



ST. BEN'S SCHOOL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Greetings from Principal Haluska

As we transition from 2023 to 2024, it gives us all time to reflect on the past year and look forward to the New Year. For one thing, this new year's weather has reminded us that, yes, we are in Iowa and, yes, winter is part of Iowa living and we have several months of it left. Meanwhile, things are moving along at a rapid pace for us at school. We are into our winter FAST testing for all students, K - 8, and making plans for our state mandated ISASP testing in April and May. This test is our grade card as to how students are performing in our school and schools throughout the state. We are working with staff and administrators at the public schools to begin the process of registering our 8th grade students for classes and preparing them for the transition to the public high school next year. We ended our first semester January 12, which indicates that we are halfway through the school year. Report cards will go out to parents on Friday, January 19. We will be having an Open house for Preschool on February 1 and our registration for next school year will begin the first week of February. Also in February, Parent - Teacher Conferences are set for the 12th and 13th. As you can see, although it's the middle of winter, many things are moving along quickly, as is this school year. Let's pray for good weather for the remainder of winter and an early end to the school year in May. On another note, for those of you who have not heard, I have decided to retire after the completion of this school year. The Board was informed in November so the search committee could get an early start on the hiring process. I am sure you will be hearing how that process is going in the weeks to come. More on all this in a future newsletter.

God bless! Steve Haluska



Primary Unit

Kindergarten with Mrs. Einck

The kindergartners were busy in December "shapin' up" for Santa, learning all about circles, squares, rectangles, ovals, and other 2D shapes. The students created triangle trees, circle snowmen, rectangle reindeer, and even Kris Kringle himself.

The kindergartners enjoyed learning all about Jesus' special entrance into the world and the true meaning of Christmas. We read books about the nativity story, sang songs about baby Jesus, and created cute crafts based on the first Christmas in Bethlehem.

Some special visitors from Decorah Park and Recreation, came to visit the kindergartners and help them make a fun holiday keepsake. The kindergartners made mini reindeer statues out of wood pieces and sticks. They worked like Santa's little elves assembling the reindeer to take home and set out for holiday décor.





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First Grade with Mrs. Dougherty

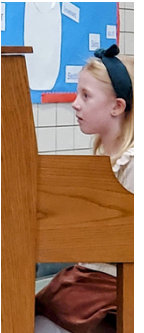


Our first grade friends have had so many amazing visitors in the classroom this semester and we are loving it! Two of our favorite visitors came from Winneshiek County Conservation and Iowa State Extension & Outreach. The students had lots of questions for our speakers. They always enjoy the fun activities that come with these special days!

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Second Grade with Mrs. Dahl

November and December were very busy months in the 2nd grade room! Students learned about Day of the Dead and honored their loved ones. They learned about different health topics with the Luther Nurses. At the end of November, students received their First Reconciliation and our 3rd grade students made each 2nd grader a card. December brought many classroom visitors as well as our regular learning. Students also had their piano recital and music concert.





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Intermediate Unit

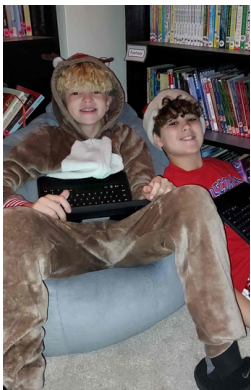
Third Grade with Mrs. Frossmo



April Bril, coordinator from Safe Routes to School and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission, talked to several classes about Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day. April read the students a book and answered questions. We then went for a walk around school grounds and then helped students create messages with chalk on the sidewalks to spread kindness. We're staying busy in 3rd grade and we welcomed Mr. Brown to our class for the second semester while Mrs. Frossmo continues to heal!

Fourth Grade with Mrs. Swanson

Fun in fourth grade! We finished our first class novel, *Frindle*, and celebrated with each student receiving an erasable frindle of their own. We played board games together during National Game Week to work on social skills. We have tried to get outside as much as possible to enjoy the mild fall and early winter weather! Additionally, we've been working hard as we expand our understanding of fractions, develop new skills as writers, and learn about the natural world around us.

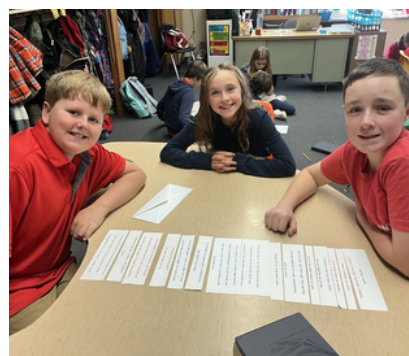




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Fifth Grade with Mrs. Galligan

Advent was a wonderfully busy time at St. Ben's with lots of activities to get our hearts ready for Jesus. Fifth graders are shown here with the wreaths they created, depicting symbols of the many names of Jesus, and putting together the parts of the Nicene Creed. Band and vocal concerts highlighted the celebration of Advent, along with fun dress up days leading up to Christmas break.



Middle School Unit

Middle School with Mrs. Jewell

Mrs. Jewell's sixth graders finished reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, with emphasis on it as a Christian allegory. The seventh graders listened to *A Christmas Carol* and discussed the three themes: greed, regret, and charity. The middle school students all wrote about his/her New Year's Resolutions for 2024 during Writer's Workshop.



faith

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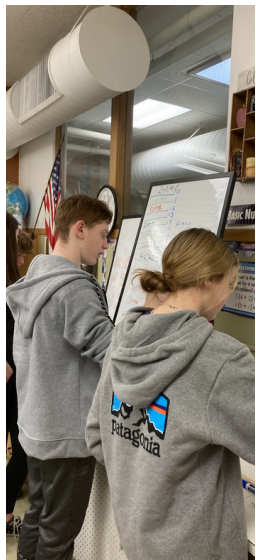
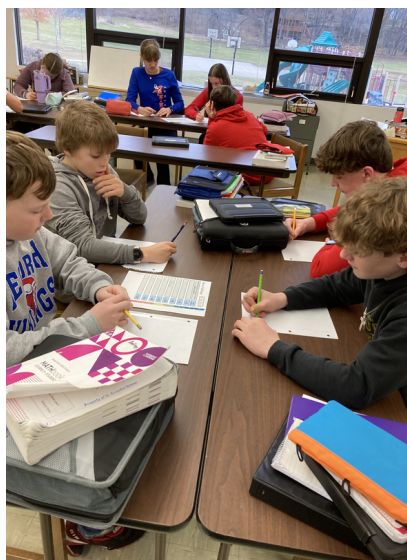
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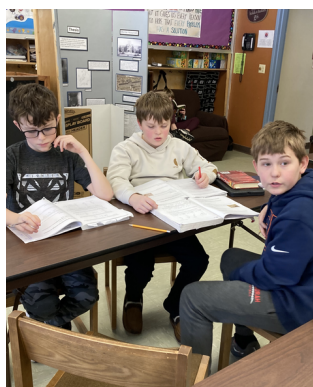


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Middle School with Mrs. Lien

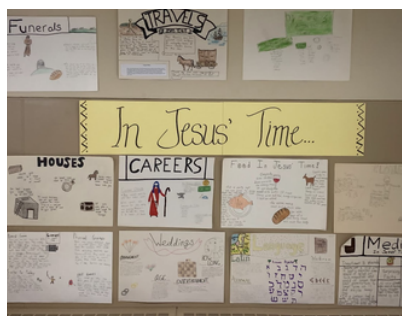


In Mrs. Lien's middle school math classes, students are often found working in groups as they solve various math problems. This gives the students a chance to share different problem-solving strategies with classmates. Every day is a new, fun challenge in math!



Middle School with Mrs. Franzen and Mrs. Murphy

The seventh-grade religion class wrapped up their **Life in Jesus' Time** unit by sampling some foods that people might have eaten during that time such as almonds, dates, olives, and pomegranates.



The middle schoolers are always testing new ideas in science class. The 6th graders used physical and chemical properties to identify mystery substances.

In their study of magnetic and electric forces, the 7th graders explore magnetic fields of bar magnets.

The 8th graders used action-reaction activity to learn about Newton's Third Law of Motion. Science class is always a favorite in middle school!



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St. Ben's Specials

Band with Mrs. Bliven

The Concert and Cadet Bands had fabulous concerts in December where they demonstrated their learning to their family and friends! The Cadet Band performed an informance, demonstrating their learning through their lesson book over the last three months. The Concert Band performed a variety of music from the 18th century all the way to Latin American influences. Congratulations to Rachel Weis for her acceptance into the NE Iowa Bandmasters Association Honor Band that was held early December in Oelwein.

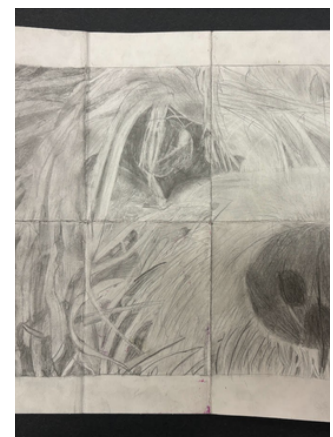
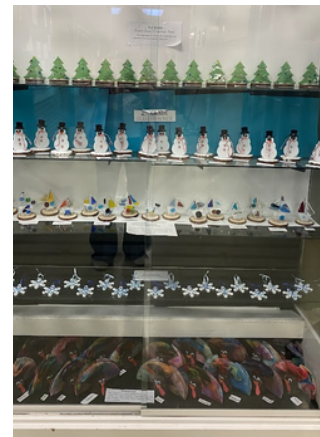


Music with Mrs. Kowitz

November and early December were devoted to preparing for our Christmas concert. What a wonderful night that was! This January, we again have a set of drums on loan to our classroom, so rhythm is the focus of our music classes. The students LOVE when the drums are here and enjoy reinforcing skills while playing a variety of games and activities on the instruments!



Art with Mrs. Holland



In our hallway display case you'll find 3rd grade fused glass Christmas trees, 2nd grade fused glass snowmen, 1st grade fused glass Skip ships, kindergarten glass snowflakes & preschool turkeys! Such beautiful art by our creative students! Also shown, a grid drawing by Rachel Weis, 8th grader.



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PE with Mrs. Tangen

Health Education is finishing up for K, 3rd, and 5th graders for the first semester! The 1st, 2nd, and 4th graders will start up with their weekly health education lessons in the second semester! Middle School has health education once a week both semesters! Students have been learning a variety of brain break movements using a program called Operation Super Brain, developed by Dr. Scott Gamm and Heather Gamm for use in schools! Balance discs were also donated by Natural Spine Chiropractic for students to use during the movement breaks! Big Thank You to Dr. Gamm and Heather!



Resource Room with Mrs. Christopher

DYSLEXIA
is NOT a disease
to have and
to be
Cured of
but a way of
thinking
and
learning.

Did you know dyslexia affects 20% of today's population and makes up 80-90% of those who are identified as having a learning disability? Dyslexia is not the end to a fluent reader; many adults and students who have taken the time to learn about how their brain processes information have become VERY successful. Did you know Leonardo da Vinci, Saint Teresa, Napoleon, Winston Churchill, Carl Jung, Albert Einstein, and Thomas Edison all had dyslexia? Students who have dyslexia are not lazy, they are exhausted. A student with dyslexia has to work very hard every day to learn but they are also full of talent. When we recognize their strengths and teach them the beauty of their brain, they can be very successful. To learn more about dyslexia, check out these websites.

<https://www.discoveryaba.com/statistics/dyslexia>

<https://sites.google.com/a/heartlandaea.org/dyslexia-resources/home>

<https://irrc.education.uiowa.edu/resources/dyslexia>

Computer Class with Mrs. Eichinger

St Ben's students participated in the worldwide event, Hour of Code. We went well beyond an hour and had a blast building our skills on and off our devices! We had fun using Bee Bot as an exciting introduction to basic programming. Remember Spirograph??!! Students used paper and colored pencils to design and noted that the changes in angles and repeated patterns could create beautiful designs. Of course, there is an APP for that, as well!





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Media Center with Mrs. Harrison

A heartfelt THANK YOU to Bill & Sherri Holland and family for their generous donation of \$1500 to be used for new books for our media center! We're so proud of our library and are excited to add a variety of books to our wonderful collection!

Our Preschool Friends

Preschool with Mrs. Kruger and Mrs. Harless



The preschoolers love their story time! Sophie, the children's librarian, comes from the Decorah Public Library each month to share new books with us. Christmas was an extra busy time for our little friends! Before Christmas, the preschoolers loved handing out candy canes to the big kids after Mass. These cute little snowmen also participated in the all-school Christmas program this year. Every audience member was smiling ear to ear watching this crew!



Decorah's
DADDY DAUGHTER DANCE
Dad, Uncle, Big Brother, Grandpa, Neighbor—
any special person is welcome!
Sunday, February 4th
6:00-8:00 pm
St. Benedict Church Parish Hall
307 W. Main Street, Decorah
\$35 per couple (\$5 for each additional daughter)
Your night includes:
*fresh flower wrist corsage
*light dinner and refreshments
*make-and-take craft
*professional DJ
*professional photo with you and your date(s)
(photo will be a high resolution digital download to use and print as you wish)
Please detach and return this portion to St. Ben's School
no later than Friday, Feb. 2nd
(St. Benedict School, 402 Rural Ave, Decorah, IA 52101)
Parent's Name: _____
E-mail address: _____
Daughter name(s): _____
Payment (check one): Cash _____ Check _____
Checks can be made to St. Benedict School
Any questions? 515.490.8698

WARNING: FUN STUFF AHEAD!

**DADDY DAUGHTER
DANCE DETAILS!**

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
WEEK COMING SOON!**

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK
will be Jan. 27-Feb. 3! Our PSA
is hosting a kick-off night on
Saturday, January 27. Join us
for student-led Mass at 5:30.
Pizza and movie night to
follow in the school gym right
after Mass!

St. Benedict School received a generous donation of a used, small, white covered trailer from Holland Construction. Thank you for this amazing gift! This trailer will be used to hold redeemable cans and bottles. Please help support our school by putting all of your cans and bottles in any garbage bag inside the trailer. All profits will go to St. Benedict School.

