



ABERDEEN CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

ABERDEENRONCALLI.ORG

CENTRAL OFFICE: 605.226.2100
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL: 605.225.7440
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: 605.229.4100
PRIMARY SCHOOL: 605.225.3460

NEWSLETTER

-Instilling Catholic values and promoting
academic excellence by nurturing
mind, body and soul.-

DECEMBER 2025



FR. SCOTT MILLER
RMS/RHS CHAPLAIN



I love the season of Advent. Everything in these four weeks prepares for the coming feast of Christmas. The liturgies take on a more solemn and subdued tone, the color violet reminds us of the need to repent from our sins, and often the weather in South Dakota cooperates with the feeling we have when we await something that has not yet arrived: barrenness. All of these things cut out the excess from our lives and center us on the essential: our relationship with our Creator and Redeemer.

This all sounds beautiful. The reality is, often we find ourselves worn out and anxious with many concerns: preparing for company, putting up decorations, and buying the right gifts for our children and family. By the end of Advent we are often exhausted rather than rejuvenated, and we wonder what the purpose of all of this is.

I would like to invite you to join with me in praying a simple prayer that can keep us centered on Jesus this Advent. It is called the Saint Andrew Novena prayer. Most novenas are 9 days, but this one goes from the Feast of St. Andrew (November 30th) until Christmas Eve. Traditionally, it is recited 15 times daily for each day of the novena. I would recommend praying it as you are able. Maybe 3 times daily is enough to keep you centered on Jesus. The idea is that we place all of our prayers and petitions in the manger where Jesus was born, recalling that Jesus really was born for us.

May this prayer help us all grow in hope and confidence in the goodness of our Creator, who humbled Himself to become a little child for us and for our salvation.

The novena prayer can be found on page 8 or the newsletter-----

LIVING NATIVITY

The 4th Grade Living Nativity is Tuesday, December 16th at 1:45pm in RES gym. A Bake Sale will follow in the Parish Hall for freewill offering.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

HOPE



STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congrats to the November Exchange Club Students of the Month, Elizabeth Bain, Claire Crawford, and Harrison Bode. These three have earned this award because of their citizenship and leadership in our school. Great job!


 A decorative background for the Roncalli Christmas Concerts section, featuring a close-up of green pine branches with white snow and red berries.

RONCALLI CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

Monday, December 1, 7pm - RHS/RMS Band Christmas Concert

Tuesday, December 2, 6PM- K-5 Concert at RHS, featuring 5th Grade Band, Elementary Choir, and all K-5 music students.

These are free events that will be livestreamed.

<https://www.aberdeenroncalli.org/activities-athletics/livestream>

STUDENT CHRISTMAS CAROLING

RMS/RHS Choir students will be caroling at Aberdeen nursing homes and will be singing with the Presentation Sisters on December 15 and at Primrose on December 16.

IN SEARCH OF SUB TEACHERS

We welcome applications for sub teachers at all levels but are especially in need of subs at the primary school. If interested please submit an Employment Application (found here <https://www.aberdeenroncalli.org/about/employment>) and submit to michala.heller@aberdeenroncalli.org, 605-226-2100, 1400 N. Dakota St., Aberdeen, SD 57401.

BLOOD DRIVE.



National Honor Society had a great blood drive on November 19th and would like to thank everyone who supported them. They had 33 individuals registered to donate and 17 first-time donors at this drive!! These individuals are essential to the sustainability of our community's blood supply, and it is truly inspiring to see new donors step forward to help save lives. Roncalli was able to donate 28 units of blood, which will impact 84 lives of people who need a blood transfusion in and around our community.

Blood donors are essential to the sustainability of our community's blood supply. Less than 3% of the population donate blood and 80–90% of people need a blood product at some point in their life. Donors make a huge difference to those who are ill or injured and are in need of blood.

The spring Blood Drive is scheduled for March 25, 2026.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
JOY

CONGRATULATIONS



Elyana Roach has been chosen as one of eight finalists for the BIG Idea Competition! Her business idea, **Shearing Excellence**, was selected from 325 entries from 66 schools. She will compete against 7 other finalists for cash prizes and scholarships.

The BIG Idea Competition is an annual business idea contest for high school students in the U.S., offering substantial cash prizes and college scholarships to encourage entrepreneurship. The competition is part of the Entrepreneurship class curriculum at RHS, taught by Mrs. O'Keefe. For more info on BIG Idea: <https://bigideasd.com/>

Maddy May, Harper Schnabel, and Roxanna Aguirre were chosen as Honorable Mentions. All of them will present their business ideas at Northern State University on Wednesday, December 10.

- **Honorable Mention Presentations - 9 AM Central Time**

Facebook Livestream at Micropolitan Podcast -
<https://www.facebook.com/MicropolitanPodcast>

- **Final Event Awards Ceremony - 1:00 PM Central Time**

Find the livestream link at this BIG Idea Awards Ceremony Event-
<https://www.facebook.com/share/14QfRapzXkU/>



CHRISTMAS AT THE CAPITOL

Our 2025 Aberdeen Roncalli Christmas at the Capitol Christmas Tree is beautiful! We have a huge assortment of ornaments created by our students, but our favorite piece is our tree skirt - a green and gold masterpiece signed by our students, faculty and staff.

Please take time this season to visit our Capitol - strolling through the beautifully decorated Christmas trees is well worth the trip. If you do go - please snap a picture in front of our tree and share with us! Email it to jill.young@aberddeenroncalli.org.



- The ACT test is given on Saturday, Dec. 13th.
- If we have enough students sign up, we will be offering an ACT math prep class starting on Dec. 5th. See Mr. Nygaard for details and registration.
- 8th grade careers class has been busy touring local businesses. The class has toured the National Guard, Police Station, Avera Hospital, School for the Visually Handicapped, and the Fire Department. The class is taught by Mr. Nygaard and Ms. Cardella.

As we approach the joyful Christmas season, let us take a moment to reflect on a few important topics that can help guide our students through the holidays and ensure their safety online.

Digital Citizenship: What It Is and Why It's Important

Students are increasingly connected online, whether through school assignments, social media, or entertainment. Digital citizenship refers to the responsible and respectful use of technology. It includes understanding how to stay safe online, how to treat others with kindness, and how to manage one's digital footprint in a way that reflects good character and respect for others.

Over the holidays, many students will spend more time online, whether through playing games, interacting on social media, or participating in video chats with friends and family. While this is a great way to stay connected, it is important that students continue to practice digital citizenship during this time. Here are a few points to keep in mind as students screen time increases over the holidays:

- **Respecting others online:** Students' digital interactions should be kind and respectful. This includes refraining from cyberbullying and spreading negativity online.
- **Privacy and safety:** Encourage your children to protect their personal information and to avoid sharing things online that could put them or others at risk.
- **Balance and self-control:** While technology can be fun and educational, it is important to balance screen time with offline activities, such as reading, being outdoors, or spending quality time with family. Encourage your child to take breaks from screens and to be mindful of how much time they spend online.

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

The Importance of Digital Citizenship Over the Holidays

The holidays are a time of celebration, but they can also be a time when kids may feel isolated or disconnected, especially if they're not seeing friends or classmates in person. Digital tools can help fill that gap, but it's essential that they use these tools responsibly. Consider setting family guidelines for technology use over the break, helping your child understand the balance between fun, learning, and self-care.

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Miss Elise Cardella, MSed

Counselor's Corner

Roncalli Primary & Elementary | DECEMBER 2024



IN THE CLASSROOM

Internet Safety

- Make sure your child feels comfortable turning to you when they have problems online
- Check-in with your child often to see if they have any questions or concerns
- Know who your child is talking to online
- Monitor what apps your child is using
- Check your child's browser history often
- Know your child's passwords
- Create a list of guidelines and expectations for online use
- Keep computers in an open area where you can monitor activity



SCHOOL COUNSELOR ACTIVITIES

- All children receive classroom lessons once a week for 30 minutes.
- Grades K-5th are working through the Everyday Speech curriculum with lessons addressing:
- Self-Awareness is a measure of how accurately learners can recognize their feelings and thoughts and learn to understand how those influence their behaviors.
- Self-Management is the process we use to regulate and cope with our emotions as well as motivate ourselves and perform throughout our day.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

DECEMBER IS NATIONAL STRESS-FREE FAMILY HOLIDAYS MONTH

Stress can lead to physical symptoms including headaches, upset stomach, depression, anxiety, elevated blood pressure, chest pain, and problems breathing. It is important to take care of yourself during the holiday season!

Tips to Decrease Holiday Stress:

Take a Breather



Make some time for yourself (exercise, reading, listening to music)

Plan Ahead



Procrastinating can increase stress. Create a list and stick to it!

Create Relaxing Surroundings



Research has found that listening to music & the scent of citrus can boost feelings of well-being

Learn to Say No



Taking on too much can cause us to feel overwhelmed

RESOURCES

TIPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS FOR INTERNET SAFETY :

- Free Parental Control Apps - click [HERE](#)
- Family Contracts for Online Safety - click [HERE](#)
- Parents Guide to Internet Safety for Kids - click [HERE](#)
- How to Protect Your Child from the Top 7 Dangers of Online Gaming - click [HERE](#)



JACKIE BRAUN, MS ED.



- ✉ Jackie.Braun@abernoncalli.org
<https://www.abernoncalli.org/schools/counseling-resources>
- 📅 Schedule: M-F 7:30-3:45
- 📞 225-3460 (RP) & 229-4100

PRESCHOOL PEEKS

Did you know playing with slime or playdough in preschool can significantly benefit children? It develops their fine motor skills, enhances creativity, promotes sensory integration, calms anxieties, and encourages imaginative play through tactile manipulation, all while supporting cognitive development and hand-eye coordination.

Key Benefits:

Fine Motor Skills Development:

Squeezing, rolling, pinching, and molding the material strengthens the muscles in children's hands and fingers, improving dexterity needed for tasks like writing and buttoning clothes.

Sensory Integration:

The experience of playing with slime or playdough stimulates different senses, which is beneficial for children.

Creativity and Imagination:

Children can freely create different shapes and objects, fostering their imagination and allowing them to express themselves creatively.

Calming Effect:

The repetitive motions of manipulating slime or playdough can be calming and help children manage stress or anxiety.

Cognitive Development:

Engaging in open-ended play with these materials encourages problem-solving, critical thinking, and cognitive development.

Hand-Eye Coordination:

As children manipulate the material, they practice coordinating their hand movements with their vision.

Social Skills:

When sharing materials and collaborating on projects, children can practice social skills like turn-taking and communication.



RONCALLI CAVALIER CAMPAIGN



Our Roncalli Cavalier Campaign has kicked off - and we appreciate every donation and gift! This campaign supports critical areas in our school system, such as teacher salaries, building upkeep, and student supplies. To give, stop by our central office or give securely online in less than a minute - head to aberdeenroncalli.org and click 'Donate', or scan the QR Code! Thank you!

St. Andrew Christmas Novena

--- NOV. 30 - DEC. 24 ---

The Saint Andrew Novena is a prayer said 15 times a day for the 25 days leading up to Christmas, starting on November 30th. The prayer blesses the moment of Christ's birth and asks God to grant desires through the merits of Jesus and His mother.

- To start, make the Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- Recite the prayer below.
- Repeat the prayer 15 times throughout the day. Many find it helpful to break this up, such as five prayers in the morning, five at lunch, and five before bed.
- Conclude with a final Sign of the Cross.

"Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, (here state your request), through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen."

BLESSED
SACRAMENT
PASTORATE
EVENTS DURING
ADVENT

Women's Mini Advent Retreat
"Prepare the Way of the Lord"
Dec 6
hosted by St. Elizabeth Ann
Seton Parish in Groton



**BLESSED SACRAMENT
PASTORATE**

Advent Women's Mini-Retreat

"Prepare the Way of the Lord"

**Sat Dec 6
9am - 12pm**

Who's Invited?
All women of our pastorate are warmly invited to a morning retreat of prayer, reflection, and encouragement as we enter the Advent season.

Location
St Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton SD

For More Info Contact:
Zack MacKeller
616-401-3859
zack@blessedsacramentparishes.org
<https://www.blessedsacramentparishes.org/womens-advent-mini-retreat>



Please Register here

40 HOUR DEVOTION



"COULD YE NOT WATCH WITH ME ONE HOUR?"

Join our pastorate for a time of deep prayer and encounter with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

We will begin with Exposition on Thursday, December 11 at 3pm at:

 **ST THOMAS AQUINAS
NEWMAN CENTER**

and conclude with Benediction on Saturday, December 13 at 10am

Scan the QR code to view the full schedule and sign up for a time of prayer.



40 Hours Devotion
Dec 11-13
at the St. Thomas Aquinas
Newman Center, NSU



BLESSED SACRAMENT PASTORATE INVITES YOU TO

CALLED & GIFTED



WHO:

We're looking for a team of parishioners willing to be trained to help implement the Called & Gifted discernment process in our parish.

WHAT:

Called & Gifted helps Christians recognize their spiritual gifts—charisms given at baptism to represent Christ and bring God's goodness to others.

WHEN / WHERE:

Come learn more and ask questions on Sunday, Dec 14 after the 10am Mass at St. Mary's and the 11am Mass at Sacred Heart. Meet with Zack MacKeller in the parish hall

HOW:

Training for the core team begins in January and will run for a few months. We will be working with the Catherine of Siena Institute to equip parishioners to help others discern their God-given charisms and opportunities

WHY:

Because every Christian is given spiritual gifts for the building up of the Kingdom of God—and we want people serving according to their strengths, not their frustrations.

For more info, check out the QR code, the website below, or email:

zack@blessedsacramentparishes.org

<https://siena.org/called-gifted>



PIUS PINTS

"Something Advent"

Dec 18

at the Market on the Plaza

PIUS PINTS

DECEMBER 18

7:00 PM GATHERING

7:15 PM SPEAKER

THE MARKET ON THE PLAZA
(UPSTAIRS)
506 S MAIN STREET
ABERDEEN

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

"SOMETHING ADVENT"

(No seriously thats what he said)



SPEAKER

**CHRIS
UHLER**



BLESSED
SACRAMENT
PARISHES

About Pius Pints: We provide a welcoming space for individuals (ages 18-39) to gather and delve deeper into their faith with the perfect pairing of great beer and spiritual enlightenment. Each month, we feature a different speaker who will engage and inspire us with their insights and knowledge.



Advent Men's Mini-Retreat

"Prepare the Way of the Lord"



Who's Invited?

All men of our pastorate are warmly invited to a morning retreat of prayer, reflection, and encouragement as we prepare for Christmas

Where?

St Elizabeth Ann Seton
Catholic Church, Groton SD

When?

Sat Dec 20, 9am - 12pm

For more info, contact: Zack MacKeller
zack@blessedsacramentparishes.org

or go to:

<https://www.blessedsacramentparishes.org/mens-advent-mini-retreat>

Register here



Men's Advent Mini Retreat "Prepare the Way of the Lord"

Dec 20

hosted by St. Elizabeth Ann
Seton Parish in Groton



*Wishing you a Joyful &
Holy Christmas
and a Blessed New Year!!*

FROM THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF
THE ABERDEEN CATHOLIC
SCHOOL SYSTEM