### December 2015

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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 10 6/12</strong>&lt;br&gt;2.30pm Liturgy/Assembly</td>
<td>7/12 Year 6 Retreat</td>
<td>8/12 ~ Library ~&lt;br&gt;Presentation Night&lt;br&gt;6pm School of Arts&lt;br&gt;Please bring a plate</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>11/12&lt;br&gt;12/12</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11 13/12</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mass 8.30am&lt;br&gt;Year of Mercy opening Mass and Diocesan celebrations Newcastle</td>
<td>14/12 No assembly&lt;br&gt;Classroom cleanup&lt;br&gt;6pm End of Year Mass&lt;br&gt;Year 6 Graduation Dinner</td>
<td>15/12 Street carolling 4pm</td>
<td>16/12 “Canteen”&lt;br&gt;Community Day&lt;br&gt;Meet at hospital by 9am&lt;br&gt;Last day for students</td>
<td>17/12</td>
<td>18/12&lt;br&gt;19/12&lt;br&gt;Mass 6.00pm</td>
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**SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 19/12/15 - 27/1/16**

**18th January - Belonging Day**

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<td><strong>Week 1 24/1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mass 8.30am</td>
<td>25/1 Australia Day</td>
<td>26/1 Staff return&lt;br&gt;PUPIL FREE DAY</td>
<td>27/1 First day for students Years 1-6</td>
<td>28/1</td>
<td>29/1 Mass 6.00pm</td>
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**Reflection**

*A Christmas Prayer*

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth . . . may we begin to see the world in the light of the understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen.
This is the final Newsletter for 2015.

Thank you all for a fabulous year and on behalf of all the students and staff at St Joseph’s we wish you a very happy and holy Christmas and a relaxing, safe holiday.

We continue to keep all the family and friends of our school community and indeed the wider community in our thoughts and prayers. There has been a lot of sadness this year both locally and world wide, and Christmas is a difficult time for those who are mourning. We pray for God’s peace at this time.

The St Joseph’s swimming carnival held last Friday, epitomises what a great school is and what great education looks like. The Learn to Swim lessons were planned with the end in mind. The carnival was the means to assess student learning. As a collaborative team, the staff assessed student water skills several weeks ago. They then targeted the learning to the various needs of the children. Children were grouped according to like needs. Resources were allocated according to need and expertise. These resources included community facilities, parents and teachers. The children set their learning goals in collaboration with the teachers. On the day of the carnival all children participated to the best of their ability. It was an absolute delight to see records smashed by our most competent swimmers. Even more inspiring was watching students who previously were terrified of the water take hold of their kickboards and glide across the pool. The entire school community cheered the efforts of even our slowest swimmers and appreciated the huge effort they were making. Everyone was engaged and everyone’s learning was enriched in many ways. There was not a student, parent or teacher present on the day that did not reap the benefits of such an inclusive learning experience. The St Joseph’s School community is a great team. Thank you Mrs Peebles for organising the carnival and the learn to swim lessons, Jason Constable and the Upper Hunter Shire for assistance and for the wonderful facility that is the Merriwa Pool, thank you teachers and parents who have helped at swimming lessons and for those who helped on the day.

Staffing for 2015:
I am delighted to confirm the following staff positions at St Joseph’s in 2016:-

Infants Class (Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2) – Mrs Kerr, Mrs Peebles, Mrs Hagley. These three dynamic teachers will continue to lead the learning of our youngest members of the school community in the infants class.

Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) – Miss Paige Farrow will direct the learning here, continuing to motivate the students to be the best learners they can be.

Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6) Miss Elizabeth Foran will lead these senior students on a journey to independence where she will set high expectations of all and ably assist them to identify and achieve their learning goals.

Mrs Colleen Oldman will return as Librarian.

Mrs Tanya Ninness will lead our Learning Support Team. She will continue to look for sound methods of improving student performance across the school.

Mrs Cassandra McLaren and Mrs Melissa Collins will again be supporting our students in the capacity of Learning Support Assistants.

Mrs Sally Gilbey will manage the office in her usual professional manner.

Mrs Karin Brazier will again be keeping our grounds in the fabulous shape that we are accustomed to.

Mrs Trudi Parker will continue to clean and polish the classrooms and amenities.

I believe we can all be very proud and thankful for the staff team we have at St Joseph’s. It is so committed to delivering the best well rounded education to all students in its care.

Annual School Presentation Evening will be held in the School of Arts at 6pm tomorrow evening. We look forward to recognising the efforts and achievements of all our students. The
2016 Kindergartens will be formally welcomed on the night. Please bring a plate of food to share for supper.

**Classroom Assistance** is needed Monday 14th December. We would love to have the help of parents to prepare for shutdown and classroom carpet cleaning over the holidays. All desks and chairs need to be cleaned, window sills, verandahs, book shelves dusted and tidied. We would love to see anyone who can help. The cleaning schedule for the day will be:

- 9-11am Infants classes
- 12-1pm Stage 2 (Yrs 3&4)
- 2-3pm Stage 3 (Yrs 5&6)

**Town Carolling Tuesday 15th December:** Although there is to be no street Christmas party this year, the St Joseph’s students will again continue their tradition of carolling in the shopping centre. We will meet outside Elders at 4pm and carol our way to the Welcoming Centre. Please wear Christmas clothes if possible and we will provide hats! Families are always welcome to walk and sing along with us. This is a memorable tradition for our school and the students look forward to this day each year, please try to be there.

**The Community Day** on the last student day of school, Wednesday 16th December, will once again see our students gather at the hospital to sing Christmas carols and then walk to Gummun Place to entertain the residents. This is St Joseph’s way to put back into our community and bring some of the joy of Christmas to those who can’t get out and about. The students can come to school out of uniform. Christmas is the theme. Remember as usual no midriffs and students must have covered in shoes. Please bring a wide brimmed hat for walking from the hospital back to school. Children can catch their regular buses to the hospital and we ask walkers and children who are driven to school to meet us at the hospital by 9am.

The **Transition to school program** ended last Tuesday. The students have demonstrated that they are ready to begin big-school and many of their routines have already been established. The relationships between the new Kinders and their senior buddies have blossomed. The final information for parents session and morning tea was enjoyed by all in attendance. We were very fortunate to have input from a speech therapist, occupational therapist, Eat it to Beat it presenter and Road Safety materials as well as Parents and Friends Federation bits and pieces. Those parents who were not able to attend the day on Tuesday or any of the previous information sessions are invited to call in at the school to collect their information packs.

The transition of students from Year 2 to Year 3 and Year 4 to Year 6 was also very successful. The students have enjoyed learning in and becoming accustomed to their new environment.

**Holidays can be fun but...** many children spend very little time reading and so their reading levels regress by the start of the school year and often take up to the end of Term 1 to regain any losses. This set back wastes valuable learning time. The teachers feel so strongly about this that we have devised a strategic plan:

- Students may borrow library books for the holiday period
- The school library will be staffed on 3 days during January, from 9am to 11am, to enable students to come in and read/borrow books/catch up with friends/enjoy a reading session

Please encourage your child to take advantage of this very generous offer. Help them to make this a priority over the holidays. Parents are welcome to join us but it is not compulsory.

**Holidays can be fun but...** many children can’t wait to get back to connect with everyone again, many students find this a time of anxiety as they have been away from people for too long and feel disconnected. Our solution?

- The Annual St Joseph’s Belonging Day. 18th January 2016.
  Students are welcome between 10am and 1pm. They will be given lunch and morning tea. While at school they will help their teachers set up the classroom for the new school year, arrange posters, colour name tags and so on. The emphasis is on sharing relaxed time with teachers and peers so as to foster positive relationships for learning. Parents are welcome to join us for lunch but the rest of the time is “Kids only”!!
- Please send in your RSVP by the due date to help us cater for lunch.

Diocesan Schools Building Fund Annual Report 2014 is now available in the front office. The Diocesan Schools Building Fund
(DSBF) is a reporting structure for all income and expenditure related to building capital works and land acquisition for diocesan school purposes. The Diocesan Family and Schools Building levy (DF&SBL) is collected from families of students attending Catholic schools of the Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle. The levy contributes to the total income of the DSBF and to the funding of diocesan pastoral activities. Other sources of income for the DSBF include government capital grants, the NSW state government interest subsidy scheme, the Catholic Schools Office, parishes, school communities and Catholic Development Fund loans. This report can be found on the CSO website www.mn.catholic.edu.au (under “current links” on the home page.

Christmas gift suggestion!
To give the gift of an Aurora subscription this Christmas, simply contact Editor, Tracey Edstein 4979 1288 or visit www.mn.catholic.org.au/aurora/subscribe Only $30 for 11 editions delivered to your door.

Kind regards
Helen Whale

Library helpers, canteen workers, carnival helpers, reading helpers, Campdraft and Fete workers, P&F meeting attenders, clothing pool helpers, bus cleaners, morning tea, afternoon tea and supper cooks, classroom visitors, homework supervisors, school supporters and all other volunteers -

Thank you!
Whatever your contribution we appreciate it. We look forward to working with you again in 2016.

Helen, Anne Marie, Sally, Samantha, Sally, Paige, Lizzie, Tanya, Melissa, Cassandra, Trudy and Karin.

Summer Kids’ Camps
THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT

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SUMMER KIDS’ CAMPS

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Helen, Anne Marie, Sally, Samantha, Sally, Paige, Lizzie, Tanya, Melissa, Cassandra, Trudy and Karin.

2016 enrolments open

The Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music is offering music lessons at school

Lessons are available during school hours in the following instruments:

Piano, Violin, Guitar

Contact us: (02) 6541 4888 | www.uhcm.com.au
Vinnies Appeal
At this time we are also encouraged to think of others. As in previous years we are asking that students donate to our local Vinnies appeal. We ask that non-perishable goods and gifts are brought in and placed in the front office by Monday 14th December 2015. These will be donated to our local community.

End of year Mass
Our End of Year Mass will be on Monday 14th December at 6pm. On this night we come together to celebrate and thank God for the year we have had and farewell our Year 6 students. Students will play an active part in the Mass and we are looking forward to seeing all parents and families there.

Cath Family
Spend some time reading through the attached link- the latest addition of CathFamily http://cathfamily.org/2015-december/ This month the focus is on the joy of Advent. It provides great reflections for the season as well as fun family activities to do.

The Year of Mercy begins today on the 8th December which is also the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pope Francis is on a Mission of Mercy and invites us to do the same.

Pope Francis:
“It’s a journey that starts with a spiritual conversion. For this reason I have decided to declare an Extraordinary Jubilee that has the mercy of God at its center. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy.”
Throughout the coming year there will be many references to the Holy Year of Mercy and what it means for us.

Anne Marie Peebles
RE Coordinator

Christmas Mass Times
Christmas Eve
6.00pm Denman
9.00pm Gungal

Christmas Day
8.30am Merriwa
10.15am Cassilis

Farewell and best wishes to our Year 6 students of 2015
Jemma, Jonathan, John, Nicole, Darcy, Emily, Gaby, Lauren, Rhys,
May God bless you with health, happiness and success as you travel through your journey of life.
Best wishes to all the members of our school community who will be celebrating their birthday in the coming weeks .....
We have a number of laptop computer bags for sale for the bargain price of $5 each. These sturdy bags are suitable for laptops up to 15.6 inch. Contact the office on 6548 2035 if interested.

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Pope Francis and Bishop Bill Wright invite all members of the diocese to the

Opening of the Year of Mercy
and the launch of the
150 year Celebrations of the Diocese
on Sunday December 13, 2015

Liturgy 4.00 pm: beginning in the Victor Peters Suite (at the end of the Southern Cross Hall, across the car park from the Cathedral).

Food and Entertainment: sausage sizzle, Irish music for singing and dancing and Christmas Carols will follow in the grounds of the Victor Peters Suite.

The Sacrament of Penance will also be available outside.

An invitation for all who desire mercy to gather to share prayer and hospitality.

Please note:
- the car park will be closed for safety reasons. However, there will be limited access for disability parking.
- the Cathedral will be closed as the liturgy involves the opening of the Jubilee door.

www.mn.catholic.org.au
Thank you to all who attended the recent AGM of the St Joseph’s P&F Association and special thanks to all who nominated for positions. Congratulations to the new P&F committee and many thanks to the outgoing members. It has been a great year this year and we look forward to the new committee making themselves known to you next year.

P & F would like to thank our recent Canteen Helpers — Mel Bates, Lisa Smith, Mel Parker and all others who helped at the carnival.

Thank you to the Smith family who gave up some valuable time to clean the Aberdeen Bus recently.

Thank you . . .

CANTEEN ROSTER
9 Dec  No canteen - ice blocks for sale only
16 Dec  Moore family

BUS ROSTER
12/13 Dec  Tomy family
23/24 Jan  Towell family
30/31 Jan  Wightman family
6/7 Feb  Wong family

May your Home be warm, your Holidays grand, & may your Heart be held gently in the Lord’s hands.

Nutrition Snippet

The simplest way
...to make fruit & veg festival!

Who says the festive season can’t be fun and healthy?

With these super-cute strawberry Santas, you’ll be wowing the Christmas crowds and feeding them nutritious fare too.

To make: hull and chop the top third off each strawberry; mix 100g cream cheese and 4 tsps of icing sugar, and pipe mix on for face filling and hat pom pom; add raisins or mini choc bits for eyes. Easy!

Or try these eye-catching Christmas creations:

For more information visit
www.eatittobeatit.com.au
or join us at facebook.com/eatittobeatit

Staying Active in the Heat

When it’s hot outside it can be tempting to become a couch potato in order to stay cool.

Here are some tips for staying active when the weather warms up:

- Plan outdoor activities in the cooler parts of the day such as early morning or late afternoon
- Wear light-weight clothing in light colours
- Have water available at all times
- Play in the shady areas out of direct sunlight
- Include indoor activities such as twister or dancing to music.

PHONE 4924 6499

NSW Health
Hunter New England Local Health District