



December 2020

When the darkness closes in, Come, Lord Jesus!
Courage fails and hopes grow dim, Lord Jesus, come!
Clear the shadows from our sight; set our troubled world aright
Fill our eyes with radiant light. Lord Jesus come!
(M.D. Ridge, *Come, Lord Jesus*)

The lyrics of this Advent hymn are, perhaps, even more poignant this year as we prepare our hearts and our homes for the birth of our Saviour, Jesus. Our world seems to be lonely and dark, and we are all overwhelmed by the seemingly unending pall of Covid-19 in our lives. As we turn our eyes towards Bethlehem in these upcoming weeks, let's take the time to reflect upon the promise to be found in the baby Jesus. God loves us, and that love is triumphant. Advent is a time of hope, and we need to let that hope permeate all aspects of our lives.

Edmonton Catholic Schools' Fine Arts team is a very creative group, and they have designed a beautiful online Advent experience for all to enjoy. Starting on November 29, you will be able to "open a door" on our virtual arts Advent calendar each day. You will experience weekly celebrations, art, performances, and Advent themed activities. Visit www.ecsd.net and click on the Art of Advent graphic to learn more.

Did you know that the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ religion resource for grades 1-7 has various resources to support your family's Advent journey towards Christmas? Click on the [Pearson Advent Bulletin For Parents](#) to find out exactly what those resources are. You can continue learning about Advent and Christmas at home by logging into the [Student-Home Website](#) and finding these specific resources listed in the bulletin above. The username is ecsd99 and the password is Student99.

The new Covid-19 measures that were announced on November 24 were a possibility that we have been preparing for. We have known right from re-entry at the beginning of this school year that we needed to be able to pivot quickly between scenarios and we have plans in place to do so. Unlike our experience in the spring, our junior and senior high students who are now moving online will be following their existing schedules and will participate in learning following regular school hours. You will receive more comprehensive communication on this pivot in the upcoming days. Elementary families will receive information about the one-week pivot to online learning (January 4-8, 2021) before Christmas Break.

On November 25 at our Public Meeting, the Board of Trustees approved our [2019 – 2020 Audited Financial Statements](#) and our [Annual Education Results Report \(AERR\)](#). Historically, the AERR has been combined with our 3 Year Education Plan, however, we shared that plan, the [Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2020-2023](#)

in May. As we join the rest of the province in shifting to an Assurance Framework, we will continue communicating these two documents separately. We will share more with you about the shift to an Assurance Framework in the upcoming months.

In his Midnight Mass homily last Christmas Eve, Pope Francis shared a beautiful piece of wisdom that I will leave you with: “Dear brother, dear sister, if your hands seem empty, if you think your heart is poor in love, this night is for you. *The grace of God has appeared*, to shine forth in your life. Accept it and the light of Christmas will shine forth in you.”

Have a blessed Advent and a very Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,

Robert Martin
Chief Superintendent