



Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools are dedicated to providing a Catholic education ensuring educational quality for all families willing to enter into a partnership to develop each child to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential.

November 23, 2011 Please email information for system-wide distribution to Cathy Nelson at cnelson@gtacs.org.

A THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Thank you, Father, for having created us and given us to each other in the human family. Thank you for being with us in all our joys and sorrows, for your comfort in our sadness, your companionship in our loneliness. Thank you for yesterday, today, tomorrow and for the whole of our lives. Thank you for friends, for health and for grace. May we live this and every day conscious of all that has been given to us. - From [The Catholic Prayer Book](#), compiled by Msgr. Michael Buckley

Here are the Mass readings for [Thanksgiving Day](#) and for this weekend, the [first Sunday in Advent](#).

NO SCHOOL MONDAY

Monday, 11/28, is a professional development day. Among the things that will be going on that day are a) tightening the alignment of math curriculum to benchmarks and standards and b) Mass followed by a presentation by Rev. John Fleckenstein – NCEA Distinguished Pastor of the Year in 2010 – who will talk about leadership in faith-based education.

WE ARE THANKFUL

- For a bountiful “harvest” of mittens, hats, boots and other winter gear donated during the Boots for Kids drive
- For our priests, sisters and deacons and their inspired work in the vineyard that is GTACS
- For [Gallagher’s Farm Market](#) for donating apples and for a new relationship with [Food Rescue](#) which will enable us to help bring food from local farms and distribute it among the needy
- For those who have helped us prepare for the changes to the Roman Missal this weekend
- For many special activities during Advent
- For the many prayers offered for Immaculate Conception third grader, Katie Barsheff during her heart surgery on Monday; you can keep up with Katie’s progress at www.katiesheartjourney.com.
- For our GTACS family and the many ways in which it supports and nurtures us

ABUNDANT SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES DURING ADVENT

Restore your spirit. Restore your sense of wonder. Make use of the many outstanding spiritual opportunities this Advent:

- **40 Hours Devotion at St. Francis of Assisi Church:** Devotion begins with Mass presided over by Bishop Hebda at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, December 6 and ends with Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thursday, December 8 at 7:00 pm. For the complete schedule, [click here](#).
- **Additional Friday Mass.** During Advent, there will be an “extra” Mass on Fridays at 11:45 am in the St. Clare Chapel at St. Francis High School. All are welcome!
- **Advent by Candlelight** is Tuesday, November 29 at St. Patrick Church. Program begins in the church at 6:30 p.m. followed by coffee, wine, desserts, and fellowship in the social hall. Please RSVP to (231) 313-2729 or email AdventUpNorth@yahoo.com. A free-will offering will be taken.
- During the **Advent Mission** at St. Patrick’s, Frank Runyeon will present “Light in the Darkness, An Advent Mission” on Saturday, November 26, at 6:30 pm and “Living in the Light in the Media Age” on Sunday, November 27, at 12:30 pm. These presentations are appropriate for all ages and are designed to remind us what the season of Advent is all about. A free-will offering will be taken.

SCHOOL DIRECTORIES

Directories are in and available at each school office for \$5 each. Pick one up for home, office, and/or your car!

CHANGING SEASONS

- Football season ended on Saturday; what a great effort by our Gladiators! Winter sports are in full swing which means basketball, wrestling, hockey, downhill and cross-country skiing and bowling! TCSF athletic events including practices can be viewed on [Digital Sports](#). Come out and support our teams!

TRIP (TUITION REDUCTION INCENTIVE PLAN) NEWS

- During the holiday shopping season, we will be carrying **Cabela's** \$25s & **PF Chang's** \$25s. Look for both on the on-hand order form.
- Also available is **Holiday Gift Card Wrappers** for \$2, with a 9% discount. You will receive a 10-pack of colorful, pre-cut glossy wrappers to wrap your gift cards in style.
- **Pure Essence Salon** is now available in two denominations: \$20 and \$50.
- **Honey Baked Ham** has changed to a \$25 card and is available on the Not-On-Hand order form. We will not be carrying them On-Hand any longer.
- As soon as our current supply of **Regis** cards is depleted, we will no longer carry them On-Hand, but they will be available thru Not-On-Hand.
- **JoAnn Fabrics** is now available only in a \$25 denomination.
- **BONUSES: LL Bean** 2% until 12/1; **Bath & Body** 5% until 12/1; **Cabela's** (OH & NOH) 2% until 12/29; **Express** 2% until 12/8; **JC Penney** 2% until 11/23; **Regis** 2% until 12/15; **CVS Pharmacy** (NOH) 1% until 12/8
- **TRIP HOURS this week are Tuesday 11/22 from 2 pm-6 pm and Wednesday 11/23 from 8 am-10am (sharp!)**

TCSF SWEATSHIRTS MAKE GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Gladiator Athletics is accepting orders for TCSF sweatshirts. [Order forms](#) are due to any school office by Wednesday, December 7 to guarantee pick-up in the Athletic Office on December 21 from 10 am-2:30 pm. These are the navy/gold sweatshirts where you can put a student name on the back and choose a sport to put on the front. Questions? Call the Athletic Office at 946-1180 or email <mailto:mmiddleton@gtacs.org>.

A FEW REPEAT ITEMS FROM LAST WEEK (IN CASE YOU MISSED IT)

BE FIT, HAVE FUN

[WE SKI](#) takes place on Thursdays in January from 6-8:00 pm at Timber Ridge Resort & Campground. The \$35 family rate includes a trail fee, snack, après ski meal plus age- and ability-appropriate instruction. Registration is limited to 90 people and ends December 25, 2011.

ST. FRANCIS CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL HELPS "RAISE THE ROOF"

Come to the [Christmas Festival](#), Sunday, December 4, in the St. Francis High School gymnasium, 10:30 am-4:00 pm.

COOKING CLASS FOR ADULTS

Join Chef Jason Maday for a cooking class that will give you strategies and techniques to help you save time and prepare healthier food. Hands-on classes will be offered at the St. Francis kitchen from 6:30-9:30 pm. Cost is \$40 per person per class, limit 10 per class. If you are interested in a cooking class with a group of friends in the comfort of your own kitchen, additional classes can be offered. Contact jmaday@gtacs.org to make a reservation or learn more.

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PRAYER BEFORE ADVENT

Dear Jesus,

It happens every year. I think that this will be the year that I have a reflective Advent. I look forward to Sunday and this new season, Jesus. But all around me are the signs rushing me to Christmas and some kind of celebration that equates spending with love.

I need your help.

I want to slow my world down. This year, more than ever, I need Advent, these weeks of reflection and longing for hope in the darkness. Jesus, this year, help me to have that longing. Help me to feel it in my heart and be aware of the hunger and thirst in my own soul. Deep down, I know there is something missing in my life, but I can't quite reach for it. I can't get what is missing. I know it is about you, Jesus. You are not missing from my life, but I might be missing the awareness of all of the places you are present there.

Be with me, my dear friend. Guide me in these weeks to what you want to show me this Advent. Help me to be vulnerable enough to ask you to lead me to the place of my own weakness, the very place where I will find you the most deeply embedded in my heart, loving me without limits.

SOURCE: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/advent-prayers.html#Before-Advent>