

# St. Andrew's Preschool Seasonal Gazette

## Spring 2024

### From the Director

As this school year comes to a close, we are happy to have had a successful year of growth in who we are and what we do. St. Andrew's Episcopal Preschool is an amazing place to work and go to preschool. I am thankful to be part of a community who values the importance of nurturing both children and adults so they can develop into the people they were intended to be.

We will celebrate our rising kindergarteners at the end of the month with their Transition Ceremonies and receptions May 22 and 23. Look for more details in the weekly email. The end of the year picnic is May 14 (Puppy, Fish, Penguin) and May 16 (Kitten, Frog, Lion) on our playground. You bring your lunch and a blanket and we will provide the snow cones!

We are looking forward to seeing you at Summer Fun and Enrichment Camp!

This time of year is difficult for us as we say goodbye to those families who will not be with us next year. We wish you the best in the coming year!

We still have a few spaces left for 2024-2025 so if you know families interested in registering for preschool next year, please ask them to contact the preschool office at 703-455-8458 or email [preschool@standrews.net](mailto:preschool@standrews.net). They can also visit our web site [preschool.standrews.net](http://preschool.standrews.net) where they can take a virtual tour and fill out an inquiry to receive more information about enrollment or begin the registration process through our software ChildPilot.

We have enjoyed working with you this year and feel fortunate to be a part of your family! If you are returning to us in 2024-2025, we will look forward to seeing you next year! If you are moving on to Kindergarten or not returning to us, please know you will always hold a special place in our hearts! Best of luck in your new adventure!

Warm regards,  
Tami



# The Lion Class



To all our Lion families, it is hard to believe we are nearing the end of the year. This year has been full of excitement, fun and learning as we have watched your children grow-up right before our eyes. I would like to thank all of you, for trusting us to keep your children safe. It will be sad to see our Lions graduate to kindergarten in May, but I know that this class is well prepared to take on all that kindergarten has to offer! This newsletter will help share what we have been learning about and what we will learn about for the rest of the year.

We began the month of March by finishing our unit on some favorite authors. We read many stories by Dr. Seuss and Jan Brett (this was discussed in the last newsletter). Then we jumped into our unit on Rainbows and St. Patrick's Day. We discussed what elements are needed to create a rainbow, and we made lots of rainbow art. The Leprechaun always seems to make a visit to our classroom on St. Patrick's Day and the kids always LOVE this. The Lions pretended in our Shamrock Sweet Shop and created some lovely plates of dessert. We even had a scavenger hunt where the Leprechaun left us a treat! We ended March talking about Easter and Spring Break.

We returned from Spring Break ready to learn about Fairytales. The Lions loved the giant castle in our classroom and all the fairytale toys. One of the favorite "toys" is our gold solo building cups. We have used the plastic party cups for several different units and the Lions LOVE to stack them, create castles and different creations with them. Stacking blocks and other objects help kids build their problem-solving and math skills and helps build their language and social skills. It is also an easy way for kids of all abilities to build their self-esteem. We discussed the elements of a Fairytale and how it is different from a Folktale. As well, we discussed that these are stories that are repeated throughout time. We read different versions of several stories showing how the same story can be told with a different twist by different authors. The class made castle suncatchers, beds from the story "The Princess and the Pea" where we counted the mattresses, and castles made from shapes. We made magic mirrors and Bean stalks that included Jack and the castle in the clouds.

Following Fairytales, we will be getting into the spirit of spring as we learn about Eric Carle. We will read a non-fiction book about the artist/author learning how he created his art using various paint techniques. We will discuss how he cut out shapes to make his wonderful animals and characters come alive in his books. As a class, we will work together to paint paper with many different color and texture combinations. Each Lion will create individual works of art using this painted paper inspired by the art of Eric Carle. We will read the story "The Tiny Seed" and "The Very Hungry Caterpillar", and many more stories by the author and illustrator. Our dramatic play area will turn into a flower shop as our Lions pretend to buy, sell, and arrange silk flowers. The Lions are excited to host their special person at our Spring Tea. This is always a fun event that I looked forward to when my children attend St. Andrew's and I love it just as much as a teacher. It is always nice to have these events to help demonstrate to our Lions that it is important to give to others, especially the people that take care of them. They might be little, but they can give their time, talent, love and attention and it means the world to the people around them.



## The Lion Class continued

As we move into May we will be learning about the farm. This is a fun unit since there are so many opportunities for the Lions to use their imagination to pretend and use their language to make their animals come to life. We will read both fiction and non-fiction stories and learn how all the different parts of a farm work together to produce something that we all use in daily life. Following the farm we finish the year with lots of books about kindergarten and remembering all the favorite things we did this year.

In the last few months of school we will continue to reinforce the important skills needed to be an independent kindergartener. We will continue to learn and commit to memory our first and last names (and identify it in writing), identifying and becoming familiar with money, sequencing, counting, and matching upper and lowercase letters to name a few. We will continue to talk about syllables and using different methods to identify syllables in our names and different words. The Lions love to make math equations by adding and subtracting and using our number line (our linear calendar). We will talk about shapes and count the vertices and sides. We will be talking about which elementary school everyone will attend just to familiarize them with this for next year (and for our Transitions Ceremony). We will continue practicing writing our last names and writing our first names using an initial capital letter followed by lower case letters.

We have mixed up our schedule and our Morning Meeting and it has worked beautifully! The kids have a “soft start” to their day as they come in from kiss and ride and can immediately start playing. We then clean-up a little earlier to have our Morning Meeting where we do our jobs and discuss any learning objectives. We have changed how we do our classroom jobs at this point of the year since the Lions have mastered what we started doing at the beginning of the year. Repetition is so important to a preschoolers mind, but it is also important to mix things up, so it doesn't get tedious (and it helps us to keep thinking outside of the box). We finished reading the Mercy Watson chapter book series and started the Magic Tree House series. The Lions love chapter books, and they pay more attention to the books since they aren't concentrating on the pictures. We love having our Mystery Reader Mondays and our Monthly Book Exchange. We are excited about our Transition Ceremony at the end of May where we will watch our Lions cross over the bridge to symbolize moving from Preschool to Kindergarten.

Each Lion class teaches Mrs. Jacobs and I how to be a better teacher and how to reach all kids – since they are ALL very different. We will remember every single Lion and they will always be a part of us. They might not always remember us as they grow-up, but WE will always remember them. I love watching how our class changes and gels through the year to truly become a family. I know I'm a little sentimental (okay a lot), but these kids have left a little mark on each one of the teachers at St. Andrew's forever.

Please keep in touch. Once a Lion, always a Lion.

With love and a roar, Mrs. Nyman and Mrs. Jacobs





## The Penguin Class

It is hard to believe that our preschool year is coming to an end. We have just a little more than a month of school left. The time has flown! Your children have been a big part of our lives. Their individual personalities entertain us and keep us on our toes. They are helpful, sweet, excited, inquisitive, smart, and so much more.

During the month of March, we talked about some of our favorite authors and read some wonderful books by Mo Willems, Dr. Seuss and others. We made shamrocks and rainbows for St. Patrick's Day and several fun crafts for Easter and Spring. This month, we are learning about farms and will end the month learning about insects. We also had a wonderful celebration for our 100th day of preschool with 100 balloons in the classroom! The children had a blast playing with them for a couple of days and loved our special "100" graham cracker/doughnut treat.

In our dramatic play area, the children have loved taking care of many animals in our play "vet clinic" including walking the animals, feeding them, and bathing them. Later this month, we will have treehouses and bunnies to play with. It is so much fun to see where the children's imaginations take them.

Since March, during circle time, we have been learning the alphabet letters with diagonal lines. These are the hardest letters, developmentally, for the children to learn to write. Our last few letters to learn are W, X, Y, and Z. We will practice writing both the uppercase and lowercase letters on little slates, as well as practicing the sounds of each letter, and identifying words that begin with those letters. The children have learned so much! During our last couple of weeks, we will review the whole alphabet. We have been working on sight words and will continue working on them until the end of the year. As your children learn to read, knowing these sight words will really help them. Some of the words we've talked about are: me, my, I, is, in, we, the, and, a, see, for – to name a few.

In addition, the children have practiced identifying the numbers 1-12 through games. We have worked on cutting out shapes and have reviewed our Mat Man song which helps us remember all the parts of a person when drawing. We love our class mascot, Rose, the stuffed penguin. The children have enjoyed taking Rose home for a few days. We love reading each child's story about their time with Rose and seeing the picture they drew. We have a few more weeks to go until every child has had a turn.

The children are really looking forward to our Spring Tea on Wed., April 24 and are excited to be a host for their special guest.

In May, our class will be learning about Eric Carle and reading many of his wonderful books!



# The Penguin Class continued

We will finish off the year by reviewing our favorite things from the school year and talking and reading about summer and going to Kindergarten!

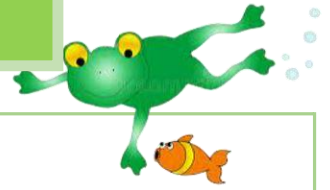
On Wednesday, May 22, we will hold a transition celebration in the Parish Hall for the Penguin class as they prepare to move on from preschool and attend kindergarten in the fall. More details will be coming soon.

We are so proud of our Penguins and all they have learned and accomplished this year! Thank you for sharing your children with us! We will miss them over the summer. Please say “hello” when you see us around.

Mrs. MacArthur and Mrs. Kockler



# The Fish & Frog Classes



This quarter the Fish and Frog teachers want to highlight dramatic play as an important part of the classroom experience.

A play area designated to dramatic play is always located in our Lily Pond classroom. Dramatic play provides opportunities for students to practice language, thinking, and social and emotional skills. Communication, cooperation and teamwork are all present while they participate in dramatic play. Writing and reading are sometimes also included. Below are the dramatic areas that we included in our classroom for spring.

In March our monthly theme was community helpers. We had a dramatic play post office with a mailbox, payment slips, date stampers and a letter sorter. After the post office, we switched to a doctor's office. Our classroom dolls received checkups, shots and medicine. Dry erase forms were used for patient check ins, prescriptions and doctor referrals. Some of the students even took a turn being patients.

April brought a new monthly theme and different dramatic play opportunities. This year we set up a classroom flower shop. The students used forms to place their flower orders and other students filled the orders and took payments. The play cash register and money were a big hit with the kids!

The month of May will bring a dramatic play ice cream shop to the classroom. There will be multiple flavors and toppings with order forms and scoopers. We will also have an upper and lowercase ice cream letter match and popsicle counting in the shop.

It is such a blessing to watch your children play and learn!

Mrs. Bailey, Mrs. Steele and Mrs. Welty





# The Puppy & Kitten Classes



Happy Spring, everyone!

I hope everyone had a relaxing Spring Break.

We can't believe the end of the year is almost upon us!

We want to thank all of the families again for the wonderful treats and cards for Teacher Appreciation week. We really felt appreciated!

The month of March was busy. In the beginning of March, we talked about St. Patrick's Day and Rainbows. We enjoyed making shamrock paintings with bubble wrap and also used a drip painting technique with droppers and different shades of green and blue. The Puppy class also made colorful rainbow collages with different materials while the Kitten class enjoyed making rainbow wreaths using shiny metallic cupcake liners.

We started our unit on Easter prior to our Spring Break. The Puppy class enjoyed sponge painting Easter eggs and making Easter baskets. The Kitten Class did a fun art project using shaving cream and scrapers to make painted marbled Easter Eggs. We then continued our unit on Easter after break, making fun yarn eggs. In the beginning of April, we transitioned to a unit on spring. As we finish off the month of April and move into May, we will be continuing our unit on spring and learning about and reading Eric Carle books and learning about flowers and trees.

Both classes will be working on a group project making a spring time mural using various techniques to create different patterns and textures making caterpillars, butterflies and flowers. This is a fun way for the children to be creative, learning about different art materials, using different drawing tools, paints and gluing techniques.

We also have been working on beading using our bead trees, making sticker pages, dot markers and using scissors to practice cutting. All of these activities are great ways to improve fine motor skills. The art table is always very busy in our classroom.

Our sensory bin changed a couple of times during March and April. The children enjoyed digging for gold coins, shamrocks and glass beads in rainbow rice and using black cauldrons to collect treasures. We transitioned to plastic Easter eggs, bunny and chick erasers and pink glass beads for our Easter unit. To introduce our spring unit, we changed to blue gravel with river rocks, turtles and frogs with wooden logs making a pretend pond. May will bring flowers, plants and black beans.



# The Puppy & Kitten Classes continued

For our dramatic play area, the children enjoyed playing in our Pot of Gold Store with gold coins and black pots in March. April brought the Easter basket factory with Easter Eggs, transitioning to our Friendship Bakery towards the last part of April. May will bring our Flower Shop.

During our circle time we have been reading wonderful stories relating to our themes. We also have been playing memory games, learning about patterning and sorting colors and shapes. We have been enjoying the outdoor classroom more and now that the weather is warmer the sand box has been popular.

We are excited for our Spring Tea. We will be having our annual Spring Tea for the Puppy Class on Wednesday, April, 24th and Thursday, April 25th for the Kitten class. One special guest is invited. Please look for the sign-up genius from the office.

May will bring us to the end of the year. Our themes for May will be flowers, trees, Mother's Day and favorites.

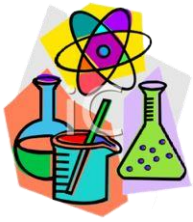
We have learned so much this year and we have enjoyed watching the children grow and make new friends.

Thank you for a wonderful year and for sharing your wonderful children with us!

Sincerely,  
Jennie Kroeger and Kristin Stites







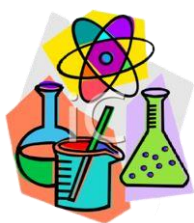
## The Discovery Room

### "Where no discovery is too small"

How does the solar system hold up its pants? With an asteroid belt, of course! At the beginning of March, we focused on planets, constellations, the moon's phases, and the day/ night cycle. The moon was introduced with Gail Gibbon's fact filled *The Moon Book*. Students practiced identifying the moon's phases. We also read Nelson's *Day and Night* book which clarified a popular student idea that the sun turns off or gets too tired to keep running in the evening. We conducted a mini experiment using a flashlight and foam earth ball to demonstrate where the light shines as earth rotates on its axis. I was really impressed by a conversation differentiating between the frequently confused twenty-four-hour rotation versus yearly revolution. Students also made their own constellations using star stickers and white crayons on black construction paper after reading *The Big Dipper* by Branley. The space unit was exceptionally exciting this year with so much visible phenomena occurring around earth. I really enjoyed informing students of the lunar module landing on the moon, solar eclipse, and Jupiter's visibility at night. Students also really enjoyed making their own planets by coloring coffee filters with oil pastels and washing them with paint brushes dipped in water. By the conclusion of this unit students could easily identify and order all eight planets with the help of the following famous acrostic: My very eager mother just served us nachos.

Why did the bike fall over? It was too tired. From mid-March and the beginning of April we explored the physics field by switching 'gears' to simple machines. I was amazed by how much information the students retained during this unit. Students explored wheels and axles, pulleys, levers, screws, wedges, and slopes (with a little mini unit on springs as well). Students moved pom-poms in buckets using a pulley system. They went fishing in a mini pond and caught magnet fish with their pulley fishing poles. We explored wedges by hammering nails into Styrofoam blocks. We also made many slopes using found objects and raced cars with different weights/body types to compare velocities. With self-constructed inclined planes, we tested to see how slope steepness, friction, and ball mass impacts speed. Students used catapults for target practice by shooting pom-poms into skeet ball goals. Students drilled plastic screws into boards and assembled mini vehicles. During review, I was overcome by how well students could identify the different types of machines in household objects. In fact, ask your child about what simple machine can be found inside your body right now.

We really "bugged out" over insects during the remainder of April! The students were immersed in the insect experience from books, to stations, to art, to science journals, and even hands-on insect experiences. I introduced the unit with insect versus non-insect differentiation. We learned about the primary characteristics used to identify an insect. The students discovered that insects have six legs, three main body parts, two antennae, an exoskeleton, and most have wings. We learned about how butterfly wings are symmetrical by folding splattered paper to observe the same pattern copied on both sides. Did you know that insects use their antennae or feelers to touch, taste, hear, and even



## The Discovery Room continued

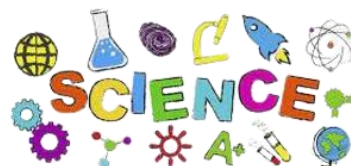
smell? We played with plastic bug scenes, insect versus non-insect sorting containers, insect puzzles, felt scenes, and examined insect slides under a microscope. If you ask at home, each student can probably regale you with a 'head, thorax, abdomen' song to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes."

The next few weeks of this unit focused on life cycles. The students sorted the life cycles of butterflies, beetles, ants, and even frogs! They enjoyed using plastic versions of these animals and accompanying charts to sort each life cycle in the proper order. We utilized Jack Kent's The Caterpillar and the Polliwog to help us differentiate between the frog and insect life cycles. Also, the students were excited to discover what a polliwog became at the conclusion of the story. To reinforce the order, students completed oversize ant and butterfly foam puzzles. Students created aluminum foil lily pads and tested how many frogs could float in a mini pond using STEM skills they learned in the previous machines unit. Four containers of caterpillars arrived in the mail and we are watching them grow over the course of two weeks from tiny larvae to giant pupae wrapped in chrysalis. The pupae will soon be transferred to the butterfly habitat cage and we look forward to releasing butterflies as soon as they emerge. We spent the final week of April specifically focused on ants, bees, and non-insect arthropods, including worms. Students gained new respect for ants and bees after learning about their complex social structures and how they have more in common with us than we thought. The book Hey, Little Ant by Phillip and Hannah Moose imparts the critical message that it is important to care about all creatures, big or small. In Discovery, students played the honeybee tree game, placed tiny bees on flowers to pollinate them, and explored an interactive ant hill complete with sand, tiny plastic worker/large queen ants, and even lifelike gelatinous worms hidden throughout the display. They used packing foam and pipe cleaners to create their own anatomically correct ants. The more students learned about Annelida, the less they became scared of these magnificent creatures which compose more than 90% of animal life on earth. The unit will culminate with each class going on a bug hunt complete with their own bug containers, tweezers, and checklists. Students usually unearth worms, ants, millipedes, larva, and beetles. Last year, we even saw a baby rat snake!

Thank you to all the families who volunteered and participated in Science Night. The basket raffle supplied the school with enough funding to purchase a "life-size" space shuttle for students to immerse themselves in an authentic space experience! Throughout our final month of school we will explore planet Earth with an emphasis on rocks and recycling. During the last week of school Discovery will conclude with favorite toys and games from each unit. Thank you for sharing your little learners with me. They never cease to amaze me with the immense amount of knowledge they are capable of absorbing and retaining!

Yours in discovery,

Karolina Smith



# Music



Hello, wonderful St. Andrew's families! I would like to thank you for all of the kind words of support, cards, flowers, and gifts that you gave me after my surgery in February. I was so touched by the outpouring of support from the students, families, and staff - just another reason why St. Andrew's is such a wonderful, special place! I'm happy to report that the surgeons did not find any evidence of invasive breast cancer, so thankfully I do not have to do chemotherapy. Truly an answer to prayer! I am working hard at PT in order to regain strength, flexibility, and range of motion in my left side. My recovery journey isn't quite over yet, but I was so happy to return to school and see the children again!

Spring was a busy season in the music room! During the first week of March, we celebrated Read Across America week with songs and activities inspired by a variety of beloved children's stories. We kicked off the week singing musical versions of Eric Carle's "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and "Brown Bear, Brown Bear." Then we celebrated Dr. Seuss with some very wacky songs like "Topsy Turvy Zoo," where the children pretended to be crazy mixed-up animals like "ele-corns" (elephant/unicorn) and "floc-odiles" (flamingo/crocodile)! We also acted out the classic tale of "The Three Little Pigs" and played a hilarious game of "What Time is it, Mr. Wolf?" during which the children were gobbled up one by one by a wolf puppet whenever his dinnertime arrived!

Later on in the month we spent some time learning some musical concepts such as tempo (the speed of the music) and how to keep a steady beat. The children explored these concepts while playing a variety of different instruments, including egg shakers, hand drums, wood blocks, and rhythm sticks. We have continued to reinforce these skills over the past few weeks by patting and clapping along to the beat of many of the songs we sing in class.

We celebrated St. Patrick's Day in the music class by going on a "Leprechaun Hunt" (unfortunately he got away - and took his pot of gold along with him!). We learned some basic Irish dance moves and danced along to some traditional Irish music. It was a fun activity as well as a great workout - after teaching 4 classes I reached my step goal for the day! The students also enjoyed tapping boomwhackers on the floor to the beat of "St. Patrick's Jig."

During the last week of March, we prepared for the coming of Palm Sunday and Easter by reading some stories about Jesus in our children's Bible. We sang "Jesus Loves Me" and learned the sign language that goes along with the words. We also sang and acted out a song called "When Jesus Came to Town," which recalls the story of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem on a donkey. After returning from spring break, we celebrated the miracle of Easter Sunday singing "It's a Happy Day/Jesus is Alive" while dancing with scarves. We also talked about fun Easter traditions like egg hunts and Easter baskets. We went on a pretend Easter egg hunt and then wore ourselves out hopping around the room like Easter bunnies!



# Music continued

During the last month of school, we'll focus on spring and summer themes like insects, picnics, and the beach/ocean. The Pre-K classes will also start working on a special song to perform at the transitions ceremony at the end of the school year. No matter what we do, we always have a fun time in the music room!

-Mrs. Elliff



## Chapel News



Spring is upon us and that means preschool is winding down! Our last few weeks of chapel we will learn about the Good Samaritan and go deeper into being good Samaritans ourselves and we will also hear about Pentecost and how the church was born. Please feel free to join your child(ren) at any chapel - we welcome visitors! It has been a pleasure teaching your children chapel this year - they are joyous, inquisitive, and excited - all wonderful qualities to keep growing! Have a fabulous summer!

Mrs. Amy Tibbetts

## Church News

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church 2024 Vacation Bible School will be July 29th through August 2nd. Registration will be open later in the year. We will let you know as soon as we have the sign up available.

In the meantime, please mark your summer calendar!



# Upcoming Events

## St. Andrew's Episcopal Preschool



### Summer Fun

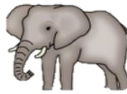
May 29 - 31

June 3 - 5



### Enrichment Camp

June 10-14



As the weather is changing please make sure your child has a seasonal change of clothes in their bag as well as jackets and appropriate shoes for outside everyday!!



## St. Andrew's Episcopal Preschool

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