The Cross and Community

A Holy Cross Academy Newsletter

Issue No. 17 | November 2026



Family Faith Reflection:

As the leaves turn from green to a deep red, we all have an opportunity for reflection. Autumn reminds us that life comes in cycles and not everything will always be perfect- but even if something bad happens, there are still blessings around every corner.

Wherever you find yourself during the autumn season, whether it is a place of hope, or in the midst of uncertainty with the changes around you, prayer is a great way to steady yourself. When we pray, we connect to God and receive his peace, and wisdom.

Autumn Prayer,
O God of Creation, you have blessed us with the changing of the seasons. As we embrace these autumn months,
May the earlier setting of the sun
Remind us to take time to rest.
May the crunch of the leaves beneath our feet. Remind us of the brevity of this earthly life.

May the steam of our breath in the cool air. Remind us that it is you who give us your breath of life. May the scurrying of the squirrels and the migration of the birds. Remind us that you call us to follow your will. We praise you for your goodness forever and ever.

Amen

Letter From Mrs. Jenny Mahfood

November always feels like a good time to slow down, take a breath, and appreciate the blessings in our lives. As we head into the holiday season, it's easy to get caught up in the busyness of everyday life and forget to pause and enjoy what's right in front of us.

What an exciting month it has been at Holy Cross!! Our Legacy Gala was a success, and I want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who helped make the evening possible. It was a beautiful celebration of Holy Cross Academy, our shared mission, and the bright future we are building for our students. I am glad I had the opportunity to be a part of a memorable evening.

We are also excited to introduce something new this year: A Holy Cross Poinsettia Sale! Kicking off next week, this is a great way to support our schools while adding a little holiday cheer to your home. I hope you will join us in making this new fundraiser a success!

November is always a family-filed month for us at home too! We celebrate Dia de los Muertos, which is a meaningful time for our family to share love and memories, honor those who have passed, and teach my littles about the seasons of life while also engaging them in a glimpse of our culture. We also tend to spend a little extra time in the kitchen, baking more often, trying new recipes, and sharing our treats with friends and family. There is usually a bit of a mess involved with 3 littles in a kitchen, but even more laughter along the way! Between family traditions, baking, and making memories, November reminds me to slow down and appreciate the people and blessings that surround us.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I encourage everyone to take a little time to reflect on what they are thankful for. Sometimes the greatest blessings are found in the simplest things: time with loved ones, the laughter of our children, and the people who make a difference in our lives.

I feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of HCA and I look forward to everything still ahead this school year.

Wishing you and your families a blessed Thanksgiving filled with joy, gratitude, great food, and wonderful shared time together!

Gracias,

Jenny Mahfood



Gala Recap

Our 2026 Legacy Gala/Auction was a wonderful success. The money raised will support the HCA Community Cares Fund, created to provide tuition assistance to families who need additional support to make a Holy Cross Academy education possible for their children.

We honored our Legacy Gala Recipients who embody the core values of Holy Cross Academy: Maryanne and Mike Twellman, Margie and Doug Allen, Rick Wedel, Jon Givens, and Amy Puckett.

There are many volunteers that make our Gala a huge success every year. This year our committee included: John & Melanie Fechter, Kerrie Forbes, Alison Lubischer, Cassie Bengard, Josh Syberg, Kevin Heitmann, Megan Connelly, Amie Koenen, Kelly Klosowski, Jennifer Mahfood, and Janie Fechter. Also a big shoutout to all our parent volunteers who helped us set up and clean up!

We cannot thank our community enough for supporting and donating to our biggest fundraiser of the year. All the proceeds made go directly to our students and school community.

It warms our hearts to see the generosity shown by our parents, parishioners, teachers, and friends. We thank God for the people who show up for our students and give where they can to make HCA thrive for years to come.









Holy Cross Happenings

Intermediate Grandparents Day

The Intermediate Campus hosted Grandparents Day on November 4th. It was so special to welcome our grandparents and special friends to HCA. Thank you to everyone who joined us and for the love, encouragement, and support you give our students each day.



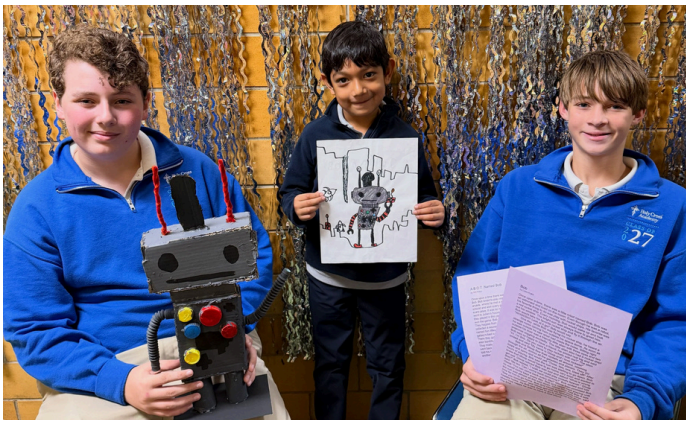
Bellarmine Speech Meet

A big congratulations to 6th graders Nora and Via! These first-time Bellarmine Speech participants represented HCA at the first meet of the season on Saturday, November 7. Their hard work and preparation paid off as they earned a Blue Ribbon (First Place) for their duet speech! We are so proud of these two!



Robot Project

First graders put their creativity to work by designing robots on paper, and our eighth graders brought their drawings to life by building them into real, 3D creations! This special tradition is always a highlight and a wonderful opportunity for students across our campuses to come together, collaborate, and learn from one another!



ECEC Dad's and Donuts

Our Early Childhood Campus celebrated Halloween with dads and father figures to enjoy a morning filled with donuts, games, crafts, and a parade! Thank you to our dads for coming!



Upcoming Events

Nov 20 - DOT Day (Dress Out Today)
Nov 23 - No school, Teacher PD
Nov 24-27 - Thanksgiving break, no school
Dec 1 - Primary Campus Advent Concert
Dec 5 - First Reconciliation
Dec 9 - Middle School Band Concert
Dec 10 - ECEC Advent Concert
Dec 13 - HCA Choir sings at St. Michael's
Dec 22 - Early Dismissal
Dec 23 - Jan 4 - Christmas Break

Faculty & Staff Corner

Q & A with Ms. Hannah Hazelwonder

What is your role at HCA?
8th Grade Religion Teacher
What is one item you can't live without?
My Kindle
What is the most rewarding part of working in education?
Watching my students grow in their faith and understanding
What is one way you try to live out your faith each day?
By doing small acts of kindness
What is your go-to comfort food?
Hot wings
What was your favorite subject in school?
Science
What is your favorite board game?
Clue
What is one thing you hope every student remembers from their time at HCA?
The family that they made here!



Q & A with Mrs. Gerianne Evans

What is your role at HCA?
Reggio Pre-K Teacher
What is one item you can't live without?
Coffee
What is the most rewarding part of working in education?
Witnessing their "aha!" moments
Favorite song that always puts you in a good mood?
Brown Eyed Girl
What is your go-to comfort food?
Ice Cream
What was your favorite subject in school?
Science
What is your favorite board game?
Qwirkle
What is one thing you hope every student remembers from their time at HCA?
How we made them feel welcomed!



From the Pews

Save the Date!
Jim Slama Memorial Trivia Night
"Superheroes"



02/27/2027 SHF Parish Hall

Registration opens in December

Children's Christmas Eve Mass Gospel Enactment @ Annunciation

Children in grades Pre-K through 8 may participate in the Gospel Enactment.

It is time to get ready for the Christmas Eve family liturgy for the 4:00 p.m. Mass on December 24! We welcome all Annunciation parish children or grandchildren to participate in this celebration. Please register by completing the form through the QR code or link below.

Every effort will be made to place the children in their desired role; however, this will depend on the number of participants and any previous roles they may have held. Available roles include sheep, angels, Joseph, Mary, Innkeeper, Angel of God, Census Recorder, Petitions or Readings.

Registration for the play will close on December 5th and roles will be announced via email the week of December 7th.



Registration form: https://forms.gle/FLMiiMygeYjLUnLM7

First Practice: December 17th, at 5:00 p.m. in the gym

Dress Rehearsal: December 23rd, at 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in the gym

** If your child is interested in possibly singing as a member of the children's choir during Christmas Eve mass, please reach out to Nicki Kaufmann directly using the contact information below.*

If you have any questions, please contact Nicki Kaufmann at ndnuss@swbell.net or text at 314-740-6054.



SAVE THE DATE

Look for us on November 21-22 (the weekend before Thanksgiving). Watch the bulletin for further updates.

Join Us for the Advent Adult Faith Series

JOIN US EACH WEEK!

6:30 p.m.
Dinner

7:00 p.m.
Presentation & Discussion

Location:
Parish Hall

RSVP HERE!

Please RSVP so we can plan for dinner.

We look forward to sharing this special Advent journey with you!

Holy Cross Parents Association

We look forward to seeing you at these Upcoming HCPA Events:

HCPA Quarterly Meeting | Wednesday, November 18 | 7:00 p.m. | ECEC Campus
Please plan to join us for the second Holy Cross Parents Association meeting of this school year. Learn about upcoming events and the efforts we sponsor throughout the year, find out how you can get involved and get to know others in the HCA community, including Director of ECEC Mrs. Katie Donnelly. There will also be refreshments and attendance prizes. See you there!

DOT (Dress Out Today) Day | Friday, November 20| All Campuses
Give your student a fun break from the usual dress code, all while supporting HCPA. For just $1 per DOT Day – or $6 all-in for the six DOT Days throughout the year- students may wear whatever they choose (within the guidelines of the student handbook). Payable via Venmo @holycrossacademy-stl. Please note DOT Day payment. (Please contact hcpa@hca-stl.org if you need an alternative payment method.)

Christmas Collection for Staff and Administration
Our Christmas elves are ready to gather donations and start shopping! Keep an eye on your inbox for the email regarding the Christmas Collection for Staff and Administration at the ECEC, Primary, and Intermediate Campuses; Staff, Administration and Faculty at the Middle School Campus; and After Care Staff. No amount is too little (or large), so please give what you are able. Your generosity allows us to show HCA leaders how grateful we are for them!

Mother/Son Basketball Game | Sunday, December 6 | 1:00 p.m. | Chaifetz Arena
All HCA moms and sons (ECEC through 8th grade) are invited to join us for a special night of SLU Billikens basketball. Come cheer on the Billikens together, enjoy the excitement of the game, and make it a memorable afternoon just for moms and their sons. Tickets are $15.00 each and will be charged through FACTS. Rally towels will be provided for all sons. Only 185 tickets available, so reserve yours soon! Register today!

Santa's Workshop | Thursday, December 10 | Primary and Intermediate Campuses
Primary and Intermediate students will have the opportunity to shop for special gifts for their family and loved ones- right at school! Gifts are affordably priced and volunteers will be on hand to help students choose their treasures. Additional information and envelopes will come home with your students after Thanksgiving.

SAVE THE DATE for these HCPA Events:

- HCPA Trivia Night: "Out of this World" | Saturday, February 6 | 7:00 p.m. | Middle School Campus
- Dad's Night Out | Wednesday, February 17 | 6:00 p.m. | Helen Fitzgerald's
- ECEC & Primary Event at the Magic House | Sunday, February 21 | 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

