



Love Came Down at Christmas

In this year looking at how God's fingerprints are everywhere in our world, the season of Advent provides an excellent time to pause and reflect.

That first Christmas, and the events leading up to it, clearly show the wondrous workings of God's hands in shaping His creation, as well as His unfailing love. First the Angel Gabriel announces to a couple who had given up on becoming parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, that they were going to have a son. And this would not just be any child- in fact he would be the one announcing the coming Messiah. Imagine if this story were announced in today's world. But God's timing is perfect and it was announced according to His plan, to people who loved Him.

Then the angel Gabriel tells a simple girl, who was engaged, that she would give birth to the Messiah. It must have taken incredible courage and faith for her to share this news with Joseph and her parents, but share it she did. With Joseph's announcement, after his own visit from Gabriel, that he would indeed marry Mary, the Baby was assured of a place to live and grow in safety as He experienced what it was like to be human.

These events clearly show the power of God's love for His creation and have been causes for celebration in the two thousand years since.

One of the traditions which has grown out of celebrating God's incredible gift, is that of St. Nick's Day. In Neerlandia, this day is celebrated out of the Dutch/European tradition. St. Nicholas was a bishop said to be born around 300 AD. He was a kind and generous man who loved children and believed in looking after them. Over time, this translated into the tradition of St. Nick's Day where he, a stately bishop, comes around to each classroom in Neerlandia Public Christian School.

Much later, the tradition of having Black Pete, a slave, serve as his helper began after a teacher wrote a story in the mid 1800's. At the time, it was acceptable to have slaves, but in today's

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society we realize that God's love extends to all people, regardless of their skin colour, so, Black Pete is being replaced with St. Nick's helper.

We look forward to continuing to honour the long standing tradition of giving gifts as we remember God's gift to us.

Lisa Gehring

School Wide News:

We will **not** be having an evening Christmas Concert this year. We will be hosting a Spring Concert on Thurs., April 26 at 7:00 pm. (mark your new calendars)!

We will be having a **Jr. High Drama** presentation "This is So Embarrassing" on **Tues., Dec. 12 at 3:10 pm**. This will take place in the Drama Room.

We will be having a **Christmas Assembly including Jr. High Band performance** on the afternoon of **Wed., Dec. 20 at 3:00 pm**. This will take place in the gym.



We will also have a **Carol Sing** at the end of the last day before Christmas Break, **Dec. 21 at 3:15 pm** in the Foyer.

Home Group Assemblies

We continue to have assemblies on Monday mornings at 8:30 am. We will have Judy Luckhart, representative of LAMP here again on **Mon. Dec. 11** for the morning assembly that begins at **8:30 am**. She will be joined by Pastor Ron Ludke, the Executive Director of LAMP and after the assembly we will help load their vehicle & trailer with **ALL the wonderful donations** we have received.

Everyone is welcome to attend any/all of these events.

LAMP – Serve Project

Lutheran Assoc of Missionaries & Pilots

We have extended the deadline for LAMP donations to Friday, Dec. 8 (St. Nick Day).

We have already received a good quantity and variety of the items mentioned below but we will still gratefully accept more donations (**food items such as Cheese Whiz, Powdered Milk, Brown Sugar, Jam & Canned Fruit would be especially appreciated**)

What are we looking for?

- Donations of money (cheques payable to NPCS and then we'll forward to LAMP)
- gently used clothing – especially winter items such as coats, gloves/mittens (not toques) – all sizes, new items such as socks, etc.
- food items such as non-perishable (canned/bags, etc.)
- balls, toys, games (could be used at school break times – right now they have **nothing** to play with at school)
- Personal hygiene: brushes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.

Thank you to everyone that gave a free-will donation at the **Gr. 3/Home-Ec Tea** – we **raised \$171.00** from this event that will be donated to LAMP.

Thanks to everyone for your kind support!

NEW WEBSITES

NPCS and all other Pembina Hills Public Schools will launch new Websites.

Pembina Hills & a few schools have already launched a new website. NPCS hopes to be ready by the middle/end of Dec.

We would like our School Community (Parents & Others) to fill out a **short Survey at the end of this newsletter** so we can have good communication between school & home.

You can either fill out the paper copy and return to the office BEFORE Christmas Break (Dec. 21) or you can send an email to Debbie.Fisher@phrd.ab.ca to express your opinions and be counted in the vote.

PHPS survey

The PHPS phone survey is coming!

In January, Pembina Hills Public Schools' staff will begin calling parents to ask you questions about how our school and the school division are doing. The goal is to reach every parent. Please take the time to do the phone survey. Your answers will help us plan for our school and our school division.

Is this confidential? We do not share respondents' names; your responses will be anonymous.

What if I'm not home when you call? We will leave a call-back number: [780.674.8531](tel:780.674.8531). For more information contact Debbie Westman, PHPS, at [780.674.8531](tel:780.674.8531).



St. Nick Day – Dec. 8

NPCS will be celebrating St. Nick Day on Fri., Dec. 8 (extra



Kindergarten day). St. Nicholas accompanied by his Helper will visit grades K-3 beginning with kindergarten.

Kindergarten: 12:30 – 1:10 pm

Grade 1: 1:10 – 1:40 pm

Grade 2: 1:40 – 2:10 pm

Grade 3: 2:10 – 2:40 pm

Each K- 9 classroom will be arranging their own activities for the afternoon. All students picked names for gift giving in their classes and these should be brought in no later than **Dec. 7** (just to ensure that everyone receives a gift)!

Door Decorating & Tree Decorations



Our Jr. High Student Council is once again asking Homeroom classes to decorate their doors. The judging will take place around 1:00 pm on Thurs., Dec. 7. We also encourage students to make ornaments and hang on our Christmas tree in the Foyer.

SKATING - ELEMENTARY



On the last day of classes for the 2017 year we hope to take the elementary students to Barrhead Agrena for skating.

The K-Gr. 3 students will skate from 9:30 – 10:30 am

The Gr. 4-6 students will skate 10:30 – 11:30 am

The students will be transported by bus. The first group (K-3) will leave the school at 8:50 am and then return by 11:00 am, the second group will be picked up at 10:00 am and return close to noon.

*We are asking all parents to ensure that children have proper skates, helmets and if they need to bring on bus, please make sure they are packed in a proper bag

OR parents can meet us at the Agrena with these items and possibly help tie some skates, etc.

Last year our Jr. High students went skiing at Misty Ridge on the last day before Break but we are waiting to see what the weather does and check hill conditions before we can choose to do this (doesn't look promising right now).

Sports

VOLLEYBALL

Both our 'A' Boys & Girls Volleyball teams won gold in Zone playoffs to finish off the season. Way to go!

Both A & B teams played very well this year and we again want to thank the coaches that put in countless hours of volunteer time for practices, games & tournaments.

A **BIG thank you** to coaches; Sherri Hiemstra (Girls B & A Assistant), Renee Rentz (Girls A), Aaron Lee (Boys B) & Howard Gelderman (Boys A), Lucas Nanninga (Boys A Assistant).

Also thank you to the parents who did the driving to games & tournaments.

To finish off the season Mr. Gelderman drove a bus load of players into Edmonton to watch the King's & Concordia Univ. play some volleyball games.

Great experience for the students, thanks again everyone!



JR. HIGH BASKETBALL: Basketball practices have begun.

We want to thank Trenton Wierenga & Arjan Koekkoek who will coach the boys team and the girls team will be coached by Sonja De Waal & Pete Schuring.

Permission forms and schedules have been sent home – please return fees & forms a.s.a.p. (*remember you can pay online)

First league games for the Gr. 8/9 players will be at BCHS. They will play against BCH at 4:00 pm followed by a game against Pembina North at 5:00 pm on Wed., Dec. 13 (on original schedule said it was Dec. 12 – notice change)

For month of December:

Girls practice on Mon. & Wed. 3:47 – 5:30 pm

Boys practice on Tues. & Thurs. 3:47 – 5:15 pm

ELEMENTARY BASKETBALL

After Christmas Break the Gr. 4-6 students will have an opportunity to play some after-school basketball. The first time will be on **Thurs., Jan. 11**. This is just for fun and we do not go to other schools for games or tournaments.

*Please complete the permission form at end of newsletter if you want your child to participate.

The play times will be **3:45 – 4:45 on Mon. & Thurs.** from Jan. 11 – mid-March, 2018.

This will change the Jr. High Girls & Boys practices.

Jr. High Boys will begin at 4:47 on Mon. & Girls will begin at 4:47 on Thurs. (Tues./Wed. will stay the same)

FUNDRAISERS



Library Gift Cards will be available for pick-up on **Dec. 7**.

Gr. 9 class hosted a **Mom's Pantry Fundraiser**. Anyone who ordered should expect their orders to arrive at school on either **Dec. 12 or 14** – we are waiting for the company to give us an exact date! Arrangements will need to be made to pick these orders up at the school. We will let you know.

Thanks for your support!

NPCSC/NCES NEWS

The annual General Meeting was held in November and we are pleased to welcome three new members to the executive. They are Charlene Nanninga (Wes), Lee Anne Schmidt and Janice Wierenga (Garry) – community rep.

A **BIG thank you** to the retiring members: Char Nanninga (Matt), Heidi Magus and Brenda Strydhorst for all their hard work and dedication over the past few years.

New Board of Directors 2017-2018

Steve De Vries-Chairperson, 780-674-9642
Steven.devries@ualberta.net

Annemiek Elzinga- Vice Chairperson

Randy Strydhorst-Treasurer

Amanda Batty- Secretary

Brenda Strydhorst- Community Rep

Charlene Nanninga - Correspondence

Lee Anne Schmidt

Adam Crabbe

Janice Wierenga – Community Rep/PCCE Rep

School Board News

No schools will be considered for closure next year

The school board accepted administration's recommendation that no schools be considered for closure this year. According to Policy 15, each year administration reviews the division's schools against the following criteria to determine if a school or program should be considered for closure:

- Are there health and safety threats?
- Is the school hitting a critical minimum enrolment?
- How many students are expected to attend in the future?
- Are fewer than 60 per cent of the students in the school's attendance area attending the school?
- Does operating the school create excessive costs for the division?

In making this recommendation to the board, administration also considered the quality of education programming the students are receiving.

Only one school – Fort Assiniboine – met the minimum enrolment criteria to be considered for closure. The school's junior high has 18 students, which falls under the critical minimum enrolment of 20. This was the only criteria that was met. The difference is not significant enough to warrant consideration for closure for the 2018-19 school year.

Board approves 2016-17 Audited Financial Statements (AFS)

PHPS reported an operating deficit of \$567,640 — this includes a deliberate investment of operating reserves in strategies designed to help meet our focused priorities of Literacy, Numeracy, Supporting Student Diversity, and Student Teacher Relationships.

Check out the new website at www.phpschools.ca

- Subscribe to *PHPS updates* in the bottom left corner
- Look for the *Bus Route Status* on the top right to find out if your bus is on time or running late
- Read the *PHPS Education Plan* and *Annual Education Results Report*

Jennifer.Tuininga@phpschools.ca 780-674-6579 H, 780-284-0971 C

Facebook: Jennifer Tuininga, School Trustee, Pembina Hills Public Schools Twitter: @JennifeTuining

LIBRARY NEWS

DECEMBER LIBRARY HOURS

Monday-Thursday

9:00AM-4:30PM

Wednesday Evenings

7:00PM-9:00PM

All-Day Friday, Dec. 8

9:00AM-4:30PM

LIBRARY CLOSED

for Christmas Break - December 22-January 7

We will be open Dec. 28 and Jan. 4 : 9:00AM-6:00PM

Lego-Building Contest-will be held Thursday, January 18.

Theme: "Things That Go". Registration forms available at the library and should be handed in by Tuesday, January 9.

Gift Card Fundraiser-Thank you to everyone who supported our gift card fundraiser. We made over \$250.00. They will be available for pick-up on Dec. 7.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec. 8 – St. Nick's Day (extra Kindergarten Day)

Dec. 11 – 8:30 am LAMP reps here for morning assembly and pick up donations

Dec. 12 – Jr. High Drama Play, 3:10 pm for public

Dec. 15 – *Alternate Day*

Dec. 20 – **Christmas Assembly, 3:00 pm in gym**

Dec. 21 – last day, Elem. Skate – morning

- Christmas Carol Sing-a-long, 3:15 pm

Dec. 22/17 – Jan. 7/18: **CHRISTMAS BREAK**

First day back will be January 8, 2018

Have a Blessed Christmas!

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER SURVEY

As we launch our new website we thought it would be a good time to decide on a few things about the school newsletters.

With permission we can automatically set-up parents to receive the newsletter each month electronically.

Other community members can send an email to Debbie Fisher @ Debbie.Fisher@phrd.ab.ca to be put on the Subscriber's list.

We are also curious as to whether parents read the 'hard copies' of the newsletters. In some schools they no longer send out the printed copies and people just receive them electronically. We would like 'your opinion' on this.

If we have a vote of 75% or more saying they no longer require a hard copy then we will no longer send home copies, only to those few that don't have access to them electronically.

Please fill out this survey below and either return this 'paper copy' to the office, email your reply to Debbie Fisher

OR give us a call at 780-674-5581 BEFORE Dec. 21 (Break). We will then be able to decide what we will do in the New Year in regards to the newsletters.

School Newsletter Survey

Parent/Subscriber Name

☐ I/We would like to be placed on the Subscriber's list for the School's monthly electronic newsletters.

☐ I/We as parents/. guardians give permission to use the email addresses provided on school registration forms.

☐ I/We are not parents but are connected to the school because of:

_____ (Example: grandchildren or relative of a child)

Child's name

Please add us to the Subscriber's List. Our email address is: _____

☐ I/We no longer need a printed copy of the newsletter sent home each month.

☐ I/We would like to continue with printed copy only (don't access to electronic version)

☐ I/We would like to have both, electronic and printed versions of the monthly newsletters.

Please complete and return no later than Dec. 21 via email (just copy and paste info. Into message)

Debbie.Fisher@phrd.ab.ca or return this copy to office.

Elementary (Gr. 4-6) Basketball Permission Form

Parent/Guardian Name

Child(ren)'s Name(s)

I/We give our child(ren) permission to stay after school on Mondays &/or Thursdays from 3:47 – 4:47 pm to play Fun Elementary Basketball.

*This will begin on Thurs., Jan. 11 2018 and continue until mid-March, 2018.