



The Cross and Community

A Holy Cross Academy Newsletter



Issue No. 6 | December 2025



Family Faith Reflection:

Psalm 27:14 - “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

During Advent, we prepare our hearts for Christmas – a special time of *waiting*. In the Bible, Psalm 27:14 tells us “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” That means we can be brave and hopeful while we wait, because God is always working, even when we can’t see it yet.

Think about a time you were really excited for something – maybe the birth of a baby, a trip, or a special event like graduation or first communion. Waiting can be hard! We might think, “*Why can’t it just happen already?*” But Advent reminds us that **waiting can help us grow.**

While we wait patiently:

- **We learn to trust God.** Just like we trust that Christmas will come, we can trust that God brings good things in the right time.
- **We practice strength and courage.** That’s what the verse tells us – being patient makes our hearts stronger.
- **We notice more blessings.** When we slow down, we see the small joys around us: kindness from friends, holiday decorations, acts of love we can do for others.

God’s people waited a very long time for Jesus to come. They didn’t know exactly when He would arrive, but they believed in God’s promise. Their waiting wasn’t empty – it was full of hope.

President's Message

Dear HCA Family and Friends:

We are in full-fledged Christmas mode with all of the school festivities, work parties, friend gatherings, cookie baking and more. During this Advent season, my wish for you and your family is that you can find quiet, reflection time to see and enjoy all of the wonders and miracles around you each and every day. I have also been working on this and trying not to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season.

We are so thankful for the many ways you support Holy Cross Academy and our students. **On behalf of the Faculty and Staff, we are so grateful for you and this community.** Thank you for all you do whether it be recess duty, classroom parties, promoting your student to read at home, stocking our faculty lounges, to name just a few gestures. You and your families bring delight to HCA!

It is the Season of Giving! Please remember Holy Cross Academy in your year end giving. Your financial gifts directly support the students at Holy Cross and close the gap between the actual cost of educating a student and the stated tuition.

No gift is too small! We have multiple ways to give.

- Use the Venmo account [@holycrossacademystl](#) (scan the QR code)
- Go to our [website](#) and click “Donate” or scan the QR Code
- Send a check to Holy Cross Academy 8874 Pardee Road, St. Louis, MO 63123.
- If you are interested in giving a stock gift, please contact Kelly Klosowski at kklosowski@hca-stl.org.

I am wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and blessed New Year!

With gratitude,

Toni Ponder



Website



Venmo

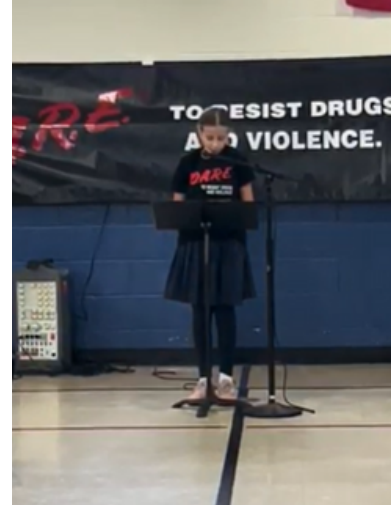
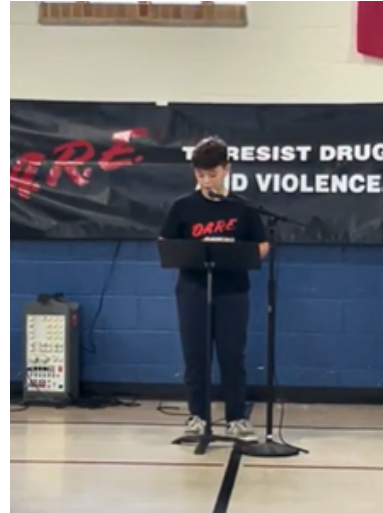
First Reconciliation

Our second graders took an important step in their faith journey as they received the Sacrament of First Reconciliation. With hearts full of courage and gratitude, the students reflected on God's love and mercy through prayer, discussion, and preparation in class. Surrounded by supportive families and teachers, each child experienced the peace that comes from God's forgiveness. It was a beautiful reminder of how our young Explorers are growing, not only academically, but spiritually as well. Thank you to our 2nd Grade teachers Mrs. Howe and Mrs. Mills, and to our Sacrament Coordinator Mrs. Kelly for supporting and teaching our students through this journey!



D.A.R.E. Graduation

Our 5th Graders graduated from the D.A.R.E. Program! Thank you to Officer Olsen for teaching our students decision making for safe and healthy living. Our students and parents had a great ceremony celebrating this achievement. Congratulations to our essay winners: Tyler, Harper O, Kiernan, & Claire!

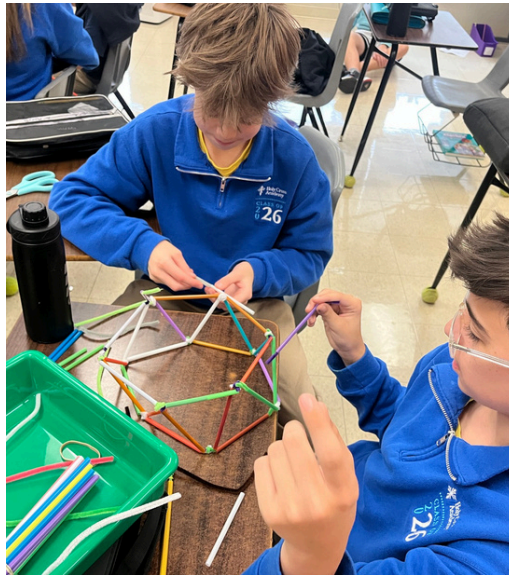


Immaculate Conception Celebration

On December 8, Our ECEC - 3rd Grade students came together to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception as well as St. Nicholas Day. The day began with a beautiful Mass followed by a special visit from St. Nicholas. Students spent time creating festive crafts and connecting with classmates from across our campuses, making it a memorable start to the Advent season.



Holy Cross Happenings



Other Happenings

Apple Award Winners

Mrs. Trueman, Mrs. Oldani, & Mr. Ewing were nominated, recognized, and received the Apple Award for being the most influential teachers in our Notre Dame High School young alumni's lives. We are proud of the long-lasting impact our teachers make in our students' lives at HCA and beyond!

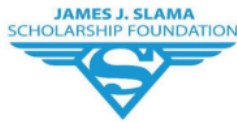


Bellarmino Speech Team

The Bellarmine Speech Team had great success at their recent meet. The team received helpful feedback on their performances and enjoyed watching other students perform. Gitamani A represented our team in the Humorous category. Maggie E and Nicole S participated in the Serious Category. Gitamani and Nicole received Blue Ribbons (first place) in their categories and Maggie received a White Ribbon for her performance. Congratulations to these hard working students!



From the Pews



Jim Slama Memorial Trivia Night and Auction "Woodstock Revival" 02/21/2026 SHF Parish Hall

This event **benefits the James J. Slama Scholarship Foundation**, which provides scholarships to parish and/or Holy Cross students attending Catholic high school.

Doors open at 6:15 p.m. and the **game starts at 7:00 p.m.**

Admission is **\$25 per person** (up to 10 people per table, 8 is more comfortable).

Bring your own food and drinks. Water will be provided.

There will be a **silent auction, raffle items, a 50/50 drawing, and more.**

Prizes for best theme-based costumes or table decorations.

Interested in **donating an item** for the auction or gift-card tree? **Want to sponsor a round?** Contact Tina Venverloh at tinajv6@att.net or (314)313-3464.



Facebook

You can **register** by contacting Karen Stolarski through email at karenstolarski@charter.net or by calling/texting her at 314-650-1931.



website

You can stay posted at our website or follow us on Facebook.

Surviving the Cold

As you begin your holiday shopping, please consider purchasing some hand, feet and body warmers for the needy and



unhoused. As in years past, Annunciation will participate at the St. Vincent DePaul Parish Christmas Party for the needy by handing out warmers to attendees. Everyone is always so grateful to receive them! A container labeled "WARMERS" will be placed in Annunciation's Bride's Room beginning next week for your donations. **OLP parishioners**, please contribute if you are so inclined! We will stop taking donations on December 21st as the party is December 23rd. Gloves, hats or other items to help keep the homeless warm may also be donated. Thank you in advance if you are able to give!

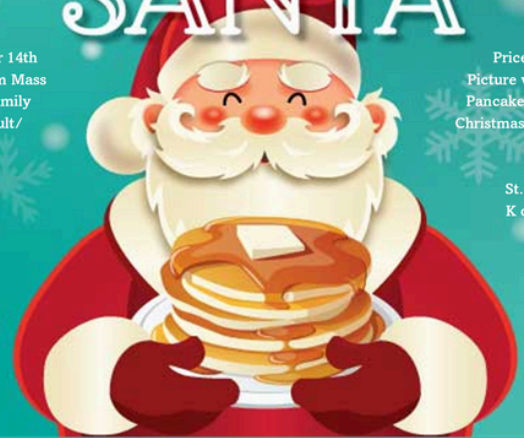
Sunday, December 14th

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

December 14th
after 10am Mass
\$20 per family
or \$10 adult/
\$5 child

Price includes:
Picture with Santa
Pancake Breakfast
Christmas Activities

Hosted by
St. Michael's
K of C 16619



OLP's Giving Tree

December 14th is the last day to bring gifts for The Giving Tree. Please contact **Shirley Fasbender** 314-849-9452 if you have any questions.

Faculty & Staff Corner

Q & A with Mrs. Kim Hendrix

What is your role at HCA?

I teach 3 & 4 year old's and Music class at ECEC

How long have you been with HCA?

5 years

What do you like to do outside of work?

I'm a big shopper and movie/ TV binge watcher. I also enjoy singing and experimenting on the piano and guitar.

Favorite STL restaurant?

Pasta House

Do you have a favorite scripture passage?

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own".- Matthew 6:34

Where is a favorite vacation spot?

Disney

Favorite book?

Pride and Prejudice or Little Women... it's a tie!



Q & A with Mrs. Adele Chehval

What is your role at HCA?

Middle School Learning Consultant

How long have you been with HCA?

10 years.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Painting, tennis, pickleball, travel

Favorite STL restaurant?

Peno

Where is a favorite vacation spot?

Hilton Head Island, SC

Favorite book?

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

If you could give one piece of advice to students or families, what would it be?

To step out of your comfort zone every once in a while. You may be surprised by all you are able to do!

Why do you think HCA is unique over other area schools?

The HCA model is unique. Each campus can focus on specific age groups and adapt to those specific needs and expectations.



Upcoming Events

2026

January 5

- Classes Resume, 3rd Quarter begins

January 10

- Luke 18 Retreat

January 16

- DOT Day

January 17

- Diva Dash

January 19

- MLK Day - No Classes

January 25

- Open House

Catholic Schools Week

- January 26-30

January 30

- All Academy Mass

February 4

- Kindergarten Kick-Off Night

February 6

- Early Dismissal

February 7

- HCPA Trivia Night

February 9-11

- ECEC Grandparents Day

February 16

- Presidents Day - No Classes

Follow us on Social Media



@holycrossacademystlouis

Diva Dash

Holy Cross Academy DIVA DASH

January 17, 2026

HCA Intermediate campus

doors open 6:30 p.m. | trivia begins 7 p.m.

Join us for an evening of ladies-only trivia, raffles, games and dashing for prizes in the stash room**!

The evening includes diva signature cocktail, beer, seltzers and water.
Espresso martinis available for purchase.

Prizes will be awarded for the winning trivia table and best-dressed diva!

Register today: onecau.se/hcadivadash

**Help us stock the stash room! Please bring two new or like-new items valued around \$15.

For more info, find us on Facebook @Holy Cross Academy Diva Dash or email hcadivadash@gmail.com.



HCA Trivia Night

SAT 2/7

7:00 PM DOORS @ 6PM

HCPA PRESENTS:

"THIS IS KID STUFF"

AN ALL- ACADEMY

TRIVIA NIGHT

50/50 & RAFFLE PRIZES

\$25 PER PERSON

\$200 PER TABLE OF 8 (BEVERAGES INCLUDED)

SCAN QR CODE FOR TICKETS

HOLY CROSS ACADEMY ANNUNCIATION GYM

Holy Cross Parents Association

Recap

Last month, our ECEC and Primary students (plus their families!) gathered for special private playtime at the Magic House. As the children explored, climbed, and created, families connected and the special joy of belonging to the HCA community came alive.

Thank you to our volunteers who helped deliver delicious lunches from Qdoba for our teachers and staff during the Parent-Teacher Conference Day on November 24. This effort is part of HCPA's ongoing commitment to support the dedicated educators and team members who support our students each day.

Additionally, HCPA was able to grant \$500 to each campus (\$2,000 total) in December to cover support and enrichment activities not covered by the budget.

Funds raised from events like Trunk or Treat, Uniform Resales and DOT Days enable us to support the events and initiatives above for our students, teachers and families. If you're looking for ways to get involved and/or offer new ideas, consider coming to one of the quarterly HCPA Meetings (next one is Tuesday, January 13!).

Upcoming HCPA Events

HCPA Quarterly Meeting | Tuesday, Jan. 13 | 7pm | Primary Campus

Join us to learn about the events and efforts HCPA sponsors throughout the year and find out how you can get involved. Refreshments and attendance prizes available.

Celebrating Faculty & Staff for Catholic Schools Week | Jan. 26-30

A Chair and additional volunteers are still needed to coordinate and deliver lunch for Faculty/Staff at the campuses during CSW. [Sign up here](#). During Catholic Schools Week, HCPA holds a Gift Card Drawing for teachers and staff. If you'd like to donate a \$10, \$20, or \$25 gift card, please email hcpa@hca-stl.org.

Christmas Collection for Staff & Admin

Watch your email for communication from the HCPA elves who will be coordinating Christmas Collections.

HCPA Trivia Night "This is Kid Stuff" | Saturday, Feb. 7 | 7pm | Middle School Campus

Join us for an unforgettable evening of trivia, laughter, and friendly competition at our annual Trivia Night. This year's theme is "This is Kid Stuff". Doors open at 6pm; trivia starts at 7pm. [Register here](#). If you would like to volunteer, [sign up here](#).

HCPA Magic House Event




We wish you a
Merry Christmas!
