



January 2021

Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (John 15:5-9)

Every year, from January 18-25, Christians around the world join together for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Canadian Council of Churches shares the following:

The 2021 theme – Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (John 15:5-9) – calls us to pray and to work for reconciliation and unity in the church, with our human family, and with all of creation. Drawing on the Gospel image of vine and branches, it invites us to nourish unity with God and with one another through contemplative silence, prayer, and common action. Grafted into Christ the vine as many diverse branches, may we bear rich fruit and create new ways of living, with respect for and communion with all of creation. (<https://www.weekofprayer.ca/2021-week-prayer-christian-unity-theme>)

Joining together in prayer and communion with others is an excellent way to begin our calendar year, especially on the heels of repeated periods of isolation over the past many months. Visit [weekofprayer.ca](https://www.weekofprayer.ca) to learn more.

The new calendar year marks the beginning of our planning for the 2021-22 school year. This year, our planning will take on a very different look and feel. Our schools will be holding virtual Open Houses so that students and families can still get a good sense of what is offered as they make their learning choices for the next school year. You can learn more about our Open Houses by visiting our school websites. We are pleased to be taking registrations online again this year. Visit register.ecsd.net beginning January 11, 2021 to find your school and follow the steps to register if you are new to Edmonton Catholic Schools. A complete listing of Open Houses can be found there as well.

Edmonton Catholic Schools is excited to be building a new K-9 school in the Keswick and a new high school in Heritage Valley. We would like to hear your voice in naming them! The culture and ethos of the school community will evolve from the name of a Catholic school. The intention of the name is to support the mission of the Catholic school to be consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church and to establish and deepen the relationship of everyone in the school with the person of Jesus Christ as members of his Body, the Church. Visit www.ecsd.net and click on the 'name our schools' graphic to view the guidelines for submitting a name. Submissions are electronic through the site and will be accepted until 4 pm on January 31, 2021.

In the fall, we hosted a virtual opportunity for parents and guardians to learn more about supporting their children's mental health during COVID-19 times. We are pleased to offer a follow-up virtual event on January 20 from 7-8 pm. We have moved in and out of a virtual, remote existence in the past many months, and that has posed tremendous challenges to our mental health and wellbeing. We are travelling in uncharted territory as parents and caregivers, and in addition to paying close attention to ourselves, we need to be extra vigilant with our young people. It is our hope that this evening will give you a few more tools to help you support your families in establishing and maintaining good mental health in an increasingly digital world. Visit our website for more information on the event and register early!

Pope Francis published an encyclical letter, [Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship](#), last fall. Beginning this month, our Religious Education Services (RES) will be sharing monthly articles on the topic to help bring it to life for our community. This month, our RES Manager, Sandra Talarico, writes about the introduction and first two chapters.

As we anticipate the Week of Prayer for Christian unity, I will leave you with a final word from our Holy Father: "To pray is to light a candle in the darkness. *#Prayer* rouses us from the tepidness of a purely horizontal existence, lifts our gaze to higher things, makes us attuned to the Lord, allows God to be close to us; it frees us from our solitude and gives us hope." (Twitter, 12/15/20)

Many blessings in the New Year!

Sincerely,
Robert Martin
Chief Superintendent