

A decorative graphic at the top of the page. It features a golden globe with a blue arrow pointing upwards and to the right. The globe is set against a background of blue and white curved lines that also form a large arrow pointing right. The text "WE ARE CALLED..." is written in white, and "TO BE LEADERS OF HOPE AND MERCY" is written in blue, following the curve of the graphic.

WE ARE CALLED...

**TO BE LEADERS OF HOPE AND MERCY**

**February 2017**

***"...be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you."***

~Ephesians 4:32~

This scripture is taken from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. This letter speaks deeply to us all being members of the Body of Christ. Two very important aspects of this scripture are that we belong to Christ, and therefore should love like Jesus did, and that we need to live in harmony in order for the Body to remain healthy.

These words are perfect for us to reflect upon as we enter the month of February. There are so many opportunities for us to have discussions about kindness, compassion, love, and forgiveness. The week of February 12-18 marks Random Acts of Kindness Week. February 14, the feast of St. Valentine, is a special day for our students to share good wishes with each other. February 22 is Pink Shirt Day, and our day is focused on taking a stand against bullying by promoting empathy.

One of our fundamental commitments as a Catholic educational community is ongoing faith formation for our students and staff alike. On February 6, all our grade 8 students will gather together as a community of young believers for our second annual Father Michael 'Catfish' Mireau Youth Faith Day. The students will be engaged by the presentations of internationally renowned youth evangelizer Jesse Manibusan and Edmonton Catholic Schools' own nationally celebrated teacher, Carla Cuglietta, who will share her personal story of making a difference. They will also have the wonderful opportunity to participate in the Eucharist with Bishop Bittman. The theme, *Serve Like a Superhero*, highlights for them that our youth, who are our future, will change the world!

Our entire staff will gather on February 7 for our 20<sup>th</sup> annual Faith Development Day. We will listen to the wisdom of David Wells, an internationally celebrated Catholic educator, who will help us to further unfold our theme for the year, *We are Called...To Be Leaders of Hope And Mercy*. Archbishop Smith and Bishop Motiuk will lead us in a Eucharistic Celebration as well. Jesus is truly at the centre of this day, and it is so special for all of us.

There are many ongoing opportunities for our staff to engage in faith formation to build their knowledge and skills specifically for enhancing the classroom experience. As an example, teachers can attend PD sessions which explore meaningful and authentic ways that Indigenous Spirituality can be incorporated into the current religious education curriculum. This is one of the mandates from *Calls to Action* of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: to increase

awareness of Indigenous culture and practices. The facilitators share lesson plans that can be used with students to meet curriculum outcomes, as well as authentic experiences of Indigenous spiritual practices.

Starting in mid-January Alberta Education began mailing Accountability Pillar surveys to parents of all students enrolled in Alberta schools. By completing this survey, you are giving your school, Edmonton Catholic Schools, and the provincial government important information to gauge the quality of education your child is receiving and to ensure they are being prepared for success. The Accountability Pillar:

- Gives school boards a consistent way to measure their success and assess progress using a broad spectrum of measures
- Helps identify areas that need improvement and set priorities for the future
- Provides schools and school districts with a wide range of data showing how they are performing
- Focuses on more than student achievement, resulting in a more complete approach to accountability and system improvement

Please complete and return the survey by February 24. We all have a part to play in the important work of educating the next generation of Albertans.

Our professional development work with communities of practice continues to grow as our teacher cohorts gathered for the third time in January. Our eight community of practice cohorts focus on promising practices in the areas of literacy and numeracy across the content areas for students from pre-K to grade 12. Teachers will spend approximately 30 hours over the course of the year learning from and with each other in a specific area of literacy or numeracy. This will increase their ability to build strong foundational skills for all students. Key highlights of the recent sessions include the sharing of specific practices and learning stories with colleagues, as well as celebration of recent successes in moving student learning forward through targeted instruction.

This past month we hosted a parent evening that focused on supporting children with diverse learning needs in our District. It was terrific to see so many parents participate in sessions hosted by our Inclusive Team on topics including: supporting positive mental health, strategies for struggling readers, how to teach skills to your child with autism, positive behavior supports, speech and language, and assistive technology to support learning. A great evening of learning and dialogue was shared in by all. [Resources and links](#) to the visiting organizations that also shared their expertise at this session are posted in the *Parent Resources* section of our District website.

Ever our shepherd and teacher, Pope Francis has also shared wisdom with us that reflects our opening scripture for this month. "Let us learn to live with kindness, to love everyone, even when they do not love us." (*Twitter*, May 9/15)

Have a fabulous February!

Sincerely,

Joan Carr  
Superintendent