



Est. 2001    Principal's Message - December 2017 - #2    Visit Us on the Web At: [www.icsannandale.org](http://www.icsannandale.org)

### From Mr. Stone's Desk

Greetings Immaculate Conception School Community,

Believe it or not, registration for 2018-2019 is not too far off. High schools are already facilitating such, while many/most Catholic elementary schools usually look to have materials ready to go by Catholic Schools Week (late January), if not before. Aside from 'nuts and bolts' matters such as tuition rates, service hours, etc. now is the time that principals, marketing and development staff members, or other related parties of interest tend to examine thoughts such as, "How can I/we encourage families to consider our school for their child[ren]?" "How do our mission and our values get promoted?" "Do our recruitment/referral efforts reflect the excellence of our program – spiritually, academically, morally, after school extracurricular offerings, etc.?"

So, families, teachers, staff members, volunteers:

### Why Immaculate Conception School?

As a community, do we share common ideals, a common mission, beyond a desire for good academics? Beyond a need for employment? Beyond simply wanting our youngsters in a safe environment that seeks to teach Catholic values?

### What is it that we are committed to?

Faith-based values, tuition, volunteer hours, job/staff duties and responsibilities, collaboration...what else?

Immaculate Conception School is not comparable to going through a cafeteria line where you may pick and choose what you like and pass up what does not interest you. Choosing to be part of this community (yes, it is a choice that each of us makes) involves making a commitment. Such thinking subsequently prompts us to reflect upon just what it is that we are committing to, beyond our individual interests.

Immaculate Conception School has a mission and philosophy. We have a Parent-Student Handbook, Parent Beatitudes, and each classroom has class rules, expectations, a designated prayer area, etc.

However, our primary objective might best be represented by the 'Christ is the reason for this school' sign located just inside our main office. Collectively, whether your family is Catholic or of another Christian denomination, whether you are a parent, student, or employee, by choosing Immaculate Conception School you become part of a community that is committed to building the kingdom. This is ultimately what we're here for, to help youngsters get to Heaven. This is what makes Immaculate Conception School special. This is what makes Immaculate Conception School different from so many other public or private school education options.

With faith and prayer I offer the following five summary characteristics of our commitment.

### You and I, having chosen Immaculate Conception School, we are committed...

1. To work as a community in our shared objective to provide a faith-centered Catholic education for our students so that they may grow toward their fullest, God-given potential. "Faith"
2. To live and learn today, recognizing that the future brings change and learning to live and thrive with that change. "Knowledge"
3. To understand that everything is interrelated and connected, thus learning to think and live with a mindset that considers interrelatedness and connection. "Critical Thinking"
4. To recognize, develop, and integrate the spiritual dimension of ourselves and each member of our community. "One Mind, One Body"
5. To learn how to be responsible for each other; we are all together on this planet and we must have a mindset that is inclusive, with an attitude that together we will be more whole, but isolated we are diminished. "Community"

These characteristics form the basis for what we do in the classroom, how we handle behavior matters, how we treat each other, and why we offer the program(s)

we have. All aspects of what we offer are infused with these five characteristics, some more than others, but they are present in everything we do. This is what each of us must commit to when we choose Immaculate Conception School.

Initially, some may have chosen ICS for a whole host of reasons. Catholic values, academics, employment, safe environment, etc. Undoubtedly much thought went into the choice which you made. Now that you've been here awhile I encourage you to reflect on the commitment which your choice truly represents. 'Christ is the reason' and I look forward to building the kingdom with you. Thank you for your commitment to Immaculate Conception School. Serviam, -David



12/15 – ICS Christmas Program - 6:30p.m. - IC Church

12/21 – School Prayer Service and Sing-A-Long

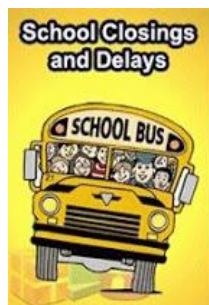
12/22-01/01 – No School – Christmas Break

01/02 – School Resumes – Woo-Hoo! ☺

01/04 – First Thursday – Early Dismissal at 12:15p.m.  
– School attends mass at 9:00a.m. – Dress Uniforms

01/06 – Epiphany Sunday

01/11 – Gala Meeting – 8:20a.m. – All Are Welcome



**Winter Weather Delays and Closure Information**  
for Immaculate Conception School – Yes, we follow the Clinton Township School District for weather-related delays and closures.

**The Process:** Clinton Township School District will inform me – Mr. Stone – of a weather-related delay or school closure. I will then inform Mrs. Casserly, who will send out one of our community text/phone call messages to alert everyone of the delay or closure. Mrs. Hillwig will also seek to post the relevant delay or closure info on the Home Page of our school website. The exact timing won't be known, as it is dependent on when CTSD informs myself, however all families should keep an ear and eye out via your phones and our website. Thank you.

## Help Wanted – Still Looking for Candidates

### ICS Employment Opening: PT Tech Teacher

Immaculate Conception School seeks a part-time middle school Technology Teacher for the remainder of this 2017-2018 school year. This position will teach Technology to 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students, Tuesday-Friday, typically between 10:45a.m.-2:35p.m. The total position will represent 15 hours per week, and prep time is included.

Interested applicants should please review the job posting and subsequently complete the required application, both of which can be found here: <http://diometuchen.org/schools/school-employment/> (Diocese of Metuchen website). Please submit a cover letter and resume, in addition to the diocesan application and 'teacher questions' documents. All four of these items are required to complete your application.

A first review of applicants will take place the week of December 11<sup>th</sup>. We hope to hire someone to shadow the position the week of December 18<sup>th</sup>, subsequently taking over the position upon our return from Christmas break on January 02<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

Tech Teacher candidates should be able to teach:

|                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Use of Google Apps, including      | Online      |
| Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Form     | Safety      |
| Effective Online Search Techniques | Programming |

Help students develop the 21st Century skills outlined in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards (2014), including: Creativity and Innovation, Communication and Collaboration, Digital Citizenship, Research and Information Fluency, Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving/Decision-Making, and Understanding of the impact of technology, engineering, and computational thinking on today's world.

### Prayer for Immaculate Conception School:

Dear Lord, bless our Catholic school. Help us to continue to be a humble source of wisdom, always yearning to learn more about your tremendous love for us. May all who enter Immaculate Conception School be filled with the gift of your Holy Spirit, coming to know you in a more meaningful way. Guide us as a community that respects and welcomes everyone. May Catholic education continue to grow so that your good news can be taught to children throughout the world. In your son Jesus's name we pray, Amen.

## Halfway through Advent – Have I missed it?

Dear Jesus,

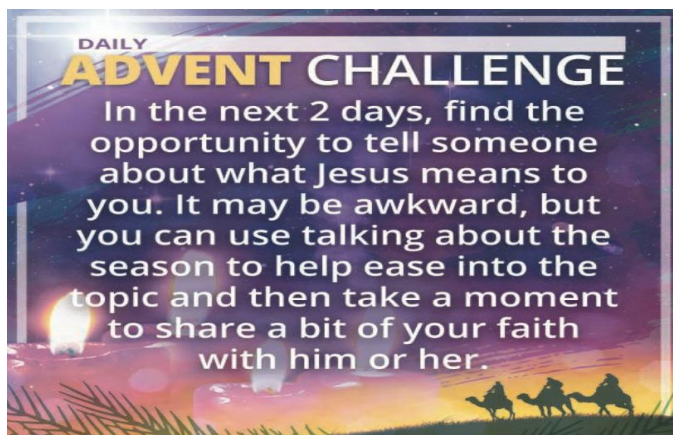
It's halfway through Advent and I'm not sure what happened. I really wanted to make this a reflective and calm season, preparing for your birth and pondering how you came into this world in such a stunningly humble way. But it's so busy and I'm distracted and sometimes even short-tempered with those I love the most. Where are you in THAT?

I am discouraged and wish I could start over. But as I sit here in the rare moment of silence, I contemplate your birth. In a bed of straw, with the smell of manure everywhere. It's a mess in that stable; and come to think of it, my life is a little messy, too. I suddenly see that it is not just into the mess of the stable but into my mess that you enter the world. You came into a humble place and that humility is often where I live my life - feeling guilty or distracted and wishing I were a better person. But if I stop thinking of myself and focus on you, I realize that there you are, waiting to love me, even though I have so many unfulfilled good intentions about prayer, so many desires of how to change this fleeting Advent season.

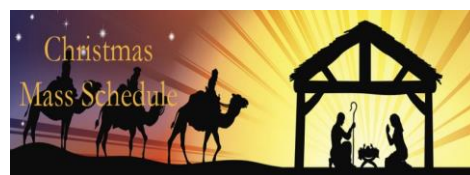
I can begin Advent today and make this season deeper by making room in my heart for you. I can take just a moment before I get out of bed in the morning and feel the empty place in my life I so often fill with my busyness. It is there I need you the most. Come, Lord Jesus. Come into that dark and lonely spot in my heart. You know what my needs are more than I do. Let me feel your love. If I only carry that thought with me each day, it will prepare me for Christmas.

Thank you, Jesus. It's not too late. You are waiting to enter my life today, where ever I let you in. Help me to open my heart in these remaining days.

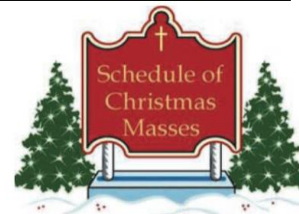
<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/advent-prayers.html#Halfway>



A festive poster for the Immaculate Conception School Annual Christmas Program. It features a red bow at the top and holly leaves. The text is centered and reads: "Immaculate Conception School Proudly Presents Annual Christmas Program Featuring the Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grades Glee Club ICS Concert Band ICSingers Eighth Grade Nativity Friday, December 15, 2017 Immaculate Conception Church 6:30pm". Below this, it says: "Band members arrive at 6:00pm and all other students arrive at 6:15pm Kindergarten-Third Grade Come dressed in your church or Christmas Best. Band, ICSingers, Eighth Grade Come dressed in white top, and black pants/skirt. K-3, ICSingers, and Band please report to the first 6 rows of pews in church sitting by grade level. 8th Grade please report to the Youth Room next to the Parish Hall."



Immaculate  
Conception  
Church



### CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Vigil Mass for Christmas will be celebrated on December 24 at 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm (Children's Theme) and 8:00 pm. The traditional Midnight Mass will begin at the midnight hour, preceded by Christmas Hymns beginning at 11:15 pm. Masses on Christmas Day, December 25 will be celebrated at 8:30 am, 10:00 am and 11:30 am.



## THANK YOU MONSIGNOR BENWELL!

Solemnity  
of the  
Immaculate  
Conception  
of the  
Blessed  
Virgin Mary  
= Dec. 08<sup>th</sup>



In recognition of our recent celebration of our parish and school namesake – The Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – our pastor, Monsignor Benwell, is kindly giving our school a day off! Woo-hoo and thank you Monsignor!

### School Calendar Update:

No School, Holy Thursday, March 29<sup>th</sup>

Yes, everyone will be able to celebrate the Easter Triduum and have an extra day off for Spring Break this year.



# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

### 2018 March for Life

As presented to our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders after Morning Gathering this past Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, the Knights of Columbus will once again be participating in the March for Life.

All 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are welcome and encouraged to attend. This year's trip will take place on Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. The bus will depart Immaculate Conception at 6:30a.m. and will return at approximately 10:00p.m. The cost is \$15.00 for any student in our Parish. Adults – Virtus-certified chaperones – are also welcome to attend. The cost for chaperones will also be \$15 (all other adults are \$50). In addition to the March, the group will also seek to have a private audience for our students with Congressman Leonard Lance in his Capitol Hill office.

Please see [marchforlife.org](http://marchforlife.org) for details on the rally.

Questions and/or parties interested in reserving a spot can call or e-mail:

Mr. Scott Okupski – [rsokupski@yahoo.com](mailto:rsokupski@yahoo.com) – 646-400-2763

\*Permission slips and an anticipated itinerary will be provided after interest is expressed.

“Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves  
be drawn by the light of God made man.”

– Pope Francis