

Holy Cross, September 2024



# Welcome Back!

We are looking forward to a wonderful year ☺



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## Opening Prayer

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Dear Holy Cross School Families:

 Welcome to the beginning of another school year, and all of the excitement that comes with it. To our new students and families, our new staff, and any others who are coming to us for the first time; we welcome you to the Holy Cross School community. For those of us who have returned after a well-deserved summer break, we hope it was refreshing, and that you had some opportunities to spend time out in God’s country enjoying nature, sunlight, and beauty with family and friends. And now, it is time to get back to our studies, and a bit of fun. Go Saints!

As the administration team and staff, we have been busy planning for what promises to be a year of wonderful teaching and learning. We are looking forward to a productive partnership with you, our families, to ensure our students achieve their highest potential. We recognize that a strong partnership with you will make a great difference in your child’s education. As partners, we believe in a shared responsibility for our children’s success. Please know that it is our honour and privilege to walk alongside your child in their academic and faith journeys. Throughout the year will we be exploring the many gifts God has given us and how we as Catholic educators, students, and families, can share these gifts with others. We are most thankful for the gift of his son Jesus Christ.

September is always a time of change for us, with updates to schedules, new teachers, and new routines. Please remember that in placing our trust in the Lord, and working together, we will build the relationships which are essential to growing spiritually, academically, emotionally, and physically. As a school community we at Holy Cross School are committed to excellence in all areas of student development and will continue to pursue the growth of Christian leaders who are responsible, life-long learners.

        In previous years, our community has been blessed with the support of engaged parents and community members, who understand the importance of what we are continually trying to accomplish. We ask that you once again become active participants in our school community by sharing your gifts, talents, or prayers - there are so many ways to help! To our students, get involved in your school, and make it what you want it to be! I look forward to working hard with you, to make this a great year for all of us.

Loving God,
Our creator, our saviour, our companion,
Bless this journey of a new school year that we undertake.
Refresh our souls and renew our spirits.

Lord,
Make our hearts pure as we prepare for the return of students to this school,
May you guide them to return with open hearts and minds eager to learn.
We ask this in Your Holy name,

Amen

Peace and blessings,

Mrs. Catherine Walker



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| September 4th | Students Return grades 1-8 |
| September 9th | Used Uniform Sale |
| September 12th | First School Mass |
| September 12th | PAC presents: Welcome Back BBQ |
| September 17th  | Early Dismissal @ 2 pm |
| September 20th  | Grade 6-8 Immunizations |
| September 20th | Terry Fox Walk ($2 Donation) |
| September 22nd  | Truth and Reconciliation Week begins |
| September 27th  | Orange Shirt Day- Non-uniform Day |
| September 30th | National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – No School |

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| October 2nd  | Photo Day |
| October 8th  | Grade 7 Retreat |
| October 14th  | Thanksgiving Monday! No School |
| October 15th  | Early Dismissal @ 2 PM |
| October 25th  | MTS PD Day – No School |
| October 31st | Black and Orange Colour Day |

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| November 1st  | All Saints Day Mass |
| November 5th  | Photo Retakes |
| November 8th  | No School |
| November 10th  | Day Light Savings Time- Extra Hour! |
| November 11th  | Remembrance Day- No School |
| November 19th  | Early Dismissal @ 2 PM |
| November 22nd  | Report Cards Sent Home |
| November 28th and 29th  | Parent Teacher interviews |

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| December 1st  | Advent Begins! |
| December 6th  | Christmas Concert Practice |
| December 10th  | Early Dismissal @ 2 PM |
| December 13th  | Christmas Concert Practice |
| December 17th  | Christmas Mass |
| December 19th  | Christmas Concert Matinee and Evening Show |
| December 20th  | Last Day of School- Dismissal by 11:30 AM |

**Please note: This school year we will be doing quarterly newsletters, be sure to check the website calendar and weekly news updates for up-to-date information.**

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All families are invited to attend the PACs AGM on\_\_\_\_\_\_.

PACs are a great opportunity to engage, inform and empower families and school partnerships. Research shows that when families are positively involved in their children's school experience, there is a positive effect on overall student achievement. PACs provide opportunities for parents to get involved and know what is going on in their child's school as well as provide a voice for parents to have a say in their child's education. It's also a place to share ideas and connect with families.

For more details e-mail pacholycrossschool@gmail.com

We would love to see you!



Families are asked to continue to monitor their child’s health every day prior to sending them to school and follow best practices. If you think your child has an illness that can be spread to others please keep them at home. If while at school your child exhibits cold or flu like symptoms such as, but not limited too; fever, runny nose, headache, or nausea, families will be contacted to pick their child up from school and take them home.

**Please, call the school office by 9:00 AM. If your child is going to be late or absent, please remind your child to sign in at the office if they are late! Email your child's teacher and the office if you will pick them up early from school. Students will not be paged after 2:20 for unarranged pick-ups.**



Holy Cross Catholic School is excited to welcome our new members of staff to our building!

Miss. Sherry Sankoh, Mrs. San Juan, Mrs. Vera Cruz, Ms. Laura Ebbeling, Mrs. Michelle Hancock, Mr. Nick Jones, and Mr. Brendan Bilawka! Our school and community are very excited to have you!

**New staff Bios:**

My name is Sherry Sankoh. I am 25 years old. I was born and raised in Dublin, Ireland. I moved to Brandon, Canada with my family in 2015. I am the oldest child with two younger brothers. I am an honors graduate from Brandon University. Since my graduation in 2022 I have spent the last two years teaching in Norway House in northern Manitoba. I taught grade 4, and then grade 1. This is my third-year teaching in the classroom.

Some fun facts about me are that I absolutely love to travel and try new things, and I have an adorable cat named Mimi. I am beyond excited to get this school year started. I look forward to supporting your child’s growth in Kindergarten this year.

Hi! My name is Jessica San Juan and this is my first year at Holy Cross School! I have 3 years of teaching experience, but this is my first year teaching Grade 2! I love to bake, garden, paddleboard and most of all, I love to spend time with my family and my Chihuahua named Gucci. I am looking forward to the new school year!

My Name is Ms. Hancock and I am a practicing Catholic who is new to Catholic schools. I have taught at all grade levels in both English and in French immersion since 2009. I am an avid Blue Bomber fan and enjoy fostering dogs from northern Manitoba when I can. I am excited to join HCS and will be teaching Grade 7&8 Social Studies, Art, and Drama.

My name is Brendan and I am new to Holy Cross this school year. I will be teaching K-6 Phys Ed and Health, and I have a passion for a wide variety of sports and activities. I believe participating in a healthy active lifestyle is paramount for young children and adolescents. This summer I spent a lot of time golfing, hiking, fishing, and anything else outdoors that could allow me to soak up fresh air and exercise. I look forward to meeting all Holy Cross students and families over the next coming months!

Mr. Nicholas Jones: Born in England to Irish parents, I moved to Canada to –40 temperatures in December 2008 with my family (parents and 2 siblings). I have been teaching for 10 years after graduating from the UofM and have taught all grades and all subjects (to varying age groups!). I am a HUGE soccer fan and proudly support Liverpool. I also play badminton and rugby. One fun fact about me is that I am also one of the biggest Star Wars fans around 😊

I married my wonderful wife Erin at St. Ignatius Church in 2019, and we have a sweet baby boy named Rupert who is about to turn 1! Prior to arriving at Holy Cross, I have taught in the public school system as well as St. Emile, SBDHS and St. Joseph the Worker. I look forward to teaching grade 7 and 8 the ways of math and physical education (sometimes even at the same time!!!).

Hello, my name is Laura Ebbeling, and I am very excited to join to Holy Cross School Community. I was born and raised here in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I received my Bachelors Degree in Science from the University of Manitoba, and my Bachelors Degree in Education from the University of Winnipeg. I am currently working on a Post Baccalaureate Diploma Program in Education, focusing on Special Education.

Mrs. Vera Cruz: I have over 15 years of teaching experience, which includes working as a cognitive teacher in a Canadian-based neuroscience program, serving as a learning facilitator for neurodivergent students in a nonprofit organization, and teaching multiple subjects at an Indigenous community school. Additionally, I spent a few years teaching high school math in the Bahamas.

**National Day of Truth and Reconciliation: September 30th, 2023**

**Why We Wear Orange Shirts?**

Phyllis Webstad, from the Stswecem’c Xgat’tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band), left her home community at 6 years old to attend a residential school in British Columbia. Initially, she was excited to go to school and went shopping with her granny to pick out a new outfit for school; she chose a shiny orange shirt. When she arrived at the Residential school her orange shirt was taken away from her and never returned. The colour orange has always reminded Phyllis that her feelings didn’t matter, how no one cared, and how left to feel like she was worth nothing.

On September 30th, Canadians wear an orange shirt to demonstrate the commitment to reconciliation and opening and continuing the dialogue about residential schooling. The slogan for Orange Shirt Day is “Every Child Matters”.\_ \_It is important educators are aware of this focus as in the early grades this curriculum focuses on what it means to matter and how children matter in our communities residential schooling has had on Canada both past and present.

**How is Holy Cross Honouring National Truth and Reconciliation Day?**

 Throughout September and the rest of the school year, Holy Cross students will be learning about Residential Schools and the history of the Indigenous people of Canada through videos, classroom discussions, and literature. Additionally, the seven sacred teachings will be incorporated with our Christian Actions and the 5 Traits of a Holy Cross School Learner. On September 29th, 2023, students at Holy Cross school are encouraged to wear Orange shirts as an acknowledgement of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.



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| **Mass Times** | **Reconciliation** |
| Monday-Saturday @ 7:45 AM | Monday- Saturday following 7:45 AM Mass |
| Saturday @ 4 PM | No reconciliation on Sunday |
| Sunday @ 7:45 AM, 10 AM and 12 PM | Private reconciliations available by appt. only |

**Religious Life at Holy Cross**

As a Catholic School, Holy Cross has monthly masses for the whole school, and also holds smaller grade-grouping masses throughout the year. Our first celebration is the Feast of the Holy Cross on September 14th. All students participate in these masses, and those who are Catholic and have received their First Communion are welcome to receive the bread that has become Jesus at communion.

For families who are non-Catholic, we want you to know the message that we try to communicate to your children here in the school: God's love includes every one of His creatures, and He wants to pour out His blessings on everyone. However, the sacrament of the Eucharist is also a sign of participation in and unity with the Body of the Church, and so it is not open for all to receive. This does not limit the outpouring of God's love, and so all are invited to come forward for a blessing. Students who are non-Catholic or who have not had their First Communion are invited to cross their arms across their chests as the sign that they wish to receive a blessing.

For parents interested in First Communion for their children, this can be prepared and celebrated through the school. There will be a meeting scheduled in October or early November to provide you with more information. Any questions can be directed to Heather Lampman at hlampman@holycrossschool.mb.ca. If your child is in grade 5 or above and you are seeking First Communion, please contact me immediately. If you are seeking Confirmation for your child, please contact your parish.

**School Safety**

**Anaphylaxis**

Some of our students have an allergic reaction called Anaphylaxis. Sometimes called “allergic shock” or “generalized allergic reaction”, anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can lead to rapid death, if untreated. Sufferers of ana-phylaxis respond with an extreme body reaction. The reaction may begin with itching, hives, vomiting, diarrhea, or swelling of the lips or face; within moments, the throat may begin to close, choking off breathing and leading to unconsciousness and death.

We must all join together to ensure their safety. Although peanuts may be the most common anaphylaxis-causing allergen in children, there are many others such as shellfish and tree nuts. Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening condition regardless of which substance triggers it.

Despite the best efforts of parents and schools, no individual or organization can guarantee an “allergy-free” environment. The only way to protect children who are known to be at risk of anaphylaxis is to put a plan in place to help them avoid the allergen and to establish the emergency response procedures to be followed in the event that they have an allergic reaction.

During the first week of school, teachers will be sending information home to parents outlining any allergens that their students are allergic to. Parents are requested to keep these allergens in mind when packing snacks or treats for the class or school bake sales. Parents are also asked to read labels carefully for the following products that may contain nut products: Granola Bars, Crackers, Chocolate bars and cookies, some cereals, any store baked goods or snacks.

On behalf of the students and staff, thank you for your co-operation.

**Medication**

If your child requires medication, we request that you please fill out our “Authorization and Request for the Administration of Prescribed Medication” forms.

We want to take this opportunity to share some of the safety precautions we have put in place to keep students, families and staff safe.

First, we will ensure that the gate at the east end of the parking lot remains **closed from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.**

Secondly, the student drop-off at the back door is **1-way traffic.** Parents are to come up the back lane from Niverville and exit onto Braemar. **DO NOT** enter the back lane from Braemar as it is against the flow of traffic.

Thirdly, after school, students are directed to the waiting adjacent to the parking lot, we ask that families **pick up their children from the waiting area,** rather than have them run across the back lane and potentially into oncoming traffic. The back lane will again be **1-way traffic.** Parents are to line up along the back lane entering from Niverville and exiting VIA Braemar.

We at Holy Cross School have a responsibility to 1) ensure the safety of pedestrians on surrounding streets, and in the back lane, during arrival and departure 2) ensure our neighbours have access to their properties 3) provide space for emergency vehicles to drive down the back lane. We need students, staff, and parents all working together to provide a safe and courteous system for dropping off and picking up students from school.

**BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR:**

The office has received many complaints from residents of Braemar Avenue about traffic in the back lane. This lane is not a parking zone, yet cars have regularly parked there creating undue congestion and safety concerns. Some parents have been observed using private property to turn around and even park their cars.

**Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten Students:** Use the ***Gym Door*** (located at the front of the gym) for entry at **8:20 a.m.** and **exit at 3:00 p.m.** on Dubuc Street.

**Grade 1 to 8 students** will meet at the rear of the school **(Parking Lot)** The doors open for student entry at **8:20 a.m. and exit at 3:00 p.m. Supervision is provided until 3:15 p.m.** Doors will be opened at 8:20 a.m. in the case of inclement weather the doors will open at 8:15 AM.

Outside supervision is provided between **3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.** It is **not safe** to drop your child off at school and leave them unattended. Students who are outside and unaccompanied by their guardians will be directed to Before & After Care. Dismissal at the end of the day begins at 3:00 p.m. Families are to wait outside until the hallways are clear before they enter the school. Any students not picked up by 3:15 will be taken to the program. As a reminder the program doors will not open until 3:15 PM.

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**A very special welcome to all our new families!**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff and families who have participated in our school’s Tabs for Wheelchairs program! You have truly helped in making this program an extremely successful one! In June, we celebrated the **26th Anniversary of Tabs for Wheelchairs** and presented a specialized wheelchair to Kyrie, a six year old girl from East Selkirk.

**Holy Cross School** initiated this program in **1998** and as of today, we have 180 schools, 299 companies/groups, and hundreds of individuals saving tabs with us. In the past 26 years, through the tab collection, monetary donations, and two anonymous donors who have given very large donations, we have been able to present **61 specialized wheelchairs**. A huge thank you to everyone in our school community who has helped to make this possible!

To all of our new families, to be a part of this very worthwhile cause, all you need to do is collect those little tabs off pop cans, fruit cans, pet food cans, beer cans, and any other items that have that same kind of tab. Tabs are usually silver but can be colored as well. This program has had such great success because of people spreading the word to their extended family, friends and neighbors. The more people you have saving, the greater number of tabs are brought in.

Every June, with the exception of the Covid years, we have had an assembly in the gym and presented a specialized wheelchair(s) to an individual(s). The Rehabilitation Centre for Children and Manitoba Possible (which used to be called The Society for Manitobans with Disabilities) give us names of young people who could benefit from a brand-new specialized wheelchair.

The following is how the tab program works at our school. Every classroom has a water jug in their class in which to collect the tabs. When a classroom fills their 1st jug, they will get a heart put up on the chart in the main hallway of the school. That classroom will have a party with a no uniform day and be able to watch a movie. When your child has their class party, we ask you to supply a healthy snack of your child’s choice from home and to also bring a drink. If a classroom fills a 3rd jug, they will have another class party.

All tabs collected throughout the year are taken to Western Scrap Metal, and they in turn, present us with a cheque for the metal’s worth at the time. This is the money we use to purchase the wheelchairs, along with any monetary donations we receive.

I am truly hoping that all families will participate in this very worthwhile program and save tabs with us this year! Remember to spread the word to all your family, friends and neighbors.

A photo and a write-up of our 2025 wheelchair recipient can also be found in this September school newsletter.

Good Luck in saving tabs and wishing everyone a successful and healthy year!

**Gwen Buccini**

**Tabs for Wheelchairs Founder & Coordinator**

**School Uniforms**

Students must be in the proper school uniform. Please label ALL articles of your child’s clothing. This a reminder that all uniforms must be purchased through Top Marks. If you are unfamiliar with our uniform policy click the link [here](https://holycrossschool.mb.ca/media/uniforms/school-uniform-policy-October-20232024.pdf) to review it.



**Exciting Year Ahead in Science at Holy Cross School!**

Welcome back to a year of scientific discovery at Holy Cross School! Our **Eureka! Holy Cross Science Club** is now open for membership, offering hands-on experiments, exciting challenges, and inspiring guest speakers. We’re gearing up for several science fairs, including our annual **Holy Cross Science Fair** and participation in regional and national competitions. This year, we’re introducing exclusive opportunities for our Grade 6, 7 & 8 students and Science Club members, such as the **Rover Driving Academy**, **SoapBox Science**, **Dissection Labs,** **MicroBit Coding**, **Mental Health and Wellness resources**, and a special trip to the **Global Biotech Week Kick-off at the Legislature**. These events aim to ignite curiosity, foster critical thinking, and inspire the next generation of scientists. Please contact Dr. Bajaj directly (abajaj@holycrossschool.mb.ca) if you need more info. Stay tuned for more details!

**Holy Cross Staff 2024-2025**

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| **Class** |  |
| **Pre-Kindergarten** | Mrs. Pam Bembenek + Mrs. Jirapan Dimalanta |
| **Kindergarten** | Mrs. Elaine Pankiw + Miss. Sherry Sankoh |
| **Grade 1** | Ms. Kate McArthur |
| **Grade 2** | Mrs. Mariia Polishchuk + Mrs. Jessica San Juan  |
| **Grade 3** | Mr. Dale Krawchuk |
| **Grade 4** | Mr. Braden Ewchuk + Mrs. Jean Gulowaty |
| **Grade 5** | Mrs. Marita Perez + Mrs. Sherill Vera Cruz |
| **Grade 6** | Mrs. Natashia Viselli-Anderson + Ms. Laura Ebbeling |
| **Grade 7** | Mr. Nicholas Jones + Mrs. Michelle Hancock |
| **Grade 8** | Mrs. Cheryl Munro + Dr. Anju Bajaj |
| **Phys Ed** | Mrs. Mariia Polishchuk, Mr. Brendan Bilawka, Mr. Nicholas Jones |
| **French/ Religion** | Mr. Rom Ciric |
| **Music** | Mrs. Michelle Henshaw |
| **Religion/Music** | Mrs. Heather Lampman |
| **Resource** | Ms. Karen Stubbs |
| **Educational Assistants** | Mrs. Trish Neusitzer, Ms. Mary Rose Tabing, Ms. Tracy Fraser, Ms. Viktoriya Mozolevska, Ms. Karina Parashchak, Mrs. Mariz Tolentio, Mrs. Charmaine Vivo, Mrs. Ela Kosa, Mrs. Mahitab Mostafa  |
| **Before & After School Program** | Ms. Mary Rose Tabing, Ms. Tracy Fraser, Mrs. Mariz Tolentino, Mrs. Charmine Vivo, Mrs. Karina Paraschak |
| **Building Maintenance** | Mr. Orest Serediuk |
| **Custodian** | Mrs. Svitlana  Temelianenko |
| **Administrative Assistant** | Mrs. Anna Katchanovski |
| **Secretary** | Mrs. Jill Anderson |
| **Vice Principal** | Mr. Brett Bourquin |
| **Principal** | Mrs. Catherine Walker |