on our minds. The season of Advent begins in Australia when our schools are finishing the work of the school year. There is a combination of feelings at this time. There may be a sense of completion of tasks done, successes and failures, hopes and disappointments, reports to arrive, and the promise of many weeks of holidays. For many students there is also a sense of expectancy not only about the holidays but also about what the new year may bring and new opportunities ahead.

During these hectic days, we celebrate the season of Advent as a reminder of whose coming it is that we are preparing for. Advent is designed to give us spiritual orientation to the coming celebration and a time for reflection and interior preparation for it. Advent is a sort of spiritual ‘waiting room’. The word ‘advent’ comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means ‘coming’ or ‘arrival’. Throughout the Advent season we anticipate the coming or the arrival of Christ, the anointed one, the Messiah, our saviour. Christmas is, indeed, a celebration of a birth, but one that is startling, amazing and almost incomprehensible in its reality!

**THE UNEXPECTED GIFT**

*It had been a long year. The students were tired and impatient for the holidays to begin. The staff were exhausted. As a staff member gave out the reports, a special student came to collect his. It was a pleasure to see this boy as he had always been polite and cooperative. ‘Thank you for this year,’ he said with a smile on his face. I really had a good year.’ The teacher agreed. He then accepted his report and walked out the door. Another student came to receive his report. The teacher bristled at the mere sight of him. This student had been difficult, rude and impolite. ‘Thank you for this year,’ he said. I know that I haven’t been the best student but I want to thank you for all your patience and help.’ With this he accepted his report and walked out the door. Which student’s remark was the teacher most grateful for?*

In contemporary Australia, while Christmas is associated with family gatherings, gift-giving, and holidays in the sun, sand and surf, its true meaning is a celebration of that moment in time when, in the immensely attractive account of St Luke, God, in the person of Jesus Christ, was born in poverty in a stable in Bethlehem, because there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the local inn. The little baby born in Bethlehem serves to remind us of the truth that our God is a God who loves us even to the point of becoming one of us. In becoming human, God has given each of us dignity and importance, and the opportunity to transcend the worries of this world and focus on our eternal destiny.

**Congratulations**

Last Tuesday Years 2–6 students and staff were very privileged indeed to be able to listen to our Year 5 students give their leadership speeches. I am so proud of each and every one of them for having courage to be able to stand up and have a go. Their integrity and vision for leadership in 2015 shone through in all of their individual speeches and I congratulate and thank them for their heartfelt words. We wish them all the best. The 2015 School Captains and Vice Captains will be announced at our Week 11 morning assembly– Monday 15th December.

Thanks

Jeanette
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MATTERS from Megan Boyd

LESSONS FROM POPE FRANCIS:
Pope Francis spends time speaking about how we can love Jesus and one another more. His wisdom is profound so in an effort to share his wisdom with our school community. I have decided to share some of our Pope’s message to the world in our school newsletter.
Each week I will include some of the thoughts and reflections from the book “Lessons from Pope Francis” by Angela Burrin.

Week 1: God’s love for us is so great!
Week 2: We are all called to be friends with Jesus
Week 3: Open our hearts to the Holy Spirit
Week 4: God never tires of forgiving you

On the night before he died Jesus celebrated the feast of the Passover with his disciples. During the meal, Jesus gave the gift of himself to his disciples in the form of bread and wine. He took a piece of unleavened bread and, looking up to Heaven, he said, “This is my Body, which will be given up for you. When supper was ended, Jesus took the cup of wine and said, “This is the cup of my Blood. Do this in memory of me.”

Pope Francis has an important lesson for us about the Eucharist. Jesus makes himself a gift…. He gives himself to us in the Eucharist. He shares in our journey. In Communion he gives us strength; he really helps us. It is the body of Jesus who comes into our hearts. Jesus wants him to be our spiritual food to strengthen us. With Jesus in our hearts we can make good choices.

Pope Francis wants us to love Jesus present in the Eucharist.

Advent: A Time of Preparation
In the Catholic Church, Advent is a period of preparation, extending over four Sundays. It is a time to show love and kindness to others – remember the Season of goodwill!
Enjoy reading the Random Acts of Kindness! Not just for kids but appropriate for all of us I think!

Making Jesus Real: God Moments
A God moment is when you see Jesus reflected through a person or event or scenery. Very often a God moment is recalled when you think back on your day!
Jack Oldham nominated by Ms Wilkins: For cleaning up the playground without being asked!
Darcy Hodges nominated by Mrs Boyd: For being a WEST person and making others smile due to her act of kindness.

ALTAR SERVERS
All Saints’ Woodburn - Saturday 6th December at 6pm
Elise Davies, Tara Blunn, Eliza Blunn
All Saints’ Woodburn - Saturday 13th November at 6pm
Stephanie Bell, Jason Bell, Courtney Bell,
THANK YOU LITURGY and MORNING TEA FOR SCHOOL HELPERS

We will have a Liturgy and morning tea to say thank you to the many parents, carers, grandparents and friends who assist us in so many ways around our school. Without their generosity in giving up time and energy our children would not be able to do the many wonderful educational activities we offer our students at St Joseph’s.

We invite EVERYONE who has assisted our school community in any way throughout 2014 to come along to our Liturgy at 10.45am on Tuesday 9th December in the Library followed by morning tea (provided).

SCHOOL LEADERS THANK YOU AFTERNOON TEA

An Afternoon tea for our School Captains, Vice Captains, Sports Captains, SRC members, Mini Vinnies President and Vice President, Parish Altar Servers and Year 6 are invited to a thank you afternoon tea on Tuesday, 9th December from 3.30pm-5pm. If your child is eligible and able to attend can you please return the reply slip in this newsletter.

ST JOSEPH’S CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our school Christmas Concert will be held on Monday, 15th December.

The evening will begin with a BYO picnic tea at 6.30 pm followed by the concert at 7.45 pm.

The concert will conclude with the draw for the Parent Forum Christmas Raffle and communal Christmas carols.

ST VINCENT de PAUL CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

St Vincent de Paul Christmas Hampers

The 2014 Vinnies Christmas Appeal campaign focuses on the idea that, “there are hundreds of reasons to donate. You only need one.” This year’s Appeal, reminds us that we all have the capacity to “Do something About it” and make a life changing difference at Christmas. So that together we can assist people experiencing disadvantage within our community during the festive season.

This year each class will be given an empty basket to fill with Christmas items suitable to give to a needy family in the community. We suggest Christmas novelties, Christmas puddings/cakes, chips, drinks, etc (No perishables or out of date food please!). This opportunity is a simple way your child/children can give to others during the Advent Season.

Thank you for your anticipated generosity and support in this matter. Hampers are to be filled by Friday 12th December as the St Vincent de Paul members will collect them on that day!

CALENDAR – TERM 4 WEEK 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 8th Dec</td>
<td>Tuckshop</td>
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</table>
| Tuesday, 9th Dec  | Parent Helpers Thank you Liturgy & Morning Tea—10.45am  
|                   | School Leaders -Thank you afternoon tea 3.30pm-5am          |
| Wednesday, 10th Dec| Tuckshop                                                      |
| Thursday, 11th Dec| Swimming Years 1—6                                          |
| Friday, 12th Dec  | School Swimming Carnival Evans Head 10am                      |

Saturday, 13th Dec

School Swimming Carnival Evans Head 10am

TERM 4 WEEK 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 15th Dec</td>
<td>Tuckshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Joseph’s Christmas Celebration—6.30 pm/concert 7.45 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 16th Dec</td>
<td>Step-up Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 17th Dec</td>
<td>Tuckshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reports go home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evans Head Community Carols 7pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 18th Dec</td>
<td>Year 6 Graduation Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 19th Dec</td>
<td>Last Day of school 2014</td>
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<td>Whole School Thanksgiving Mass</td>
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STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

TERM 4—Week 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>Darcy Hodges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erin Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Jozie Murada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Imogen Farlow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Elleigh Jamroz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Eliza Blauw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Victoria Mohammed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Kaitlyn Cook</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CONGRATULATIONS!

TUCKSHOP ROSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Roster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 8th Dec</td>
<td>Leann Grebert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kate Christoffel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 10th Dec</td>
<td>Robyn Hatcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, 13th Dec</td>
<td>Naomi Robinson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU, LADIES!
Community Christmas Carols at WOODBURN and EVANS HEAD  
and Christmas Eve Mass – Woodburn All Saints’ Church 24th December 5pm

All over the Christian world, the story of Jesus’ birth at Christmas is shared, as people enthusiastically participate in Nativity plays and pageants. One of the best ways for children to become familiar with the real meaning of Christmas is for them to play a part in re-enacting the story at Christmas. Sister Janet and Mrs Boyd will be co-ordinating the children’s participation at the Christmas Eve Mass at Woodburn.

Our school also has a tradition of beautifully sharing the story of Christmas at the Evans Head and Woodburn Community Carols. We are encouraging all students and especially our senior students of the school to support these events. Mrs Lowrey is preparing the students for our school’s Christmas celebration and would appreciate receiving a commitment of attendance at these functions so that speaking parts and acting parts for the performances can be allocated.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider your child/children becoming involved in these Parish and community events, and return the reply slip at the bottom of this Newsletter as soon as possible. Thank you!

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE
Tickets for the Christmas Raffle being run by the Parent Forum have been sent home. Many thanks to everyone for their support of this raffle through donations and purchasing tickets. The prizes are:

- 1st prize: 2 nights’ accommodation for 4 people (donated by Opal Cove Resort Coffs Harbour)
- 2nd prize: Grocery Hamper
- 3rd prize: $50 Coles gift voucher

Tickets are $2.00 each or three for $5.00. The raffle will be drawn on 15th December at the school Christmas Concert.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Happy Birthday to Alec Robinson, Lily Fisher and Patrick Barham who celebrated their birthday this week.

National Cheer Leaders Championships
Lily Davidson from Year 6 and her sister, Laura, along with their team JD Richmond Rumours, competed on Sunday at the Gold Coast in the National championships with Australian All Star cheerleading Federation. They came second in Level One Co-ed. Congratulations to the Richmond Rumours!

SCHOOL LEADERS AND ALTAR SERVERS’ THANK YOU AFTERNOON TEA
My child/children______________________________________ will be attending the afternoon tea at school from 3.30pm to 5pm on Tuesday 9th December.

Name: ______________________ Signature_____________________________

Community Christmas Carols Evans Head and Woodburn and Parish Christmas Eve Mass

Please return as soon as possible.

My child/children ____________________________________________

Please circle:

- Will be able to attend the Christmas Eve Parish Mass at Woodburn 5.30pm
  YES  NO
- Will be able to attend the Woodburn Carols by Candlelight on Saturday, 13th December
  YES  NO
- Will be able to attend Evans Head Carols by Candlelight on Wednesday, 17th December
  YES  NO
- Will attend Carols by Candlelight at both Woodburn and Evans Head
  YES  NO

Name: ______________________________________ Signature: __________________________