



December 2023

Newsletter



Finding Peace, Hope and Love in the Holidays

To many people, Christmas is just a holiday – and a stressful one at that. It's a time for buying gifts that do not need to be bought out of a budget that cannot really afford it. It's a time for squeezing concerts, parties, craft sales, and extra events into a schedule that is already too full. It's a time when many feel rushed and overcommitted, when what we really need to do is to slow down and enjoy the season.

Christmas should be a time of peace, not of fear and unrest. We fear we may overlook someone on our gift list, or that they may not like what we bought them. For some, Christmas brings the added tension of bringing together fractured families. Instead of peace, they dread the inevitable conflicts. Yet, Christmas should be a time of peace.

Christmas should be a time of hope. Christmas is positioned at the end of one year and the beginning of the next – at the crossroads of the past and the future. A previous year, with its blessings and its trials, is gone, and a new year, full of uncertainty, looms ahead. Yet, here is Christmas – the celebration of a birth that took place over 2000 years ago – a perennial bright spot on our calendars – because God has given us hope. Christmas should be a time of hope.

Christmas should be a time of love centered around the greatest love story ever told – the story of God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Christmas is the story of God's greatest gift given to meet our greatest need. Christmas should be a time of love.

The Christmas story – a tale retold year after year, never loses its majesty and never ceases to fill our hearts with wonder. These are certainties, that if you will let them find room in your heart, they will fill your Christmas with joy - peace, hope, and love.

Some say that Christmas is for children. There may be truth in that. When you look at the holidays through the eyes of a child there is wonder and anticipation. There is a simple joy and appreciation for the shiny brightness, the beauty and the music. The time spent together as a family. Years from now you and your children will not remember the gifts received - toys and things now at the bottom of a box or closet. What will stay with you and them are the traditions you created and shared together. Placing the angel on the tree, the smell of cookies baking, the terrible taste of fruit cake, tobogganing, hay rides, hot chocolate, Christmas light tours, putting out carrots for Rudolf, and most importantly observing your faith together.

On behalf of St. Joseph students and staff I would like to wish each of you a quiet Christmas, filled with family, friends, and fun; in which you make special memories to be treasured in years to come.

Continued Blessings,
Brent Christensen

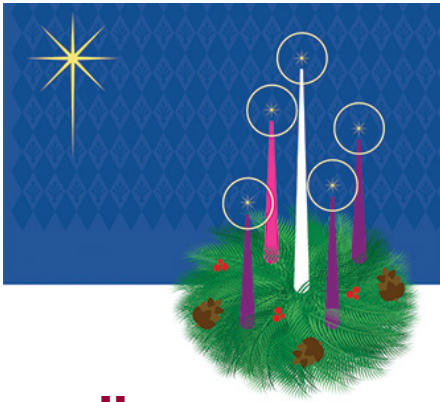


Principal - Mr. Brent Christensen

Associate Principal - Mr. Bruce Gal

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Parents/Guardian our monthly newsletters are available on our website: sjs.holyspirit.ab.ca



Today, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) announces the 2023 series of online weekly videos for the liturgical season of Advent. These videos are intended to help the faithful prepare for the celebration of the birth of Our Lord on December 25th, by offering resources and faith formation. Entitled [Journey through Advent](#), the videos are a joint initiative of the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis, the National Liturgy Office and the Office national de liturgie.

This year's reflections will be led by the Most Reverend Jon Hansen, C.Ss.R., Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith and the Most Reverend Alain Faubert, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Montreal. They will help viewers enter into Advent by presenting reflections on the Gospel readings for each Sunday in Advent and providing spiritual and pastoral guidance.

As we prepare for the arrival of Christ, it is hoped that Journey through Advent will be a source of spiritual comfort and insightful preparation for all.

The videos are uploaded one week at a time throughout Advent and will be available on the CCCB website each Monday in advance of the upcoming Sunday celebration (27 November, 4 December, 11 December and 18 December). To follow the series, the CCCB offers several ways to stay informed:



December Athletic Report

The month of December is looking like a busy time for our basketball athletes and coaches. League play begins the last week in November with our first tournament being the Cat's Classic, co-hosted by our school and Kate Andrews. I would like to thank all of the parents who generously donated food for our coaches room. Other tournaments that we are looking forward to this month include: The SV boys attending the Big Storm tournament at St. Mary's Taber and the JV boys and girls travelling to Barnwell for the Purple Pride Invitational tournament. As always we wish our athletes all the best as they compete and grow throughout the season. Finally, a reminder to pay basketball fees if you have not already done so. We are all looking forward to a great basketball season and are thankful for the coaches and referees who ensure that all of our athletes have an opportunity to enjoy the game.



Sincerely, Bruce Gal

St. Odilia's Project



Thanks to everyone who purchased a float at our last **Chalice Fundraiser**. We raised over **\$800** to support our project of helping construct a new building for St. Odilia School in Zambia, Africa.

We will continue our fundraising efforts in January with our **hot chocolate** sale on **January 24th, 2024**. In the meantime, if you would like to support this project please use the following [link](#) to donate.

Thank you for supporting this most worthwhile project!



"SOCK IT TO 'EM"

Your donations support the less fortunate of our community.

Collecting SOCKS from
December 1st-6th, 2023
Sponsored by Holy Spirit Staff of
Caretakers, Maintenance, and
Support Staff.

December 2023

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 PD Day SJS No School for Students Cat's Classic Basketball Tournament	2
3 1st Sunday of Advent	4 2nd Advent Celebration in Home rooms	5 SV Girls Game (Away Game) 4:00pm-5:00pm SV Boys Game (Away Game) 5:15pm-6:15pm Grades 6-9 Curling 8:30am-11:30am	6 JV Girls Game (Away Game) 4:00pm-5:00pm	7 Junior High Curling Afternoon Christmas Concert 1:00pm-2:00pm Christmas Concert 6:30pm-7:30pm	8 Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary SV Boys Big Storm Tournament JV Girls Barnwell Tournament	9
10 2nd Sunday of Advent	11 3rd Advent Celebration JV & SV Girls Practice SV Boys Practice	12 SV Girls Game (Away Game) 4:00pm-5:00pm SV Boys Practice JV Boys Practice	13 JV & SV Girls Practice JV Boys Practice SV Boys Practice	14 Grades 1-3 Mass 8:45am-9:45am	15 School Assembly Wear Team Colors	16 JV Boys Barnwell Tournament
17 3rd Sunday of Advent	18 4th Advent Celebration Christmas Hats & Socks Day JV & SV Girls Practice	19 Ugly Sweater Day (Home Games) JV Girls Game 4:00pm-5:00pm JV Boys Game 5:15pm-6:15pm	20 Board Meeting Red & White Day JV & SV Girls Practice JV Boys Practice	21 Christmas Mass & Dinner Dress your Best JV & SV Girls Practice	22 Pajama Day	23 Christmas Break Begins
24 4th Sunday of Advent	25 Christmas Day 	26 Boxing Day	27	28	29	30 Feast of the Holy Family
31 New Year's Eve	Christmas Break December 23 rd , 2023 - January 5 th , 2024					



Winter Wonderland Family Dance

Thursday, December 14th, 2023
5:00pm-7:00pm

Tickets are \$1 per person or \$5 per family
Water, Popcorn, & Candy Bags for purchase in our canteen



"CLASSROOM DOOR" Decorating Contest

The Leadership Group is holding a door-decorating contest December 13th, 2023. Students and teachers together will decorate a creative, colorful, and one of a kind festive door. Prizes to be won!

You've enrolled your child in a Catholic school. Do you want to know what they will be taught? Are you a cradle Catholic and not sure about all that the Church teaches? Do you want to grow deeper in your Faith and closer to Jesus? Join **St. Ambrose Parish in doing The Catechism in a Year with Fr. Mike Schmitz** (Ascension Press) podcast (repeated. Its original start was January 2023) on January 1, 2024. Discover this wonder podcast and how it is not only **INFORMATIVE** but **TRANSFORMATIVE**. All you really need is an up to date version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and access to the podcast through YouTube, the Hallow App, the Ascension App or subscribe through <https://ascensionpress.com/>.

Please contact Shelley Lohues at shelleylohues@gmail.com with questions or to advise of joining our group. We will meet as a group each week on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 in **St. Ambrose** foyer to discuss the past week's information. We start **January 3, 2024**. If there are enough people who need an evening group we can make that happen too.



A huge THANK YOU to EVERYONE who volunteerd for our SJS coordinated Youth led Mass on November 26!



Your enthusiasm in sharing your precious time and talents is such a Blessing for our community!

The next SJS coordinated Youth led Mass will be on

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023, 4:00 p.m. at St. Ambrose Church.

We will need readers, greeters, gift bearers, altar servers, ushers, singers, and musicians!

Volunteer forms will be available at the SJS Office and emailed to all parents.



All students and staff are encouraged to share their precious time and talents for this special celebration.

We will have two practices in preparation for this Mass:

Friday's, December 8th & 15th , 12:22 p.m. to 1:22 p.m. in the Choir Loft at St. Ambrose Church.

We will meet in the Gathering Space after school and walk to the church together.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Pat Mastel at 403-892-4207.

****YOU are also welcome to join us at St. Joseph School after Mass.****

**We will sing carols, enjoy hot dogs, munchies, hot chocolate,
and enjoy sweet treats from a very jolly visitor!**

****Please RSVP by email to mastelp5657@gmail.com, or call Mrs. Mastel, 403-892-4207 with a list of family members planning to attend the Family Celebration after Mass.****

Youth Led Mass – Sunday, December 17, 2023



*St. Joseph School will be coordinating the
4:00 p.m. Mass at St. Ambrose Church for
Sunday, December 17, 2023!*

We need readers, greeters, gift bearers, ushers, altar servers, singers, & musicians.

If YOU would like to participate, please complete the volunteer form below and email it to mastelp5657@gmail.com, or text it to Mrs. Mastel at 403-892-4207,

or return it to the school office by December 1st.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Mastel at 403-892-4207.

**The choir will only have 2 practices in preparation for this special Mass:
Friday's, Dec. 8 and 15, 12:22 to 1:22 p.m. in the Choir Loft at St. Ambrose Church.**

We will meet in the Gathering Space after school & walk to the church together

****YOU are also welcome to join us at St. Joseph School after Mass.
We will sing carols, enjoy hot dogs, munchies, hot chocolate,
and enjoy sweet treats from a very jolly visitor.****

***Please RSVP by email mastelp5657@gmail.com, or call Mrs. Mastel, 403-892-4207.**



SUNDAY, DEC. 17, 2023 - YOUTH LED MASS VOLUNTEER FORM

Student's Name: _____

Please PRINT First and Last Name

Grade & Teacher

Parent's Phone/Cell Numbers:

Parent's Email Address:

December

Build! Pilgrims of Hope



*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you..."*

Jeremiah 1:5a

St. Margaret of Castello 1287-1320 (Feast Day: April 13)

Margaret was born in Perugia, Italy in 1287. We know that she was born with a medical condition known as dwarfism, was blind, and had other physical disabilities as well. Her parents, who were nobles, hid her from the public and eventually walled her into a room adjacent to the chapel. It was there that she began her spiritual journey, attending Mass and receiving the sacraments. She became devoutly spiritual during this time of solitude and when she was about 16, her parents took her to a church at Castello, where miracles were said to have happened, seeking for her to be cured. When this did not occur, they abandoned her there.

Consequently, she spent time living amongst the poor of the town before being taken in by a religious family. She joined the Dominican Third Order of Castello, and spent the remainder of her life in prayer, and performing acts of penance and charity to those around her. Her devotion and holiness were so well known in her community that upon her death in 1320, they demanded that she be buried in the local church. She was canonized by Pope Francis in April of 2021, and her incorrupt body still lies in that church in Castello 700 years later.

"Building" In Our Schools

It's important to remember and honour those who have served before us - be it in our community or in service to our country. With the help of Mrs. Alvarez and Mrs. Picton's students, St. Teresa of Calcutta School held a Remembrance Day service, while St. Mary School in Taber hosted a Community Remembrance Day ceremony. On November 9th, a special Mass was held at St. Basil Catholic Education Centre to honour retired staff for their work and support of Catholic Education. *"I thank my God every time I remember you..."* Philippians 1:3

"For we are God's servants, working together..." 1 Corinthians 3:9a



Corporal Works of Mercy — Advent —

As we enter Advent this month, we would like to highlight a resource and a request.

In Holy Spirit, we have a divisional license for the [FORMED](#) platform. This service provides abundant Catholic content for your use with your staff, students, or your own formation. For [Advent](#), they have two new series, an interactive Advent calendar, as well as some Advent FAQs. *Rooted* will be a daily Advent reflection video series, while *Drawing Closer to God* is a Catholic art show for kids!

You will also know that we are working collaboratively this year with Chalice to support the St. Odilia building project. A number of schools are working on fundraising efforts through Advent to support this initiative, and recall that you can also make individual donations through [SchoolCashOnline](#). If you or a community partner would like to make a larger contribution, please let us know!



"...the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel." (Matthew 1:23)



[VIEW FULL SIZE](#)

Pope's Prayer Intentions - For people with disabilities
- Let us pray that people with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusion programmes that value their active participation.

[Home Page](#)

Catholic Social Teaching — Participation —

Through the course of this year, we will look each month at one of the Catholic Social Teachings. The aim of Catholic Social Teaching is to shine the light of the Gospel on our contemporary world, allowing us as disciples of Christ to look at the world around us with new eyes, and to take action.

Last month, we looked at subsidiarity - the idea that we should seek to address needs at the most local level and create solutions with those around us. Participation is closely linked to subsidiarity. As part of our living together, we also believe that each person is entitled to participate in making decisions that affect their lives, and to actively involve those around us in those processes, whether economic, social, or political. This is a way of balancing the dignity of each person with the pursuit of the common good.

As Pope Benedict XVI noted in *Caritas in Veritate*,

Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others.

The Pope's Prayer Intention this month is for people with disabilities - that they may be at the centre of our societies and that we value their active participation. St. Margaret of Castello shows us the importance of this, and the positive impacts that those with disabilities have on all of us.

Learn more about Participation with one of these resources:

- The Religion Teacher - [Participation](#)
- Caritas EU - [Participation](#)
- USCCB - [Participation](#)



*"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."* (1 Peter 4:10)

Gospel Readings

December 3, 2023

1st Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Mark 13:33-37

"What I say to you I say to all: 'Watch!' — Mark 13:37

Whenever something exciting is coming in our lives, we wait for it with great anticipation. If it is a birthday or a holiday, there is a lot to do to prepare for it. We put all our energy into the preparations without hesitation because we know how much fun it will be when the day comes. Today's scripture reminds us to prepare ourselves with this same excitement and anticipation for Christ's coming. Since it is the season of Advent, we are preparing to celebrate Christ's birth. But we are also called to be prepared every day of our lives. Jesus wants us to be ready to meet him any day, any time, anywhere.

An Advent wreath helps us count the four weeks of preparation for Christ's birth. Does your family have an Advent wreath or another Advent tradition that helps you count the days until Christmas?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, show me how I can best prepare my heart and mind to meet you whenever you come.



December 8, 2023

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38

"Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.'" — Luke 1:38

People sometimes mistakenly believe that this feast is about when Mary became pregnant with Jesus. Instead, this feast day is about MARY's birth. From the very moment when Mary began to grow in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, she was without sin. Mary received this special grace from God so that she could live unselfishly her entire life.

God knew that Mary would accept his plan to bring Jesus into the world as a human baby, so he prepared a perfect soul for her so she would become the Mother of his perfect Son.

Can you pray the Hail Mary? The first part of that prayer comes from the words the angel Gabriel said when he appeared to Mary.

Prayer:

Sweet Mother Mary, please help me to trust and obey God just like you did.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour
of our death.
Amen.



Download this month's [Saint Prayer Card](#) - St. Margaret of Castello



[Home Page](#)

Gospel Readings

December 10, 2023

2nd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8

"...prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." — Mark 1:3

Preparing is what everyone seems to be doing this time of the year. People are buying presents, writing cards, making cookies, and decorating homes. These ways of preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth are lots of fun. But how are we preparing our hearts? There are many special things we can do during Advent, such as a Jesse Tree which reminds us of Jesus' lineage. We could do Advent meditations as a family to help us think about Christ's coming. We could find a way to serve those in need together. Or we could just pray together as a family in front of our Christmas tree and ask Jesus to help us prepare our hearts for Christmas. Whatever we choose, let us find a special way our family can "prepare the way of the Lord."



What will we do as a family this Advent to prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, please help us to prepare our hearts in a special way as we prepare to celebrate your birth.



December 17, 2023

3rd Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

"Rejoice always." — 1 Thessalonians 5:16

During this time of year, there are many things that can make us feel happy. We enjoy seeing friends and family. We may like looking at Christmas lights that decorate people's homes. The festive food that seems to be present everywhere is extra yummy. But today's scripture calls us to venture beyond "happy" into "rejoicing!" There are so many blessings around us that our joy should be abundant and directed to our God who gives us all good things! Let's share our great joy with those around us, so the light of Christ will shine during this Advent season and continue through the upcoming Christmas season."

What will we do as a family this Advent to prepare our hearts for Jesus' birth?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, please help us to prepare our hearts in a special way as we prepare to celebrate your birth.



*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."
(John 8:12b)*

December 24, 2023

4th Sunday in Advent

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38

"Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." — Luke 1:30

There are times when I do things that I know must disappoint God. There are other times that I've done things that I hope are very pleasing to God. But can you imagine being told directly by an angel that you have found favor with God? That would be amazing! Mary was someone very special to God. He wanted her to carry his Son. She always tried to do everything in her life to please the Lord. During this last day of Advent, ask Mary to pray for us to have the same desire she did, to do everything in our life to make God happy.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for showing us through Mary such a beautiful example of faith.



December 25, 2023

The Nativity of the Lord

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-18

Today is a day of great rejoicing! Jesus is born! He has come to teach us how to live with love and compassion. He was here when the whole world was created and he is here right now! Let us spend today and the rest of the Christmas season praising him for his goodness to us.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for continuing to love us. Thank you for being the Word of God that speaks to us of your love.

Sources:

[NOVENA TO ST. MARGARET OF CITTÀ DI CASTELLO](#)
[The saint who was abandoned by her own parents](#)
[Meet St Margaret of Castello, the pope's unexpected canonization](#)
[St Margaret of Castello Experience at the NCPD Race for Belonging](#)
[In My Heart: The Life of Saint Margaret of Castello](#)
[Margaret of Castello – the unwanted saint](#)
[2023 Daily Prayers for Families](#)

**THANK
YOU**

**for supporting
our Book Fair!**



#ScholasticBookFairs

A huge **Thank You** to our wonderful St. Joseph Family and all the support you have given to the Library.

During the Scholastic Book Fair, we sold over \$6000 worth of product!!

This is the most we have ever sold!!

Because of this, we can enjoy approximately \$3000 worth of new books and other resources for the school.

God Bless Each and Everyone and

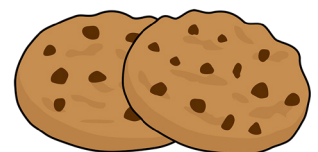
Thank You Again
Debbie Erdos
Library Clerk



Alberta Birds of Prey

NATURE CENTRE

Thank you for your support!
Grade 1, Ms. Johnson's, "Everything but the Kitchen Sink"
cookie fundraiser raised over \$1400 for the
Alberta Birds of Prey Centre.
We hope you enjoyed your cookies!



KSCPP

Korean Spirit & Culture Promotion Project

ESSAY CONTEST

Grades 6 -12

To foster a greater understanding of Korean history and culture, KSCPP is hosting its **3rd National Essay Contest in Canada**.

The Essay Contest is open to students in two groups: **Group A (Years 6-8)** and **Group B (Years 9-12)**.

The entrants are required to read *Chung Hyo Ye, Tales of filial devotion, loyalty, respect and benevolence from the history and folklore of Korea*, published by KSCPP and available for free download at our website www.kscpp.net.

Essay Topic

Please choose **one** of the following two topics:

1. How could the values of Chung, Hyo and Ye be applied in your daily life?
2. Which of the three values illustrated in the book (Chung, Hyo, Ye) impressed you and why?

Awards (E-gift card)

Prizes will be awarded separately for Group A (Years 6-8) and Group B (Years 9-12):

- 1st prize: \$500
- 2nd prize: \$200
- 3rd prize: \$100
- Honorable Mentions: \$50*

* The number of Honorable Mentions is at the discretion of KSCPP.

To Enter

Submit entries to kscppessay@gmail.com with the subject heading "2023 Essay Contest".

Deadline

All submissions are due by **February 4, 2024**. The winners will be announced no later than **March 10, 2024**.

Instructions

Essays must meet the following requirements:

1. One-inch margin (top, bottom, left, and right); font-size 12 (Times New Roman); double spaced; two to three pages in length.
2. Each essay must have the following information listed on the cover:
i) Name, ii) Age, iii) Phone Number, Mailing Address & Email, iv) School Name and Grade/Year.

KSCPP (Korean Spirit & Culture Promotion Project)

is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
158-16 46th Ave, Flushing, NY 11358 USA
www.KSCPP.net

Spectrum: A Grief Support Group for Teens



A program that helps teens, **aged 13-15 years**, who are grieving the loss of a family member due to death, divorce, deployment, or trauma.

No Charge



Spectrum can...

- ⇒ Help to engage with their own individual journey - to identify, name, understand, manage, express and share their feelings
- ⇒ Provide a safe setting to tell and retell feelings and thoughts with trained listeners
- ⇒ Support to come to terms with loss and to integrate and adapt to loss in their lives
- ⇒ Allow them to have a shared experience and identification with others' feelings.
- ⇒ Acknowledge the grief.
- ⇒ Support the rebuilding of self-esteem, trust, confidence and resilience
- ⇒ It provides a model of coping and support for the future.

TUESDAYS, January 9th - March 5th

No group February 20th

3:30 - 4:30 pm

Coaldale FCSS - 2107 13th St ~ the Hub

REGISTRATION REQUIRED ~ Deadline January 2nd



Register Online: fcss.ca/event/spectrum-a-grief-support-group-for-teens-rsvp/

Motivation...Discipline...Respect

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



TRY JUDO

Winter Classes

January through April

In Person: January 9 & 10

6:00pm to 7:30pm

Limited Spots Available

Beginners (6ys+)

&

12ys+ Beginners & Intermediate

Registration Packages available at:

www.lajudo.com

Questions? Contact Angie at lethjudo@gmail.com



CCH WELDING CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISER!

WE HAVE TWO OPTIONS THIS YEAR!!

OPTION 1: CCH TREE ORNAMENT (LASER-CUT STEEL)

OPTION 2: NATIVITY TREE ORNAMENT (HORSESHOE NAILS)

PRICE: \$20 EACH

50% OF THE PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS SANTA'S ANONYMOUS

50% OF THE PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS REPLACING WORN OUT TOOLS & EQUIPMENT IN THE WELDING PROGRAM

SUBMIT ORDERS BY
DEC 14 TO ENSURE
DELIVERY BY
CHRISTMAS BREAK



[SCHOOL CASH ONLINE](#)



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



ACTUAL PRODUCTS ARE SIMILAR TO THE ONES ABOVE, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY VARY SLIGHTLY

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY:

