Dear Parents and Friends,

Welcome back everyone for the 2016 school year. Along with our existing families, I would also like to warmly welcome the 22 new families whose children began in Kindergarten this week: Alexander (Patricia), Barac (Nicholas), Bennett (Dailen), Biehl (Sarah), Carter (Olivia), Housego (Daisy), Kindavong (Alexie), Kpakima (Kris), Landon (Leo), Massey (Isabella), Mitchell (Dallas), Monck (Hudson), Montero (Claudia), Morris (Georgia), Morris (Logan), O’Connell (Elijah), Reardon (Lola), Rositano (Marianna), Steffan (Carys), Susic (Tijana), Winsbury (Amelia) and Xuereb (Tivani). Welcome also to the five new families whose children began in other years: Hare (Hannah Year 2), Kefferd (Kayden Year 2 and Kayla Year 4), Taylor (Anya Year 2), Khalidi (Ashkon Year 3 and Myah Kindergarten) and Evans (Eliza Year 5). A very warm welcome to you all, and I wish you all a long and happy association with St Matthew’s.

Chicken Taj Mahal
Have you seen the new chicken run in our courtyard? At the request of our chief chook wrangler, Ms Cathy Talbot, this new home for our feathered friends was constructed over the January holidays by some parents in our school—Kev and Kate Whitton (parents of Geordie Year 6) and Michael McGuigan (father of Lara Year 3 and Alex Year 6). Our five chickens can now move freely from one area to another and will have a lovely, accessible space to chill out on weekends. Thank you Kev, Kate and Michael from all of us—and the chooks! (Read more on page 4!)

Swimming Carnival
Our swimming carnival on Monday was a wonderful success. The weather was perfect, helpers came out in droves, children and teachers were in good spirits and the day was a wonderful sporting and social event for the children. Every child had the opportunity to participate at a level with which they felt comfortable, and we saw some outstanding swimming stars emerge! An hour of free play on the slides and in the pools at lunchtime was enjoyed greatly by all the children.

Days like the swimming carnival only happen with your support. Thank you, most sincerely, to the many parents and grandparents who volunteered their time to help us on the day. Your efforts at time keeping, running, recording, writing and your good humour really contributed to the success of the day. Thank you also to the teaching team who organised the day and ensured its smooth running on Monday; Mrs Rachel Powell, Mrs Fiona Debenham, Mrs Michelle Johnson, Mrs Alison Ewyk and Mrs Belinda Eaton. Splendid work, team! Ribbons for the carnival will be presented at assembly tomorrow morning, Friday 12 February at 8.50 am.

Morning ‘Kiss and Drop Off’ Procedures
You will have noticed a teacher standing in the car park in the mornings to supervise the drop off area. (I know we all look so stylish in our fluoro vests!) This was in response to several concerns raised last year about the delays which were occurring when people used the drop off incorrectly. Parents/carers who use the drop-off zone in the morning are asked to follow a few simple rules:

- Drivers access the car park turning in from Stutchbury Street via the entrance closest to the Junior Playground and leave via the exit at the bottom of the netball court ramp.
- Three cars can use the drop-off zone at one time.
- Do not stop in the middle or at the back of the zone if there are no cars in the front space/s.
- Move to the front of the zone.
- Drivers must stay in their cars as getting out to open doors or the car boot will cause traffic delays.
- Please move on promptly without overtaking cars in front.
- Children should be ready to get out on the kerb side of the car (the left hand side of the vehicle) preferably with their school bags in hand. Children are at risk of being injured if getting out on the right-hand side of the vehicle into the traffic coming through the staff car park.

Drivers, please take care when driving around our school. Your children are our most precious resource and we need to keep them safe. When driving through our carparks, stick to 10 km p/h.

... cont page 2 ...
**Staffing**

As announced in last week’s ‘Matty’s Reminder’, Mrs Amanda Peek, our Front Office Manager Admin has been accepted into university to study midwifery! Amanda’s last day will be tomorrow as she starts uni the following Monday. We will say a whole school farewell at assembly tomorrow morning, Friday 12 February. I know you will join me in wishing Amanda every blessing as she begins this new path in life. This position has been advertised, information about which can be found on our website under ‘Employment Opportunities’ in ‘About Us’.

**Term 1 School Fees**

Term 1 school fee statements were sent home last week. If you have set up a direct debit, these statements are for information only to see the term’s account. If you have not made adjustments to your direct debit to cover the 2016 fees, please come in the office to amend your payment schedule.

**A story for Lent**

We celebrated Ash Wednesday Mass yesterday in our church with all students from Year 1—Year 6, led by our parish priest Fr Michael Mullin. A visitor to our parish from Sydney complimented the children after Mass, remarking on their reverence, prayerfulness and participation in the Mass. We are always so proud of your children when we spend time in God’s house What a hope for the future!

Ash Wednesday is the official start of the church season of Lent, a time associated with doing good works, abstinence, almsgiving, charitable works and preparing for the joyous celebration which comes at Easter.

Did you know that the humble pretzel has its origins as an official food of Lent?!

In the early Church, the Lenten abstinence and fasting laws were more strict than what the faithful practice today. Many areas of the Church abstained from all forms of meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for food like fish. The general rule was for a person to have one meal a day, in the evening, and smaller snacks to maintain strength through the day. So a need arose for a very simple food which would fulfil the abstinence and fasting laws.

The story goes that a young Italian monk in the early 600s was preparing a special Lenten bread of water, flour and salt to allow people a simple food as a snack. To remind his brother monks that Lent was a time of prayer, he rolled the bread dough in strips and then shaped each strip in the form of crossed arms, mimicking the then popular prayer position of folding one’s arms over each other on the chest. The bread was then baked as a soft bread, just like the big soft pretzels you can find today.

Because these breads were shaped into the form of crossed arms, they were called *bracellae*, the Latin word for ‘little arms.’ From this word, the Germans derived the word *bretzel* which has since mutated to the familiar word *pretzel*.

These days, our emphasis is less on the ‘giving up’ at Lent, and more on the ‘doing more’ at Lent. For some it is a simple commitment to spend more personal time being with God. For others, they commit to doing charity work such as the St Vincent de Paul doorknock appeal. Others might commit to being more charitable in thoughts and actions, or more generous with their time. Whatever the choice is, anything that brings us closer to our God and focusses us on the greatest gift, that of Jesus’ new life at Easter, is a good choice.

I ask our God of all calm and tranquillity to help us straighten out our pretzels this coming week!

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Brenda Foley
Principal
brenda.foley@cg.catholic.edu.au

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**Addition to the 2016 School Calendar**

Thursday 19 May
Athletics Carnival
Cook Ovals
The Community Council will provide a free sausage sizzle for everyone. Bring along some drinks, a picnic blanket and some chairs for an afternoon of socialising and fun.

Friday 26 February 2016
3.20 pm to 5.00 pm

St Matthew’s Community Council
Start of Year Soiree

Come along to meet and chat with all the people in the extended St Matthew’s family on Friday 26 February from 3.20 pm—5.00 pm. Stay for as little or as long as you like! This will be a great opportunity for the kids to have a play, for you to meet all the teachers and other parents in an informal setting and to keep building our wonderfully inclusive and supportive community.

Location:
Kinder and Year 1 Playground

St Matthew’s Primary School
Stutchbury Street
Page ACT 2614
Welcome back to the new 2016 academic year. I trust you had a wonderful time during the summer holidays and found some time to relax and enjoy being with your children. I look forward to getting to know all our new students and families as the year progresses.

Chickens
Our chickens have returned from their Christmas break at the Fosters (Imogen, Year 1). We thank the Foster family for looking after our chickens so well over the holiday period. It was very much appreciated.

New Courtyard Chicken coop and run
If you haven’t had a chance yet to check out our fantastic new Courtyard chicken enclosure please stop by to have a look. Thanks to lots of hard work over the Christmas holiday period by Kev and Kate Whitton and Michael McGuigan our chickens now have a fantastic new enclosure to call home. This new coop enables our chickens to have a lot more outdoor space of a weekend. It also enables the students on the chicken roster to let out and return our chickens to their night time roost more easily and in a more timely fashion. We now have more space in our courtyard that has enabled us to put in two more vegetable gardens and a small sandpit as well as create some additional play areas for our courtyard lunchtime club.

I would like to sincerely thank Kev, Michael and Kate for all their hard work to improve the functionality and look of our courtyard. You have done an amazing job!

If you have some spare time I have some of the bench seats in the courtyard that need a new coat of bright paint and our compost bins need a good turn over. I am also after a loan of a paint sprayer that I could use to repaint some of the items in the courtyard. If any one can assist in this area please send me an email.

Learning Support
During the ‘Meet the Teacher’ meetings next week personalised goals for students with PPs (Personalised Plans) and Aboriginal PLPs (Personalised Learning Plans) will be discussed with class teachers. Over the following week a copy of these plans will be sent home for you to keep. If there are no changes to be made we ask that you sign the receipt of the plan note and return it to your child’s class teacher.

Student Behaviour Protocol
One of the ways we help to create a positive school community is the way we treat and respect one another. We are very fortunate at St Matthew’s to have a great group of students who on the whole look after and care for one another really well. This only happens if we all play our part in abiding to the rules and values that are central to our School community.

Over the next few weeks I will be mentioning and revising some of the key elements of our Behaviour Protocol Policy and I ask that you discuss these with your children.

Our positive Behavior policy is founded on three rules which also form the basis of class rules that are negotiated at each class at the beginning of the year and reinforced with reminders throughout the school terms. These rules help us achieve our aims and support our agreed values:

* We show courtesy and respect for others.
* We allow students to learn and teachers to teach.
* We care for the environment in which we work and live.

The full policy and Behaviour Flowchart is available on our school website.

Thanking you for your support,
Cathy Talbot
Assistant Principal
catherine.talbot@cg.catholic.edu.au
Good News

Prayer Wall
At St Matthew’s as we believe prayer is an integral part of our daily lives. Our Prayer Wall reflects the importance of providing space and time for students to experience a variety of opportunities to engage with prayer in different ways. A prayer space is a context where hopefully students will find they can pray any prayers (or none) and find acceptance, affirmation, kindness and reassurance. Some instructions and materials needed can be found on the table at the Prayer Wall. We welcome all our community to come and share their prayers on our Prayer Wall.

MJR—Making Jesus Real by being grateful
Those two little words—‘thank you’ (or "thanks" if you want to be quick about it) can mean a lot. Or, depending on how you say them, they can mean almost nothing. Just like "How are you?" or "I love you," "Thank you" is a phrase that can hold great weight or be totally meaningless. Here are some ways to show you really mean it! Write a note of thanks. Make time for someone. Say it in public. Return a favour. Give a smile or a hug. Be happy. Take a picture. Pay it forward!

Lent 2016
This year the first Sunday of Lent falls on 14th February. As Lent begun, on Ash Wednesday this week, we were signed on the forehead with ashes, a reminder that we are in this world for a relatively short period of time. Our principal purpose in life is to grow in the deep knowledge that God loves us unconditionally – and to allow that understanding and love to flow in us, and through us to others.

This Sunday is the first Sunday in Lent. It brings us to recognise that we are Gospel people, carrying the mind and heart of Jesus Christ into today's world. Project Compassion is a way of bringing unconditional love in a tangible way to people who lack the basic resources of life. Caritas Australia draws its inspiration and energy from the revelation of God’s love. As we become aware of some of the physical needs of our brothers and sisters, Caritas gives us one way to respond, turning our Project Compassion contributions into well-designed programs.

The theme for Project Compassion 2016 is “Learning more, creating change”. As Pope Francis says “Education is an act of hope”, so this year Project Compassion celebrates the power of learning, and the many ways in which Caritas Australia is working with local partners around the world to provide vital learning and renewed hope to children, women and men most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice.

“Together we can empower the world’s poorest people with the opportunity to learn, grow and create change.”

Bishop Greg O’Kelly

Yours in Truth and Love

Sylvia Campbell
Religious Education Coordinator
sylvia.campbell@cg.catholic.edu.au
Some ways to Create a Sacred Space in your home

Our homes are holy ground. They are the dwelling place of the faithful, where Christians live and love on a daily basis. If you don’t already have one, you might like to establish a ‘sacred space’ in your home: a focal point for gathering and praying with symbols of our Christian faith. Here are some ways to enhance your home’s natural ‘sacred sites.’

1. Start with a table top
Your sacred site might be as simple as a small table or shelf displaying a bible, a candle or a crucifix. Your sacred site can be suitably decorated during the year to mark special feast days, seasons and celebrations: a nativity crib at Christmas, a palm on Palm Sunday, photos of deceased loved ones on the anniversary of their deaths, the baptismal candle of your newborn. Adorn your sacred site with symbols of life from your garden: a green branch, a single hibiscus, a few petals or gum leaves. Involve your children in the task of maintaining the sacred site.

2. Where we ‘break bread’ as a family
The family dining table is more than a place of physical nourishment. It is where families gather to nourish one another emotionally and spiritually. Our experience at the family dining table has a lot to do with our understanding of the Eucharist. Mark your dining area with a cross, a painting of the Last Supper or an image of the Holy Family. Some families hold their nightly prayer around the dinner table after the meal. Add a festive table decoration to mark a liturgical season. A purple table cloth during Lent; gold or white trimmings for Christmas and Easter; red foliage and a large candle for Pentecost.

3. Quiet prayer nook
Create a quiet prayer haven in a part of the house where traffic is low (e.g., an attic space; a corner of a bedroom). The more inviting the space the better as it will encourage you to come and sit with the Lord regularly. Include a chair or a bean bag, a lamp and a drawer for holding prayer books or a spirituality magazine. Mark this space by displaying a bible and a candle. How about an icon on the wall as a powerful image inviting contemplation.

4. Conversation corner
This sacred space is for precious moments shared with family members and dear friends. It’s a place to catch up on each other’s lives, discuss difficult decisions, share a burden or revel in a joy; a place to praise one another, pose a challenge, pray together. To create this sacred space you need: a couple of comfy chairs, a small tabletop for holding coffee cups, a drawer or shelf to hold a prayer book. If your conversation is long distance you will need a phone or skype access. Mark this space with an image of a favourite saint, or a photo of a special person who supports you in faith.

5. A loving passage
Ever thought of the entrance of your home as a sacred site? It’s the spot where we kiss each other hello and good bye, the starting point for hospitality, a place of warm handshakes, greetings, farewells. In what way might you mark this sacred site in your home?

6. Dad’s turf
Take care not to over-feminize family prayer spaces. They need not be all candles and flowers! The backyard toolshed or workbench is a reflective haven for some men; a holy place where the masculine spirit is rejuvenated. One handyman marks this space with a wood-carving of Joseph the Carpenter. A chair in the corner encourages visits from his children who love to chat with their Dad while he works.

7. Easter garden
Children love this one. The Easter Garden is a delightful way to celebrate the risen Jesus. And, as the Easter seasons lasts for seven weeks, there’s plenty of time to enjoy it. To create this sacred site, make a clearing in the garden. Build a ‘tomb’ out of a few large rocks. Come Easter Sunday roll away the stone, lay a white cloth over the stone, add pots of green, white or coloured foliage. For a change of routine, hold family prayer time in your Easter garden. On a crisp clear morning or at dusk this is a magical place to spend time with the Lord and one another.

More ways to mark a sacred site
- Holy cards  • A card from a ‘soul mate’ in faith  • A child’s prayer-drawings  • A framed copy of a papal blessing  • A rustic cross made of sticks or rough timber  • ‘Easter water’  • Photos of special people who enrich our lives and support us in faith  • Family photo album

Ways to show reverence in a sacred site:
- Prayer  • Praise  • Forgiveness and compassion  • Affection  • Blessing  • Deep listening

Helpful Hint
Television! It is a blessing but it can also intrude upon a family’s sacred spaces. Try some house rules. E.g., Establish TV-free zones: no TV during certain hours. Turn it off during meal times. Don’t make the television the living room icon (e.g., don’t give it the most prominent position). Choose programs wisely and discuss the values presented with your children. Avoid mindless ‘veging out’ in front of TV; it’s like junk food to the mind. Establish similar house rules for computer games and internet habits.

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Congratulations
Brodie Campbell (Year 6) has been swimming at Kings for 4 years and recently graduated from the King’s Swim like a Fish Program. This means Brodie is able to swim 1000m of continuous Freestyle, is competent in all four strokes and has completed the swim and survive components. Congratulations Brodie!

Happy birthday wishes to
Annabelle McKee, Sharon Brady, Megan Jennings, Shona O’Sullivan, Joel Connor, Erin Duncan, Matthew Vizzari, Eason Cooper, Sophie Kelly, Rhys Hanley, Alexandra Beake, Abigail O’Sullivan, William Fraser, Dylan Fletcher, Liam Sawade, Ava Hurley, Max Berry, Ethan Sawade, Hayly Fitzpatrick, Abbey Reynolds, Ewan Hunter, Amy Sephora, Mitchell Wilesmith, Alexie Kindavong, Sammy McNamara, Liam Miner, Charlotte Cowley, Sofia Lopes Reis, Grace Glasson, Chloe Holgate, Callum Gaul and William Causer who celebrated birthdays in January or in the last two weeks.

Weetbix Kids Try-athlon

We know many children are participating in the Weetbix Kids Tryathlon at the AIS this Sunday, 14 February. Look out for the St Matthew’s tent and feel free to use it as a base for the day. There are limited other shady or seating areas. BYO chairs and cool drinks and enjoy the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our kids as they finish their triathlons!

Girls in Kindergarten and Year One are invited to visit their local Gumnut Guide unit and find out what guides get up to. Guides have FUN indoors and outdoors, learn new skills and make new friends. Local guide units meet once a week during school term at the Guide Hall in Walhallow Street, Hawker. To find out more contact: Rita Turnbull 0419663441 or rita.jean.rt@gmail.com

Enrolling NOW for 2016!!!
Starts 8 FEBRUARY

Ballet
Lyrical
Funky Moves
Acro

AGES 3YRS +

BOYZ ONLY FUNK 5 – 8 YRS TUESDAYS ARANDA STUDIOS IN MACQUARIE & ARANDA FULL TIMETABLE ON WEBSITE WWW.VIEIRADANCESCHOOL.COM
Scholastic Book Club

This year Book Club will be fully embracing technology and all orders will need to be processed electronically, we will no longer be accepting cash or cheque payments for orders.

There are 2 options – online or through the app.

For online orders go to http://mybookclubs.scholastic.com.au/

The process is straightforward from here:
1. Select the ORDER tab
2. Search for St Matthews
3. Start order
4. Select which issue you are ordering from
5. Add your child and select which class they are in
6. Type in the book code and quantity
7. When finished select NEXT and NEXT again if you are happy with your order
8. Process your payment
You are done – nothing needs to be sent to school.

For new app users – search Book Clubs Loop For Parents in the app store for Apple users or Book Clubs Loop for android users.

1. Once downloaded sign into the app and you will need to add your child/children - do this by selecting the +Person icon, type in your child’s name, select the state and school – search St Matthews, select the class - and then press add.
2. You will need to do this for each child.
3. Once the child is added this is saved and you will just need to change your child’s class details at the beginning of each year.
4. To put through an order just select the ‘New Order’ tab on the home page and follow the prompts.
5. The app allows you to have an easy online record of previous orders – at the bottom of the home page you can select order history and it will show previous orders.

For existing app users - select My Profile at the bottom, select the people image at the top right and then either tap the person image to create a new child attending St Matthews or select your existing child and update which class they are in for 2016.

Any issues please don’t hesitate to contact me –

Nicole Mitchell (Kasey, Yr6 & Jasmine Yr2)
Nic.mitch@me.com
0413968499
Hi Girls and Boys,

Welcome back to 2016!!! This year’s theme is “Outback Savers”

Don't forget “Banking Day” is every Friday morning at Assembly Line Up.

To students who banked last Friday well done for remembering.

To students who wish to join Commonwealth Bank Student Banking we will be having an account-opening afternoon on 26th February. Parents please bring along your drivers licence to open an account for your child/ren.

REWARDS FOR 2016

We’re excited to launch the new rewards items for 2016 from our Outback Savers range. To be eligible for a reward you must make 10 deposits to your account. The rewards will be available to view on 26th February at the account-opening afternoon.

- Term 1 - Flying Snake Tail and Wildlife Writer Set
- Term 2 - Mud Splat Handball and Outback Pat Bag Tag
- Term 3 - Backtrack Eraser Pen, and Jump and Skip Rope
- Term 4 - Bush Fly Fan and Wriggily Glow Worm

Win a wildlife family adventure holiday at Australia Zoo

This year we’re giving students the chance to win a family trip for up to two adults and three children to explore Australia Zoo and meet Bindi and Robert Irwin.

Students who make 15 or more School Banking deposits by the end of Term 3, 2016 will be automatically entered into the draw. This is another great way to motivate students to save regularly and reach their savings goals. Find out more at commbank.com.au/schoolbanking