



TIDBITS



First Presbyterian Church Weekday School
December 2007

From the Director

It's that time of year again – when one holiday follows another. During the seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas, young children begin learning about holiday traditions that they will carry with them into their adult lives and pass on to their children. We are reminded of how powerful our example is as young children observe and assimilate how their parents, family members, and teachers celebrate the holidays. During the month of November at the Weekday School, the children learn about some of the past and present Thanksgiving traditions and learn ways to express gratitude. During December, our focus is on celebrating the birth of Jesus and emphasizing the concepts of “giving and sharing” as we learn about God’s greatest gift to us.

The following story taken from the book, Momfulness: Mothering With Mindfulness, Compassion and Grace, written by Denise Roy, reminds us of how important family traditions can be:

Nurturing Family Spirit

The moment was a serious one. The large extended family was gathered around the table for Thanksgiving dinner, and they were getting ready to say grace. Everyone was supposed to say one thing for which they were grateful, but when they went around the circle and got to five-year old Emily, she was embarrassed. She put her napkin over her head and sat in silence. Nobody moved. They looked out of the corner of their eye at her mom and dad, to see how they might respond. Mom’s face became stern, and as she was about to correct Emily, Grandma did something totally unexpected. She put her napkin over her head. The family started chuckling. Then two cousins covered their heads with their napkins, and soon Aunt Jane and Grandpa joined in. Before long, the entire family was sitting around the Thanksgiving table with napkins over their heads.

That happened twenty-five years ago. At every Thanksgiving dinner since then, just before eating, the family gathers to say grace. Then they wait with smiles to see who will be the first to put the napkin on the head. This year, Grandma was no longer with them, and it was the first time that Emily’s daughter was able to sit in a high chair near the table. Even though family members changed over the years, what has remained constant is the love and the laughter and this simple ritual that binds them all together as a family.

When we celebrate moments together, from the family dinners to bedtime rituals to holiday celebrations, we strengthen our families. We create lasting memories, we give our children a sense of security, we share our spirituality with our children, and we deepen a sense of belonging.

In past generations, rituals were much more likely to happen automatically through one’s community or religion. But in modern-day life, with families often separated from relatives or no longer connected with their childhood faith traditions, new rituals need to be established. Mothers are often the primary ritual makers in families, and it’s so important that we take the time to create these “sacred pauses” in our otherwise busy days.

So light a candle, sing a song, say grace before meals. Slow down and recognize the connection and the celebration, the mystery and the miracle, that are present in our everyday lives.

Fundraisers

The Weekday School has benefited from very successful fundraisers this year. Thanks to your generous support, our classes will be supplied with new and wonderful toys, books, and learning materials which is very exciting for the children and teachers!

The photographs you purchased from St. John Photography has netted our school \$1300. We hope you are enjoying the beautiful photographs of your children. Have you noticed all the photos we have on our walls at the school? *Please contact St. John’s directly at 704-889-7800 if you have not yet received your proofs or photo order.*

Our two book and toy fairs were also very successful! The Bedford Falls event earned our school \$1300 which we can spend on new items for the classrooms. The Black Forest Book Fair earned our school a store credit of \$900 so that we can shop at Black Forest for new items for the school. In addition, parents donated a total of 65 books and 25 toys to our school.

You also benefit our school by linking your VIC card to our school number, 3417. Over the past six years, our school has earned \$1,500-\$1,900 each school year as a result of parents’ purchases at Harris Teeter credited to our school. This is such an easy way for us to earn valuable dollars for the school. This year we have 171 people linked to our school number. The more links we have the more \$\$\$\$ we will earn. It’s not too late to link your VIC card to our school number, **3417**. Send your number to Janis via email, and she will link for you!

Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 19-Jan. 1
Christmas Holidays
Jan. 2
Teacher Workday
Jan. 3
Classes Resume
Jan. 21
No School-MLK



Happy Holidays!!

What a wonderful time we are having in our classrooms during this busy month of December. Your children are making decorations for their classrooms and their homes, hearing lots of Christmas stories, playing with nativity sets, singing Christmas songs, baking delicious goodies, and making special “surprise” gifts for their parents. We introduce the children to many of the special symbols of the season: stars, angels, bells, wreaths, Christmas trees, candy canes, and gingerbread men. We hope you will use some of their special creations to decorate your home, and save a few for years to come! Our children in the 3s, 4s, and TK classes will enjoy a Christmas sing-along in the Fellowship Hall with Bob Ivey playing the piano on Monday, December 17. During this Christmas season, we say once again how very grateful we are for the gift of love and joy you give us each day by sharing your child with us at the Weekday School. We wish you and your family a Christmas filled with love, joy, and peace!

Notes and Reminders

VERY IMPORTANT: There will be a regular dismissal time of 12:40 on our last day of school, Tuesday, December 18.
Snow Days: In the event of ice or snow during the winter months, the Weekday School follows the closing policy of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Please read the details of this Weather Policy in your Parent Handbook on page 8.
Registration: The enrollment process for the coming school year, 2008-2009, will be held in January and February. Currently enrolled families and church members will receive their registration packets in early January. Please "spread the word" to your friends and neighbors that we always have space for new children and welcome new families.

Safety Concerns:

FOBS: Church administration has asked us to remind parents of the importance of safety when using your FOBs for church entry. First and foremost, do not let anyone enter the building with you unless you know them personally by name and association with the church. Direct persons you do not know to the Courtyard entrance where a receptionist will assist. Please report any lost or stolen FOBs to Madeline or Janis. We appreciate your assistance in keeping the children as safe as possible in our Uptown location.

Children's Footwear: With the popularity of crocs and clogs, we are finding that children are having a difficult time walking, running, and climbing safely when they wear these types of shoes. We ask that you send your child in shoes that are safe for walking up and down stairs, as well as running and climbing on the playground. Shoes with a sturdy back are much safer for young children in these situations. Thank you for your help with this.

Go Grier Go!: Please keep Grier Christenbury and his family in your prayers during the holidays as we all pray for a complete recovery for little Grier. He has returned home from Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital where he had a successful surgery to remove the neuroblastoma. He is still undergoing chemotherapy at CMC and fighting hard to battle this dreadful childhood disease.

Grier and his family have been a true inspiration to all of us who have been involved with his illness, and we are reminded daily that there is no more important blessing than the blessing of good health. We pray that Grier will soon be blessed with good health again and return to the Weekday School! Go Grier Go!

Heartfelt Thanks from the Cox Family: As many of you know, one of our families experienced a house fire on November 18. Susan and Rob Cox, with their children Aubrey (6), Palmer (4), and Lily(2), all safely escaped from their burning home in the middle of the night, but they lost many things in their home and will be out of their house for at least nine months. Many Weekday School families have generously contributed children's clothing, toys, DVDs, and books to replace these items lost in the fire and have provided numerous meals for the family. The Cox family is so very grateful for your generosity. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time in their lives.

Thank You:

Our Family Fun Night on October 26 was a huge hit for both children and parents.

We had so much fun dancing and singing with Roger Day.

Thanks to Christina O'Dell and the following parents for coordinating the details for this event:

Sara Hendrick, Romy Graham, Joy Palermo, Pamela Baker, Ashley Robertson, Louisa Fisher, Jennifer Champion, Laura Beyer, Gena Morris, John and Patti Bitter, Annie Bowles, Jenny Craver, Margaret Bange, Carla Fuller.

Staff Appreciation:

The children weren't the only ones who enjoyed Halloween this year...

Thank you to those parents who sent in homemade treats for the staff to enjoy!

All the WDS teachers and staff went home the week before Thanksgiving with yummy Taco Soup dinners and delicious brownie desserts thanks to Kelli Mallory and her team of helpers. Every family knows what a huge undertaking getting dinner on the table can be, and so imagine doing it for 40 families in one day. There are far too many parents to thank here for organizing this endeavor, which included parents sending in homemade Taco Soup (that was picked up by helpers in carpool) in just the right containers, baking brownies, buying chips, cheese and sour cream. There were also many who helped with packaging and labeling the goods in beautiful gift bags which were brought to each classroom, so the teachers did not have to do anything, but enjoy the meal and the nurturing spirit in which it was delivered. **Thank you to everyone who helped!!**

Please update your WDS Parent Handbook by making these changes and additions to the following:

Pages 30-34 Make changes to parent phone directory for those listed above.

Carpool Corner

Need a new number? Please let Madeline know by email You are also welcome to write your own in Large Black Marker.

Please put your number on the passenger side of the dash, so we can see it way down the street.

For your safety, please consider moving car seats for children that need assistance to the passenger side, so that YOU do not have to get out of the car.

Reminder: **Carpool cars MUST turn right on 5th Street!**



~The Cozy Corner~

I need you:

To get me to eat the yucky stuff that is good for me.

To prepare yourself for the changes I am sure to go through

To make sure Santa Claus knows about me

To remember to pack my blankie when we leave the house.

To carry me on your shoulders now and then.

To always remember I am only a child

from

"Why I Need You, 100 Reasons"

By Gregory E. Lang