



April 2021

“Today the Church’s proclamation echoes throughout the world: “Jesus Christ is risen!” – “He is truly risen!”. Like a new flame this Good News springs up in the night: the night of a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family. In this night, the Church’s voice rings out: “Christ, my hope, has arisen!”
(Pope Francis, [Urbi et Orbi message](#), 04/12/20)

A year ago, Pope Francis gave an Easter address and blessing that still resonates very deeply with our global circumstance today. He spoke of the impact of the pandemic on our lives and issued a call to us to work together, to shed our indifference, and to let the triumph of Christ in his glory shine through in our hearts and our lives. We are an Easter people, and we will work together to bring living witness to our faith with hope and joy!

On March 24, our Board of Trustees passed our 2022-2025 Capital Plan. This plan identifies the Division’s highest priority school facility requirements for the forthcoming three-year period. For each year of the plan, projects are listed in order of priority. This plan will be submitted to Alberta Education so that they are aware of our needs when they are deciding on building schools across the province. You can view our Capital Plan by visiting www.ecsd.net or by [clicking here](#).

We are pleased to announce that Edmonton Catholic Schools will be consolidating all of its departments, with the exception of Facility Services, to one central location! We want to ensure that we can maximize funding to our schools and classrooms rather than supporting old and inefficient infrastructure. We are fulfilling a commitment to find operational efficiencies and financial savings for the entire Division. ECSD has purchased the building known as the 50th Street Atria (9405 – 50 Street), and this will bring together more than 300 Division employees under one roof, reducing our administrative physical footprint by 12 per cent. The purchase, which uses only Capital Reserves, will see us saving over a million dollars a year in operations and maintenance. We will also be selling the 5 administrative buildings that are currently being used to bolster the Capital Reserves. [Click here](#) to learn more about this innovative project.

Thank you to all our families for sharing your learning intentions for the 2021-2022 school year. We are approaching the fall with the hope that we will be out of the grip of the pandemic and families will be comfortable with in-person learning. We are pleased to share that over 97% of our families have indicated that they plan to return to in-person learning in September.

In the fall of 2020, ECSD hired an independent research team to evaluate our School Resource Officer (SRO) program in order to identify its strengths and to make recommendations on its areas for growth. The team is composed of 3 researchers from the University of Alberta, University of Toronto, and Carleton University. This year long study will explore how the current SRO Program impacts various areas of interest such as school safety, student engagement, crime, diversion from the justice system and diversion from Child and Family Service involvement. It will also explore the experience of students, parents, staff, and officers through a mixed methods approach. Families in schools that have an SRO will receive more information directly from the Division about participation in the study in the upcoming months.

Pope Francis published an encyclical letter, [Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship](#), last fall. This month, our Division Chaplain Father Julian Bilyj writes about chapter 7, *Paths of Renewed Encounter*, and chapter 8, *Religions at the Service of Fraternity in our World*. The article is included as an accompaniment to this newsletter.

Since this month marks the final installment of our *Fratelli Tutti* journey, I will leave you with one of the prayers that Pope Francis shares in the encyclical:

A Prayer to the Creator

*Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.
May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognize the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams.
Amen.*

Have a joyous Easter season!

Sincerely,

Robert Martin
Chief Superintendent