

Seasons of the Saints

Spring 2025



Photo from praise concert on Alleluia Day

From the Principal

Dear All Saints Academy Community,

This spring, we honor the incredible progress our students have made throughout the academic year! This joyful season reflects our core values of faith, learning, love, and service.

Our value of faith was highlighted through May Crowning ceremonies held at each campus, as we also observed the special month dedicated to Mary. Our second graders traveled to the Franciscan Life Processing Center for a first Communion retreat as they prepared to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Alleluia Day brought together our kindergarten through eighth grade students as they invited Very Important Persons to join them for a day of prayer, praise, worship, and joy during the Easter season!

Through the 3rd grade poetry fair, 6th grade Junior Achievement BizTown experiential learning trip, and 2nd grade natural playground proposal presentations, ASA students celebrated how they have grown this school year. While they may not be able to recognize all their growth, when students have the opportunity to look back on their school work from the beginning of the year and reflect upon where they are now, the smiles emerge as they find evidence of how they have grown.

Loving can be found as students travel throughout West Michigan this season to engage in experiences throughout our community that bring opportunities for students to learn, explore, and enjoy their time together. From Farm Days to the Critter Barn to Boulder Ridge Animal Park, our students were able to enjoy time together away from our campuses this spring.

As is tradition, service is a core component of our Lenten liturgical season and Via Dolorosa walk each year. During Lent, families collect items for Kids Food Basket Supper Sacks and these are prepared by students the day of the walk. Additionally, 8th graders spend a day each spring providing service to our four founding parishes as they prepare for graduation.

Celebrations continue throughout the final weeks of the school year, whether large or small, they are all an important element of the end of each school year. Together please join me in celebrating all of our students who are preparing to conclude an academic year filled with experiences, memories, and growth which will propel them into this summer and beyond.

Many Blessings,
Mrs. Megan Schneider

From the Board of Directors

All Saints Academy is an interparochial-owned Catholic School operated with the support of the following parishes: Blessed Sacrament, St. Alphonsus, St. Isidore and St. Jude. On 7/1/12, ASA transitioned to a new governance model led by a Board of Directors with limited jurisdiction and a Canonical Administrator.

The Board of Directors shall have as its primary concern the ministry of Catholic elementary school education: the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of the students. The Board, operating in conformity with the policies of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, under the guidance of the Superintendent of Schools and the Canonical Administrator, shall concern itself with local school planning and policy issues pertaining to the general excellence of Catholic education at ASA.

Board membership consists of school parents, parishioners, and community members. Members lead a variety of committees including Mission Effectiveness, Policy and Planning, Finance or Institutional Advancement. To learn about joining a Board Committee, contact Mrs. AJ Fossel, board chair, or Mrs. Megan Schneider.

Welcome Mr. Fred Kooistra!

Mr. Fred Kooistra is our new Business Manager, replacing Darrell Beckwith who is retiring at the end of this school year. Fred has a Bachelor's degree in Financial Management from Trinity Christian College. He comes to us with several years' experience in the telecommunications and real estate industries as well as in non-profit accounting and working as Business Manager for a small college.

Fred is married to Nellie and has three grown children. He has lived in the Riverside neighborhood on the city's northeast side for over 25 years.

White Smoke on Alleluia Day!



Each spring ASA hosts Alleluia Day, which celebrates the Easter promise of eternal life with God, the joy of the creation of ASA, a new school born from four founding parish schools, and the new life we see popping up all around us in spring.

2025's Alleluia day was hosted at the Upper Campus and welcomed all students to invite a Very Important Person to the day's celebration. Students brought parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends!

After mass, students showcased their talents (left) and performed a praise concert (below).



Preschool students celebrated by parading through and around the campus singing praise songs and playing instruments (right).



Alleluia Day is always memorable, but 2025's was even more so, as during the praise concert, white smoke rose from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel announcing the election of Pope Leo XIV.

Habemus Papam!



Leo P.P. XIV

Pope Leo XIV's portrait obtained from <https://photo.vaticanmedia.va/> © Vatican Media

Take the Time to Pray, Take the Time to Listen

Written by Jonathan Jensen

I had the great pleasure of visiting All Saints Academy for the first time in many years in January, and it gave me a chance to reflect upon how my life had changed over the past several years and what role my education has had in that change. I am now finishing my third year of College Seminary as I prepare to one day become a priest. The past three years have been an immense blessing and a time of rapid growth in my life, both as I grow into adult life, but also as I am drawn by the Lord into the depths of His heart in prayer. As I look back, however, and see the many changes I have undergone since walking through the doors of ASA for the first time in 2nd grade, I see that the course of my life has forever been shaped by those earliest times of my life.

I remember praying before bed every night when I was a child. I don't really remember how I started, but I remember that I was never able to fall asleep until I had told Jesus about everything that happened over the course of my day. I was really able to hear the Lord's voice in those days, and it was always a voice of love. I always knew that Jesus wanted to hear about my day and that he wanted what was best for me. When I stopped praying later on, however, it was because prayer ceased to be a pleasant thing, and began to make me feel guilty as I told Jesus about the sins that I began to commit as I matured. Instead of asking Jesus for help there, and

asking for his forgiveness, I instead decided to ignore God, to ignore my guiltiness, because I didn't want to pray when it was difficult.

Now, the reason that it was difficult is because God was trying to bring me out of my sinful habits, by showing me the harm that they cause, but not knowing this, I naturally took the easy way out.

I still loved learning about the church, and I still went to church, but my heart ceased to be in it; it was like going through the motions. The one thing I always enjoyed was altar serving, but anything beyond that was a bit of a chore. I knew a lot about God because of my education, but I decided that I didn't want to know Him, because it meant that I would have to do difficult things. Then, suddenly, Jesus broke into my life and woke me up to reality. I heard an impassioned speaker preaching on the truth that Christ wishes to set us free from sin, to make us happy, because we are truly happier without sin in our lives. I asked Jesus for forgiveness on that day in 7th grade, going to confession, and my life was transformed. The opportunities for prayer and learning at ASA gave



me what I needed to excel in my faith, and that life of prayer I had as a young boy began to return. Living the life of faith was truly difficult, and it definitely had (and still has) its ups and downs, but I had changed the path I was on, turning around to walk towards Christ.

From that day, I began living for Christ. When I got to West Catholic, then, I naturally found myself in a group of other boys who were trying to live in the same way that I was, the Discernment Group. About 20 of us would meet at lunch time to talk about Vocations, something I had learned about at ASA. Now, however, it felt very real as we were only four years away from entering adult life, and the decision of what to do with my life after school was the most important one I knew that I would make. I began to pray daily, asking the Lord what he wanted me to do. As I began to pray more, I found the grace to keep diving deeper into prayer. I began to love prayer and see it as necessary for my own

Take the Time to Pray...continued

happiness. Through this prayer, the Lord began to speak into my life what it was he wanted me to do: to be his priest. I realized this while serving my cousin, Fr. Rob's, First Mass. Through his joy, I saw what a vocation truly was - the state of life that makes us the happiest, because on that day he was the happiest man I had ever seen.

I've spent the past three years at Saint John Vianney College Seminary in St. Paul, MN, and they have been the three happiest years of my life. What we do here is not easy, learning how to pray is not easy, living far from home is not easy, but it's the most worthwhile thing I've ever done, because it's what God has asked me to do, and because he always helps me to do it. The most difficult days here are always the ones in which I don't say my prayers, or I only go through the motions; when I try to do things on my own instead of asking Jesus to help me every step of the way. When I allow Him to help me, then my life is joyful, my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

One of my favorite things that I get to do is teaching. Whether it's Religious Education or visiting schools like ASA, I love to teach about Jesus. The Lord has given me such an amazing gift in my vocation, and he has made me so happy, that I always want to help others to find that same happiness, to give them the gift of a relationship with Jesus. I love sharing the Truth with everyone I can, because it is the Truth which sets us free. The Christian life is not an easy one, but it's the only chance that we have at happiness

in this world.

None of this can happen if we aren't aware of God's presence in our lives, if we can't hear His voice speaking to us. Two pieces of advice I have, especially to students, are, first, to always keep learning about Jesus, to pay attention in class, to ask good questions, to always seek answers, and second, that prayer is about relationship with God. Jesus

already knows everything about you, but he wants you to tell Him everything that you can about yourself, because that's what you do with your friends. Jesus loves you infinitely, but you can't know that until you take the time to

look for where He is currently loving you. We have to take time to pray to Jesus, but we also have to take time to be in silence and listen for His voice. It often doesn't come as human words, but rather movements of the heart, and graces received in your life. A sense of happiness on a difficult day, or energy when you're tired. A feeling of being loved when you pray. A friend who helps you when you really need it. These are the simplest signs of Jesus' love to see in your life, but they are not seen when they go unlooked for. Taking time for silence is so important in our world of technology and noise today. Everywhere we go is filled with sounds and lights and stories vying for our attention, but Christ

is not going to be found there, but in the silence. If we want to find Him, then we have to build into our schedules time away from TV and video games, and even from homework and reading, so that we can simply listen for Jesus' voice. Pursuing the Christian life, the life of interior silence, is difficult, but it is the most worthwhile thing we can do.



Summer Faith Ideas

Written by Brittany Renne, Campus Minister

As summer approaches, I have begun to think about how to create a summer routine for our family. If I've learned anything in my eight years of parenting, it's that everyone does better when we have a regular rhythm. I also know the importance of making our Catholic faith a part of that everyday rhythm. Here are a few ideas for how you can stay connected to your parish over the summer:

Attend a Daily Mass

I know Mass with kids is hard—trust me. But daily Mass is shorter and gives us all more practice in how to appreciate the gift of the Mass. Most importantly, you can never get too much Jesus time! Here are the daily Mass times for our four founding parishes:

St. Jude: Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 8:30 AM

St. Alphonsus: Tuesday & Wednesday at 5:30 PM; Thursday & Friday at 12:15 PM

St. Isidore: Monday through Friday at 7:00 AM

Blessed Sacrament: Tuesday at 8:30 AM

Check Out Your Parish's VBS Program

There should be information on your parish website soon! Vacation Bible School is a great way for kids to grow in faith while having fun with their peers.

Come to a Family Night!

Last summer, one of our founding parishes started a once-a-month family night. We begin with Mass or a Rosary, then share a meal and fellowship. It has become one of my kids' favorite summer rhythms!

Contact Brittany Renne at brenne@asagr.org to get on the mailing list for these gatherings.



Mission Statement

All Saints Academy is a Catholic School inspired by the Holy Spirit and dedicated to teaching and living as Jesus did. Our mission is to serve and partner with our families, parishes, and communities as we focus on the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, and physical development of our children.

Lower Campus at Diamond

Upper Campus at Four Mile



2233 Diamond Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
616.447.2997

1110 Four Mile Road NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
616.363.7725

Academic Calendar

August

August 18 & 19
Summer Child Care Closed

August 18
Ice Cream Social
5:30 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.
Both Campuses

August 20
First Day of School!

August 29
No School
Childcare open

September

September 1
No School
Childcare closed
Labor Day

September 9
Picture Day

October

October 3
No School
Childcare open
Professional Development Day

November

November 26
No School
Childcare open

November 27
No School
Childcare closed
Thanksgiving Day

November 28
No School
Childcare closed

December

December 22 - January 2
Christmas Break

December 24-26, 31, Jan 1
Childcare closed

Save the Date

**Ice Cream
Social**

Monday, August 18
5:30 - 6:45 p.m.
Both Campuses