



As we approach this Christmas season, I want to take a moment to extend my warmest wishes to you all. This time of year invites reflection, gratitude, and giving as we renew our spirits and prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. During this special season, we are reminded that St Mary's School thrives because of the support, dedication, and involvement of our parents, parish, and community. Your ongoing encouragement and partnership in fostering our students' academic, spiritual, and emotional growth are truly appreciated. St. Mary's staff and students wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

God's **LOVE** is all around us this **CHRISTmas** season!

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." This verse says everything good in our lives can ultimately be traced back to God's LOVE for us. In our busy world we may just need a quiet moment to pause and truly see His generosity all around us. **Sometimes the smallest blessings are where we find the biggest expressions of His love.**

St. Mary's School started off our season of blessings and giving with our Thanksgiving Prayer Service/Food Drive on November 22nd. The students are currently preparing for Advent and Christmas by collecting and donating items to Eagle's Healing Nest, praying for our families, friends, and community members, and sharing goodie bags with community members at Coborn's Melrose location.

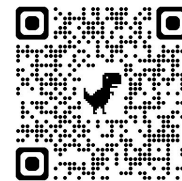
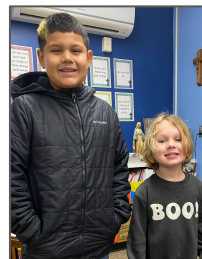
Students at St. Mary School presented the Christmas musical, "Miracle at Midnight" on Wednesday, December 11th at the Marit Elliott Performing Arts Center. Christmas musicals have long been a tradition at SMS. Based around the traditional story of the first Christmas, these plays have given generations of children the opportunity to get involved in a production and try their hand at performing in front of a big crowd of parents and peers. The Little Saints Preschool also hosted a Christmas Program for their families on Friday, December 13th, that included an adorable Christmas Story play to celebrate Jesus' birthday!





Did you know we have an amazing Little Saints Preschool program at SMS? Our Little Saints staff members are dedicated, caring, and so much FUN! Students enjoy plenty of creative play time balanced with guided learning to prepare them for kindergarten and life in general. They pray each day, practice being kind friends, and learn self-confidence that will take them far in life.

If you have a child ready for preschool next fall, please contact SMS for a classroom visit or make plans to attend our open house in March. We have options for both full day and half day classes. Information can be found on our website at <https://www.smsmelrosemn.org/preschool-pre-k> or scan the QR Code.



- ♥ Thank you to Melrose Bowl for donating bowling to all our students in December!
- ♥ Thank you to the Grey Eagle Knights of Columbus for their recent donation of \$500 to St. Mary's School to purchase Bibles for our students. Every student at St. Mary's in grades 1-6 have a Bible in their hands that they will keep from year to year.



- **CHRISTMAS BREAK:** December 23-January 1
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK:** January 26-31. This community-building week begins with our SMS/Alumni Mass and School Breakfast on Sunday, January 26th.
- **SMS AUCTION4EDUCATION: "Stayin' Alive in '25"** Mark your calendars for March 1, 2025!
 - **Raffle Tickets** are on sale now for \$100 each with a grand prize of \$20,000! Drawing will be held at 7:00pm the night of the auction.
 - **Dinner** at the Melrose American Legion on March 1st from 5:00 to 8:00pm; free will donations for the food are appreciated. **50/50 drawings** will be held too; please join us there!
 - **Online Auction** at <http://www.bidpal.net/smsmelrose>. Online viewing begins on February 16th, online bidding begins on February 23rd. Online bidding will close the night of the auction.
 - **Live Auction** for the classroom items will be held during the event-don't miss the excitement!



SMS is in the middle of our SMS\$4Kids Drive, our annual appeal to families and friends to use this **no additional cost program** that raises funds for SMS. SMS\$4Kids is a program that allows our school to purchase gift cards from vendors at a discount, customers purchase them from our program at regular cost.

This year, the drive is raising money to add acoustics to our gym walls. This space serves multiple purposes, including gym classes, lunch, prayer services, Grandparents Day, and after-school and weekend events. Currently, voices are muffled, making it difficult for the audience to focus and causing strain on speakers. By improving the acoustics, we will reduce echo and reverberation, leading to better sound quality and a more comfortable atmosphere with less background noise. We would appreciate your consideration of using SMS\$4Kids for your gift card purchases; it will benefit all who use our gym.

To learn more about SMS\$4Kids, check out our website at <https://www.smsmelrosemn.org/sms-sms4kids> or scan the QR Code.

