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DECEMBER, 2025 NEWSLETTER,

During the month of December at St. Mary we will be learning about Advent, it's meaning and symbols. Advent marks the beginning of the Church calendar year. During the four weeks of Advent we commemorate the coming of Jesus to Bethlehem more than 2000 years ago. During this time we celebrate his coming into our hearts. In a spirit of anxious anticipation we prepare once again, with grateful hearts to celebrate the coming of Jesus, our Saviour and Lord. The most common symbol for Advent is the Advent wreath. Its circular shape, formed by evergreens is a symbol of eternal life. Its three purple candles symbolize our time of waiting, our time of repenting, our time of preparing for the Lord. Its pink candle represents a time for rejoicing as we move closer to Christmas. The light cast from the candles remind us of Jesus, the Light of the World.

Wishing your Family a wonderful Christmas Holiday filled with many moments of Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace.



Advent 2025

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."

Isaigh 2.2-3

STAY CONNECTED and follow us on:

Website: https://www.stmary.ecsd.net











Important Dates

November 30 First Sunday of Advent

December 1- 15 Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation Holly Leaf Fundraiser

(Watch for the Holly Leaf coming home with your child)

December 1 Grade 1, 1/2A and 2A Creative Caravan In School Fieldtrip

December 1 Grade 3A Clay for Kids In-school fieldtrip

December 1 Hot Lunch through Healthy Hunger - Domino's Pizza, order by

Wednesday, November 26 at 11:59 pm

December 2 Glow Team Meeting 3:00-4:00 pm

December 3 St. Mary attends 9:30 Advent Mass at St. Thomas More Parish. Parents welcome to attend.

Bussing for Kindergartens and those needing assistance

December 4 Student-Led Conferences 1:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Please check your email for a link to book

your appointment

December 7 Second Sunday of Advent

Advent Celebration during Morning Announcements

December 8 Grade 6 Immunizations - HepB & HPV - in the a.m.

December 11 Alberta Musical Theatre - Pinocchio - 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

December 12 Grade 1A, 1/2A and 2A to "We Rock the Spectrum" fieldtrip

Grade 4A and 4/5A to St. Albert Place Visual Art Studios fieldtrip

December 14 Third Sunday of Advent

December 15 Advent Celebration during Morning Announcements

Theme Day - Winter Wonderland - Dress in blue/white or sparkles

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December 16 Lifetouch Individual Photos Retakes

December 17 Theme Day - Looks like Christmas - Christmas Sweater Day or Christmas accessories

December 18 Full Day of School Thursday for Grade 1-6 Dismissal at 3:00 p.m. - FRIDAY SCHEDULE

Theme Day - Pajama Day

This is a switch day - Kindergarten attend school today and NOT FRIDAY - regular programming

School Council Pancake Breakfast Day

December 19 Early Dismissal before Christmas Break – dismissal at 11:59 a.m.

Theme Day - Wear Red & Green Day

No Kindergarten classes today

Caroling in the Gym at 11:15 - 11:45 - led by Mrs. Hauger. Parents are welcome to come and sing with us as all classes carol into Christmas! **This is NOT a performance.**

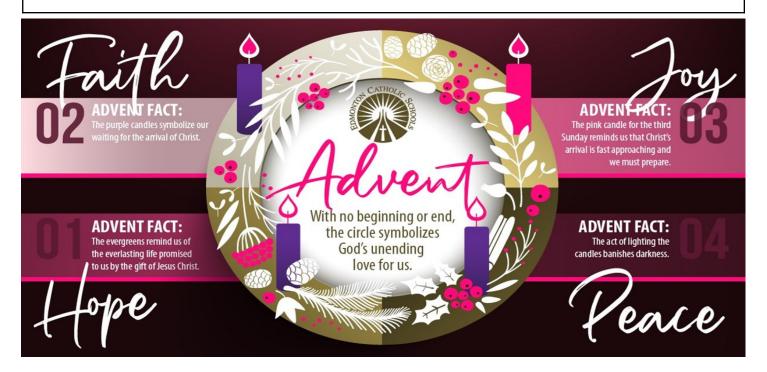


December 22 - January 2 CHRISTMAS BREAK

January 5 Classes resume at 8:15 am

Grade 5A to Oilers Ice School - 8:30 a.m.

THE SEASON OF ADVENT



ST. MARY ADVENT CELEBRATIONS

At Mass, after praying the Lord's Prayer, we hear ". . . as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ." This prayer reminds us that during Advent, we wait in joy, in hope, and in anticipation for the wonderful event we are about to experience - the feast of Christmas, the coming of Christ into our lives in new ways, the return of Christ in glory at the end of time. As the Church, we wait during Advent and look forward to celebrating the fact that God loves us so much that he sent his Son into the world to save us. This waiting is far from empty; rather, it is full of the hope that God promises us as we prepare for Christ in the feast of Christmas.

The students at St. Mary will be experiencing the season of Advent through discussion, prayer and celebration

Advent Week 1- Wednesday, December 3- Advent Celebration 9:30 at St. Thomas More Parish

Advent Week 2 – Advent Celebration - virtually during announcements

Advent Week 3 – Advent Celebration - virtually during announcements



SOCIAL JUSTICE ECS Foundation HOLLY LEAF CAMPAIGN December 1-15



Students at St. Mary will be taking part in a Holly Leaf fundraiser for the Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation. Your children are invited to decorate a Holly leaf, which they will be bringing home, and return it to school with a Spiritual Advent Wish along with a donation if you can. The Holly leaves will be displayed in the school atrium and funds collected will be donated to the Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation.

What Does the Foundation Do?

In short, the Foundation makes dreams come true for students and families in our schools through six Dreams for Kids funds and seven endowment funds. You are able to direct your support to the area of greatest need or to any one of the different funds available. We anticipate the areas of greatest need this year to be:

- 1. Helping Hands Fund: Provides resources to assist schools in addressing student or family emergency needs including, clothing, food, shelter and health.
- Conquer Hunger Fund: Supports healthy school lunch, breakfast and snack programs (it only costs \$100 to provide a daily snack to a student for the entire school year).
- 3. Guardian Angel Fund: Provides help for students with mental health needs.

Donations through the ECS Foundation Website

Parents who would like to make larger donations and wish to have an income tax receipt should make their donation directly using the Foundation website. In order to track which school they represent, parents are encouraged to click on the "I would like to dedicate this donation" box and write the name of the school their children attend in the "Tribute Name" box. This will allow tracking of donations from our school. To access the form, simply go to the Foundation website: https://www.ecsfoundation.ca/ and click on the "Donate Now" button on the top right hand side of the page.





GRADE 4-6 CHROMEBOOKS - A Good Christmas Gift Idea!

All students in grades 4-6 are required to bring a Chromebook or laptop as part of their school supplies. These devices are used daily to access Google Classroom and other online resources both at school and home.

The schools existing Chromebooks are allocated to students in grades 1-3. We are grateful for the support of our Fundraising Association, which has provided Chromebooks over the years. However, they will now focus on other initiatives to enhance the school experience. (Perhaps a chromebook is a good Christmas idea for our Grade 3 students!)

If purchasing a Chromebook or laptop for your child is not feasible, please contact the Principal to inquire about an alternative solution.

Please note that students are expected to bring their devices to and from school each day. It is their responsibility to ensure the device is charged and ready for use. We will not have backup devices available, so if a student forgets their device, they will need to complete their work on paper or at home.

Thank you for your partnership in education.

CREATIVE CARAVAN In-School Fieldtrip - Grade 1A, 1/2A & 2A - December 1

Students in Grades 1A, 1/2A & 2A will be taking part in an in-school fieldtrip on December 1, 2026. A fieldtrip form would have already come home with your child. Please make your fieldtrip payment online in the Powerschool Parent portal. Please contact the school office if there are any questions or difficulties.

CLAY FOR KIDS In-School Fieldtrip - Grade 3A - December 1

Students in Grade 3A will be having a Clay for Kids in school fieldtrip on Monday, December 1. This fieldtrip was rebooked from November 24. Thank you to the parents who volunteered on the 24. We hope to see you again on Monday, December 1.

SCHOOL COUNCIL HOT LUNCH - IS BACK!! December 1

Hot lunch is returning to St. Mary for students in **Grades 1-6 only!**

• The first hot lunch date is December 1 – Domino's Pizza

Please visit https://healthyhunger.ca to register for hot lunch. All payments also go through the Healthy Hunger website.

Please note, with hot lunch being on a Monday, all orders must be placed with Healthy Hunger by Wednesday at 11:59 pm in the week prior.

As we have for the last two years, the hot lunch committee of the School Advisory Council has prioritized offerings that balance the following objectives: low packaging waste and low cost to ensure accessibility for all families, while also providing a fun change to usual lunch box routines (and a break for parents from making lunches!).

We welcome volunteers for the pizza lunch days, and a signup sheet will be circulated closer to the days of those hot lunches.

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback on hot lunch, please feel free to reach out to Kate Faught directly (kate.faught@gmail.com).

School Council Hot Lunch Committee

ADVENT MASS - December 3 - St. Thomas More Parish

On Wednesday, December 3, students at St. Mary will attend 9:30 Mass at St. Thomas More Parish. Parents are welcome to attend. Bussing will be provided for Kindergarten students and students requiring assistance. Bussing will be provided for all students dependent on weather conditions.

STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES - December 4 - 1:00-7:30 pm

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are hosting a Student-Led Conference at the school on Thursday, December 4. This is an opportunity for you to learn more about your child's progress at school. It is intended that your child attend as well. This is the only date the teachers have available and so we hope you can make it a priority to attend. If there are extreme circumstances where you cannot make this date, you can reach out to the teacher to inquire if they have a 3:00 pm appointment on another day. An in-person appointment is preferred but if you require a virtual appointment, please book a time and email the teacher that you require a virtual appointment. The system cannot accept bookings after December 3.

The students will be sharing their success and challenges so that goals can be set for the future. Please choose a 15-minute block of time for each of your children using our Booking Page. Please make sure you are booking in Mountain Standard Time, on the correct date and with your child's teacher. We ask that you are on time for your appointment as we cannot reschedule. If your child has an Individualized Program Plan, please do not use this system to book a meeting. The teacher will be in touch with you to schedule a longer meeting at another time within the next few weeks.

Instructions:

1. Click on this

link: https://outlook.office.com/book/StMarySchool@ecsd.net/?ismsaljsauthenabled

- 2. Choose the date December 4, 2025
- 3. Use the drop-down menu to choose your child's teacher
- 4. Select a time that you and your child can visit the classroom
- 5. Enter your contact information and then select "book". You should receive a confirmation email if you entered your email address.
- 6. Repeat for multiple children in the school

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, December 4, 2025!

Mrs. Vince

Principal

GRADE 6 IMMUNIZATIONS - December 8

On the morning of Monday, December 8, Grade 6 students will receive their first HepB & HPV immunizations. Consent forms will already have come home with your children. The second round of immunization is scheduled for Monday, June 8, 2026

ALBERTA MUSICAL THEATRE - Pinocchio - December 11

Alberta Musical Theatre will be at St. Mary to perform Pinocchio on Thursday, December 11, at 9:30 a.m. Parents are welcome to attend!

ARTS & HERITAGE FIELDTRIP - December 12 - Grade 4A & 4/5A

The students in Grade 4A and 4/5A will be visiting the Arts & Heritage Foundation in St. Albert on December 12. Please watch for a fieldtrip form coming home with your child. Please make the online fieldtrip payment in the Powerschool parent portal.

WE ROCK THE SPECTRUM FIELDTRIP-December 12, Grade 1A,1/2A & 2A

Students in Grades 1A, 1/2A & 2A will be going on a fieldtrip to "We Rock the Spectrum" on December 12. Please watch for a fieldtrip coming home with your child. Please make your fieldtrip payment on line through the Powerschool parent portal.

SCHOOL COUNCIL HOT LUNCH - December 15 - SUBWAY

Healthy Hunger https://healthyhunger.ca hot lunch order deadline Wednesday, December 10 at 11:59 p.m.

LIFETOUCH PICTURE RETAKES - Tuesday, December 16 a.m.

THEME DAYS IN DECEMBER



December 15 Theme Day - Winter Wonderland - Dress in blue/white or sparkles

December 17 Theme Day - Looks like Christmas - Christmas Sweater Day or Christmas accessories



December 18 Theme Day - Pajama Day

December 19 Theme Day - Wear **Red** & **Green** Day

SCHOOL COUNCIL CHRISTMAS Pancake Breakfast - December 18



December 18 - Pancake Breakfast and PJ Day

Have your child bring their own plate and utensils to minimize garbage - more info will follow

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY BREAK

Thursday, December 18 is a switch day with a full day of classes with dismissal at 3:00 p.m.

(Kindergarten attend school today for their regular class times)

Friday, December 19, children will be dismissed at 11:59 a.m. (No Kindergarten today)

Classes Resume Monday, January 5, 2026

St. Mary COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Each month, we will be highlighting a local community resource that is available to families! If you have any questions about how to access resources, don't hesitate to contact allyson.kothari@ecsd.net



CHRISTMAS BUREAU ASSISTANCE



Christmas Services of Edmonton is a joint program of the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton and 880 CHED Santa's Anonymous. Every year the program delivers hampers, toys and gift cards to thousands of Edmonton families. **If you would like to apply for Christmas Assistance** (food gift cards or a hamper, toys for kids, or adopt-a-teen gift card for your teen) in Edmonton, click the following link:

https://christmasservices.ca/



VETERANS WEEK

On November 5, Grade 5 students attended the Beechmount Cemetery to lay poppies on gravestones honouring those that served in the Canadian military. The No Stone Left Alone ceremony traditionally has students laying a poppy and saying a prayer at each gravestone.

On Thursday, November 6, during our Remembrance Day Ceremony, we remembered those who volunteered, sacrificed, served, fought and died for our freedom. Thank you to our parent first responders for making our Remembrance Day Ceremony special.

"Lest we forget"







NOVEMBER - The Saints Came Marching In!

November is called the "month of saints" because it includes the feasts of All Saints Day (November 1), dedicated to honoring all saints, and All Souls' Day (November 2), praying for the souls of the departed. Through out the month, students researched and celebrated saints by drawing pictures of their favorite saint.











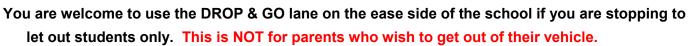
MONTHYLY REMINDERS

PARKING

Drop Off & Pick Up

Please do not park in the bus lane at any time.

The church across the street allows parents to use their lot before after school.



Please follow the link https://arcg.is/1H4ieS1 or use the QR code to view the map explaining which zones are for parking and which are for driving through only. Parking is available in the church lot during pick up and drop off.

SICK

STAY HOME WHEN SICK



As students and staff return for another exciting school year the health, safety and well-being of all students and staff remains a top priority.

Parents are asked to please continue to monitor your child for symptoms daily before coming to school. This is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of illness. Anyone who is exhibiting symptoms of illness, including fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, new or worsening cough, or shortness of breath, should remain at home until their symptoms have improved and they

have been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, and they feel well enough to resume normal activities. If your child becomes sick at school, parents/guardians will be called to pick them up. If your child is away from school for any reason, please call the school office to let us know.

At our school we are,

- Encouraging students to wash and/or sanitize their hands regularly. Hand sanitizer is available at our school.
- Prioritizing frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces.
- Ensuring proper ventilation is extremely important to us. We have installed the ASHRAE-recommended MERV 13 filters in our school, and our HVAC systems are running for extended periods of time. We continue to reference and implement ASHRAE guidance where practicable within the limitations of existing infrastructure across the Division.
- Respecting individual choice regarding masks. Our priority is supporting a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.
- Reporting illness to Alberta Health Services when school-wide student absentee rates are over 10% due to illness so they can investigate and advise. This has always been our division practice.

 The health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff remain our top priority.



SCHOOL FEES

Please review your child's fee account in the Powerschool Parent Portal. If you have **NOT** yet paid your child's school fees, please make your online payment today.

VACATION

LEARNING WHILE ON VACATION

St. Mary School recognizes that a child's educational experience is not confined to the school building and that vacation trips can be enlightening and valuable to a child's intellectual growth. Please keep in mind that the learning and teaching that is missed cannot easily be replicated outside the classroom or in a worksheet and your child may miss parts of the curriculum. Teachers structure their classes for both instruction and assessment according to the regulations established by the provincial government. Teachers are not required to provide assignments for vacations but could share topics being covered so you include them in your daily discussions. Google classrooms may allow for completion of assignments but opportunities for interaction and questions will be impacted as well as feedback for assessment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the school.

BUSSING 2025-2026



All NEW applications, changes to bussing addresses, cancellations or replacement bus pass requests **must** be completed online through the following link

https://ecsd.mybusplanner.ca/

Parents are asked to monitor their Powerschool Parent portal weekly to obtain their child's route information and check for any changes to the schedule. Bus pass fees for 2025-26 are all \$50.00 for both Yellow bus and ETS, with no additional family plan discount. Eligibility for bussing this school year, as changed by the Alberta Government, requires access for bussing to be at least 1.6 kilometers from the school.

<u>Bus Passes</u> This school year there will be no bus passes issued to students. Bus drivers will take attendance of their passengers according to their updated running boards.

<u>Bus Delays</u> Bus delays are posted on the division website through the BusPlanner website https://ecsd.mybusplanner.ca/Alerts or can be accessed through the bus delay app BusPlanner Delays App on your mobile phone. Students are encouraged to be at their stop at least 5 minutes before their pick up time. If a bus **does not arrive within 10 minutes** of its scheduled time, please ensure your child knows to notify an adult. No matter how late a bus runs behind schedule, the driver finishes the route. But we do recommend that after 20 minutes, you make other arrangements.

Any questions on bussing can be directed to our Transportation Department directly at 780-441-6078.

LUNCHES

LUNCH drop offs

We encourage children to bring their lunch with them as they arrive to school in the morning as to limit disruption to learning and work flow. Noon drop offs of fast food items are discouraged. All essentials for eating their lunch should be packed as the school does not provide disposable supplies - cutlery etc. for student use. Healthy lunches are encouraged together with reducing disposable waste.

CANCELLATION of YELLOW BUS SERVICE - Weather

Please be advised that the following Radio and TV Stations will carry announcements with respect to transportation cancellations due to inclement weather conditions.

RADIO STATIONS

880 CHED	AM 930 The Light CJCA	CBC
CISN FM 103.9	SHINE 105.9 FM	CHFA 90.1 FM (French)
THE CHUCK FM 92.5	TSN 1260	CFCW 840 AM
INEWS 880 AM	95.7 CRUZ FM	The Breeze 96.3
KISS 91.7	The Bear 100.3 FM	K97 97.3
UPI 99 3 FM	SONIC 102 9 FM	02.3 NOW! Radio

PLAY 107 104.9 VIRGIN Radio FM

TV STATIONS

CITYTV CTV Edmonton GLOBAL Edmonton CBC TV

Every effort will be made to have messages broadcast commencing no later than 6:30 a.m.

Daily bus delays can also be checked at https://ecsd.mybusplanner.ca/Alerts





SEE IT? HEARIT? REPORT IT!

Have you or your child experienced discrimination or racism? Tell a trusted staff member.

For more information: ecsd.net/link





ST. THOMAS MORE CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Mass Time

Christmas Eve: December 24 - 3 pm / 5 pm / 7 pm / 9 pm / 10:30 pm / midnight

Christmas Day: December 25 - 9 am / 11 am



December 31: 5 pm

January 1: 9 am and 11 am

St. Thomas More Catholic Church Sacramental Preparation

Baptism for Children Aged 0-6

For infants and children under 7 years old, baptisms are typically held once or twice monthly.

We encourage you to review the Baptism Requirements.

To register, please contact Tracy Lam at (780-434-6313 ext 233, or email Baptism.STM@caedm.ca

Baptism for Children Aged 7-15

For older children, we offer "Later Baptism" followed by other age-appropriate sacraments 2-3 times per school year.

Please note that February 7, 2026 is the next accommodated baptisms date available during this school year.

We encourage you to review the <u>Baptism Requirements</u>.

To register, please contact Tracy Lam at (780-434-6313 ext 233, or email Baptism.STM@caedm.ca

First Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist for Children Aged 7-11 (Grade 2 and up)

Registration for Spring Cycle 3 - 2025-2026 1st Reconciliation & 1st Holy Eucharist is OPEN

February 10: 6:15 - 7:15 pm - Parent Orientation

February 17: 6:15 - 7:30 pm Class 1

March 3: 6:15 - 7:30 pm Class 2

March 7: 11 am - 1:00 pm First Reconciliation

April 14: 6:15 - 7:30 pm Class 3

April 21: 6:15 - 7:30 pm Class 4

April 28: 6:15 - 7:30 pm Class 5

May 3 at 4:30 pm (First Eucharist Celebration)

Confirmation for Youth Aged 12-15 (Grade 6 and up)

Registration for Spring Cycle 2 -2025-2025 Confirmation is OPEN

January 28, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm - Parent Orientation

Schedule for Catechism Classes

February 11, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

March 11, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

March 18, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 8:30pm

March 25, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

April 15, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

April 22, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

April 29, 2026 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

May 9, 2026 from 10 am - 3 pm (Retreat and Confessions)

Confirmation Mass on May 24, 2026 at 4:30 pm

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) 16 years and up

Meets Thursday evenings 7 pm to 9 pm starting Thursday October 2nd until Pentecost.

"Indeed God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3.17)

Signup to become an inquirer or a sponsor.

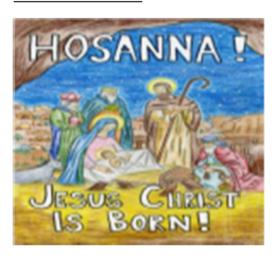


KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS CONTEST

'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His path straight.'

The Knights of Columbus Father Bonner Council is happy to announce the Keep Christ in Christmas (KCIC) Program to help shift from a preoccupation with materialism to the light of Christ and the spirit of giving.

All are invited to participate in the Keep Christ in Christmas Contest, to prepare the way for Jesus. This contest is open to youth from grades one (1) through nine (9) and may participate in either or both events.



Event 1: Make a Room in your inn - Nativity Scene Creation

Participants may get together with their family or a group of friends to create a model of the nativity scene that demonstrates the Catholic understanding of Christmas. Participants can use any materials for their entry. There are <u>no size restrictions</u> for the nativity scene model. Entries can be submitted by sending a picture(s) (JPEG) or a short video to <u>jasonkalapurakal@gmail.com</u> no later than December 15, 2025.

Event 2: 'Keep Christ in Christmas' Poster Contest

Youth are invited to submit a poster, using a medium of their choice (i.e. paint, crayon, marker, etc.). The size requirement of the poster is 11"x17". The poster should depict your concept of 'Keeping Christ in Christmas'.

The submissions can be made by emailing a scanned image or picture (JPEG) of your poster to iasonkalapurakal@gmail.com. The deadline for entries is December 15, 2025. Please ensure your name, contact number and email address are included with your entry.

Please contact Family Program Directors Tony Joseph at (780)-977-4921 or Jason Kalapurakal at (587)-985-0450, or email jasonkalapurakal@gmail.com for any questions.



DOORS OPEN AT 9AM

I SUPPORT OF CWL SERVICE TO PARISH & COMMUNITY