



As the new school year approaches, I'm filled with excitement and anticipation of the possibilities this coming year will bring. I know God is with us and this year will mean new opportunities for our students and staff. New ways to learn, new ways to grow, and new ways for God to reveal himself to us.

And while summer break was enjoyable, we miss seeing the children and families in our school. Taking a rest from relationships for the summer can help us appreciate the genuine impact each person has on our lives. When we return to see each other face to face, it is a delightful experience.

## SMS Welcomes New Staff this SCHOOL YEAR!

*Please join us in welcoming these new members of the SMS family; we're so excited to work with them this school year!*



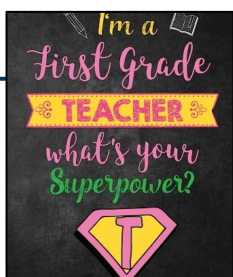
Hello! My name is Jennarae Barten, and I'm excited to introduce myself. My husband Isaac and I are both Melrose natives raising our two daughters, Charlie and Georgia, in this beautiful community! I have worked in schools either as a Mental Health Practitioner or a teacher for a handful of years, and I'm so excited to start my newest journey as St. Mary's kindergarten teacher. Though I know I have big shoes to fill, I am so blessed to have this opportunity!

Hello, my name is Heidi Hoppe. I am excited to be joining the Little Saints Preschool team as the new 3/4 Lead Preschool Teacher here at St. Mary's. I have been married to my husband Jason for 16 years, and we have 3 boys: Thor, Sawyer, and Tucker. I enjoy camping, traveling, taking rides in our Ranger, spending time together as a family, and being my kids' biggest cheerleader at all their sports/activities. I can't wait to get to know you and your children!



Hi, I'm Amy Primus. I am excited to be a part of the preschool program as an assistant teacher. All 4 of my children attended the Little Saints program, so I know it is a wonderful program! I am married with 4 children, all of whom attended St. Mary's School. We live on a beef farm just outside of Melrose.

Hello SMS Families, my name is Ali Arnzen and I am excited to join the SMS team this year as an Interventionist! I am a former student of St. Mary's School, and have been a lifelong parishioner of St. Mary's Church. My husband Brandon and I have 3 kids, all attending St. Mary's School: Averi in 2<sup>nd</sup>, Everett in 1<sup>st</sup>, and Owen is starting Little Saints this Fall. Over the years St. Mary's has helped shape me in many ways, and I look forward to working with the students and staff.



Hi, I'm Peggy Stowe; I'll be the 1st grade teacher at SMS this year. I am so blessed to have found a new home to continue my teaching adventures. I look forward to forming new relationships with the staff and families of St. Mary's School. Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my family and traveling to California to see my granddaughter. My husband and I grow Haskap berries so part of my summer is spent harvesting the berries.



## New Food Program at SMS

The SMS food program will look different for the 2023-2024 school year. Earlier this year, the Universal School Meals bill was passed into law in Minnesota. What this means is that any organization that is a part of the School Nutrition Program will receive free breakfast and lunch for students in Kindergarten- 6th grade, starting in the 2023-2024 school year for at least the next two years. Because our school is not part of the School Nutrition Program, we have made the decision to partner with Melrose Area Schools (MAS) to provide lunch under their program. Unfortunately, this program does not cover lunches for preschool students, so Cornerstone Catering has generously agreed to continue serving lunches to our preschool students.

SMS has hired Brenda Primus as our new Lunch Supervisor; she will act as the liaison to MAS to ensure this program runs smoothly and efficiently. SMS has also purchased a van to transport lunches from MAS and Cornerstone Catering each day.

We are thankful for the support and understanding of our school families and staff members as we work through this arduous process; our end goal is to provide healthy food for our students at an affordable cost to families.



My name is Brenda Primus. My husband Melvin and I are dairy farmers south of Melrose. We have four children and 9 grandchildren. I have been a 2nd grade religion teacher for almost 20 years. I enjoy working with children. In the past I have been employed by Jennie-O-Foods, Tahar as a cook for St. Mary's School, and a volunteer for the Melrose Food Shelf. In my spare time, I like spending time with my grandkids, enjoying the outdoors, going bowling, and playing cards.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **ST. MARY'S PARISH GET-TOGETHER:** Sunday, September 10th. 4:00-7:00 pm at the Church of St. Mary
- **HARRY'S PIZZA FUNDRAISER:** October 11th-25th. Contact a SMS family or the school at 320-256-4257 to order. Pizzas are \$12 each; flavors include 4-Meat, Breakfast, Cheese, Chicken Alfredo, Chicken Bacon Ranch, Deluxe, Pepperoni, and Sausage.
- **GRANDPARENTS DAY AT SMS:** Tuesday, October 17th.
- **FALL-O-WEEN JESUS:** Tuesday, October 31 from 3:00-5:00 pm in the SMS Gymnasium. All children ages 2-12 are welcome to join us with an adult for a fun afternoon of crafts, games, and snacks!

### DID YOU KNOW?



St. Mary's Catholic School was built in 1965, and many of the main components and structure are original to the building. Although the building is structurally sound, well maintained, and safe for students to attend school, components are showing their age and will continue to deteriorate in the future. SMS is currently replacing the heating units in the school; in addition to these units, the exterior doors, windows, and roof of the school are quickly nearing the end of their efficient and serviceable life. These needs are not unexpected, but result in costs that our yearly

budget cannot support. St. Mary's School and the Church of St. Mary have funds to contribute to the current heating project and we have received many generous donations from our supportive parishioners, community, and alumni members, but as of Sept 1, we still need to raise approximately **\$47,000** for this cause. To learn more about helping us heat our school, please check out the brochure on our website by scanning the QR code here or going to [www.smsmelrowsemn.org](http://www.smsmelrowsemn.org). Thank you for your consideration and continued support of St. Mary's Catholic School!

