

St. Andrew's Preschool Seasonal Gazette

Fall 2024



From the Director

Fall brings so many opportunities to enjoy the beautiful crisp outdoors and of course a variety of pumpkin flavored treats. Another treat will be after-school programs starting October 1st. Celene's email will have more information on what's available and how to sign up.

We would love for you to participate in our Trunk or Treat the end of October and invite one special family guest to attend Stone Soup with your child in November. Dates, times, and sign-ups will be in Celene's weekly email. Picture Day with Victor O'Neil Studios is coming in November. Individual pictures will be taken during class time. Proofs will be sent to your email address two weeks after the pictures are taken. We will offer pictures with siblings before preschool. All the information regarding dates, times, and sign-ups will be in Celene's weekly email.

October also finds our students understanding their schedules and routines. They look comfortable and confident walking down the hallway. Our learners begin to notice what's around them and how the different parts of the preschool work. They continue to ask great questions when they pass by my office. We enjoy working with your children each day. They are funny, smart, and curious! Now let's have some fall fun!

Warm regards,
Tami



The Lion Class



Hello Lion families, here is the first edition of “The Life of a Lion”. We are loving our Lion class this year and we are enjoying getting to know all the personalities that we get to see five days a week. The kids are really coming together as a team and we are seeing new friendships form each week. The beginning of each year we really focus on transforming our little people into the pre-k wonders that they are today (and they will only continue to grow during the year). In this newsletter, I will try to highlight and give you a “sneak-peak” into the life of your Lion. So here it goes...

In September we try and keep things simple since we are trying to focus on getting to know our Lions and just teaching the general rules of the classroom. We had learning units about starting school, all about me, families and apples. We did many projects that were multi-purpose to teach skills, while also assessing what our Lions can already do (cutting, writing etc.). We learn so much sitting with our Lions as they draw and create. They usually talk/narrate as they go which is why sometimes you will see us write something on their paper that helps explain or narrate their pictures. Self-portraits are fun since we use them to see how far our Lions progress during the year. Our Lions loved playing at the Apple Orchard, and it was amazing to see how the kids took turns shopping and checking out all the various apple items. This class has fantastic imaginative skills. This year we made apple crisp as our cooking project for September. The Lions helped chop the apples and watched as we added the other ingredients as a class. Most of the kids liked it (especially since it was topped with whipped cream)! We will do more cooking projects during the year since it is a great teaching opportunity, and the kids love it! On to October...

In October we continued our apple unit, talked about scarecrows, bats, pumpkins and Halloween. October is such a fun month to teach preschool, it is so magical for a child (and for big children who happen to be teachers). There is a reason most of us teachers love teaching this age group! After being in school for a month our Lions have really adjusted to our routine. The Lions know their jobs and are taking responsibility for them and often remind us of what still needs to be done each day. Scarecrows and bats are great fall units to start off the month of October. We had fun with the puppet theatre in dramatic play and the kids made up fun stories with all the puppets. After the puppet theater our Lions trick or treated at the “pumpkin playground” in dramatic play and had a blast! During October we made many fun projects to celebrate Halloween. I love how unique each project ends up. Our crazy pumpkins and/or witches are always a hit. We read the story “Creepy Carrots” and made our own carrot patch (this is one of Mrs. Nyman’s favorites). Pumpkin bread (really it is cake) is always a hit in October. We love to bake with our Lions. We continue to work on our alphabet journal each week. The kids practice cutting, sounding out words and writing the letters of the alphabet in their very own composition book. We will work on one to two letters a week depending on what we have planned for the week. Our Lions are working hard writing their names. We are encouraging our Lions to use initial capital and lower-case letters where appropriate. We are so proud of them no matter how they write their name, but most of all we are just happy to see how proud they are of their success. Seeing their growth is very rewarding, but most of all I am just excited that they are excited to learn and succeed. If you aren’t excited about something you might end up learning it, but it will not be a lot of fun and what’s the point of being a kid if it isn’t fun? On to a preview of November...

The Lion Class continued

In November we will learn about all the colors of fall, stone soup and Thanksgiving. It is a fantastic month to reinforce all the soft skills we teach in the classroom. Kindness, thoughtfulness, and being thankful are just a few of the skills we reinforce every day and there is an entire holiday devoted to this! We talk about red and green choices in the Lion class and this is a great time to support those choices that we taught them at the beginning of the year. We are excited that we get to celebrate Stone Soup as a group again. The kids will get to use a knife and cut our vegetables for our soup (such an amazing fine-motor activity, but obviously it needs to be highly supervised) and the kids get to host a special person to share their soup. December is always a whirlwind and we try to create lots of things the kids can give to you. We teach about giving, not just receiving since that is hard for kids to internalize especially during Christmas. My favorite dramatic play of the year shows up in December – Santa’s workshop.

It has been an amazing start to the year. At back-to-school night, we try and tell you how our day works, but I will be honest we always try and change things up depending on what works with each group of Lions. We are constantly talking about patterns, sorting, counting and we have added math equations to our circle time routine. For language arts, we work our way through the handwriting without tears letter order practicing initial letter sounds and having the kids make sentences with new words. Not all our kids get this right away, but the more they are exposed to something the less scary it becomes. As always, if you have any questions, please let me know.

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





The Penguin Class

Happy Fall, everyone! The Penguin class has been enjoying the gorgeous fall weather while outside on the playground. The children love to run around and chase each other as they climb and slide. They enjoy giving each other rides in one of our wagons, bouncing together on our school bus structure, tossing a ball back and forth between teachers and friends, and playing in the sand box. It is so important that they have this time to move about freely to develop muscles, coordination, and friendships.

We have spent time in our morning circle learning class rules to keep each other safe and happy. The children enjoy all the jobs we do in the morning, some of which include counting the days on the calendar, singing our "days of the week" and "months of the year" songs, identifying the daily weather on our weather dial, and choosing a greeting song to sing.

In addition, circle time is an opportunity to work on learning our letters. By November we will have learned the sounds and proper formation of the letters A, F, E, H, T, I, and U. When writing, we start every letter at the top (and there's a song for that!). We begin with the easiest letters to form and work our way to the hardest ones. We have enjoyed playing the "What's Missing?" game with objects that start with the letters we are working on in class. This game helps us identify the beginning sounds of the items. We've also been learning the "Mat Man" song, which helps children remember to draw all the parts of a person in a picture. The children have learned so much already! You might ask them to sing one of our songs for you.

We continue to work on handwriting using our name cards and spending time with number recognition and cutting practice.

New friendships have formed during our classroom free play time as the children play with playdough, sort items in our digging bin, do free art, play games, build with blocks, or "cook" together in our kitchen. These activities incorporate matching, color recognition, alphabet recognition, counting, sharing and the ability to take turns in a larger group activity. Some favorite toys among the children that you might be hearing about are Magna-tiles (magnetic building tiles) and Alpha-Bots (letters that transform into 26 cool robots).

In October we started Show and Tell every Tuesday. The children love this and it's a great opportunity for them to learn to listen to their classmates, and they can expect the same respect when it is their turn to share.

In our units so far, the children have enjoyed learning about Halloween, Fall, Apples, and Starting School. We have done many fun art projects geared to these units and read some wonderful books. In November, we will have a unit about giving thanks. We look forward to talking with the children about giving thanks for all the wonderful people, places and things in our lives.



The Penguin Class continued

Some upcoming events for the Penguins: Trunk or Treat, 10:00 am on Thursday, October 31; Stone Soup, 11:30 am on Wed., Nov. 20; Thanksgiving break, Nov. 27-28, no preschool.

We are thankful for the many children in our care along with their families!

Mrs. MacArthur and Mrs. Kockler



The Fish & Frog Classes



Play or work?

When your child arrives at preschool each day, we always have a busy schedule lined up with lots of fun activities. Did you know that ALL of the “play” activities that we do are actually achieving educational goals?

As you all know, the Fish and Frog Classroom weekly newsletter is titled The Lily Pond and it contains the planned activities that we will be doing in the classroom each week. Below is an explanation of some of the broader educational terms found in The Lily Pond.

Gross motor skills are abilities that involve the arms, legs and torso. Examples include running, jumping and hopping. We focus on gross motor skills activities to help students learn to move and control their bodies. The below daily playground activities are just some of the activities that are used to strengthen Fish/Frog gross motor skills:

- Kicking and throwing balls
- Balance beam practice
- Climbing structure practice
- Walking up the slide
- Pulling and pushing the wagon (full and empty)

Fine motor skills are abilities that involve movement in the fingers and wrists. Examples include picking up objects, working a zipper and dressing. We focus on exercises that strengthen fine motor skills to aid in student self-care and emergent writing. The list below are some of the daily activities used to strengthen fine motor skills in the Fish/Frog room:

- Sorting small objects such as beads
- Using tweezers
- Lacing
- Manipulating play dough
- Flipping through books

When we find fun activities for the class that will work on both gross and fine motor skills it is a win for everyone!

Due to all the rain we received in September, we had the opportunity for many visits to our indoor playground. The students enjoyed engaging their core muscles while sitting and laying on the scooters. The Rody toys also offered this developmental opportunity. Together we created long, complicated balance beam obstacle courses. These creations were fun to make and allowed the children to remain balanced for longer periods of time offering them a chance to build their core muscles.

The Fish & Frog Classes continued

In October, we added a bead bracelet making center to our classroom. The process of picking up the beads and sliding them onto the pipe cleaner offered fine motor skill development. It was also very rewarding to have a finished product to wear when completed! We also included smaller beads into the digging bin. The students enjoyed filling the small shaped pumpkin pasta with these tiny beads using their pincer grip. A skeleton art project with metal clasps offered more fine motor practice.

November will bring new activities to the classroom that will help strengthen the student's motor skills such as a nature walk to find materials for our Leaf People craft, a wooden marble run in the classroom and new materials to manipulate in the digging bin.

Amy Bailey and Cynthia Steele





The Puppy & Kitten Classes



Hello parents! We have had a wonderful start to the year with our Puppies and Kittens! We have loved getting to know each of their unique personalities over the last two months and look forward to watching them continue to learn and grow. We're happy for this opportunity to share with you some of the details from our days in class! Both classes have done an amazing job getting used to our classroom and learning our routines.

In September, we began our year with our "Welcome to Preschool" and "All About Me" themes. We slowly worked in all our routines and special classes. We have spent time each day practicing sitting in a safe way, knowing when it's our turn to talk, raising hands when we need something, using walking feet, making a choo-choo train line, and taking turns. We learned songs to help us remember what our bodies do when we walk down the hall ("there's no talking at all, when we're walking in the hall, when we're ready for the hall, lips are closed"), and songs to go with our daily morning meeting. We imagine you are probably hearing snippets of the songs at home! Each day we spend time talking together and getting to know each other while we are eating our snack. Sometimes Mrs. Stites even uses her banana as a phone to "call" the children to share about themselves with the table!

We are really enjoying this fall weather, and spending time in both the indoor (on rainy days) and outdoor playgrounds. Most of our friends look forward to this time of the day especially! We are also diving into some of our favorite units of the year—Pumpkins and Halloween Friends. We have spent time in the art center making our own Jack-O'-Lanterns, watercolor spider webs and painting ghosts. A highlight for both classes has been our dramatic play center, where we had a Pumpkin Patch for a couple weeks. They took turns picking out and buying pumpkins from each other. Currently, we have a Magic Potion/Creative Cauldron Shop, where we have three little witches at a time mixing some very creative potions! They are having so much fun with it. We have been reading fun fall and Halloween-themed books, and learned a new song called "Five Little Pumpkins," which talks about pumpkins showing different emotions on their faces. We all laugh when we pretend to have grumpy faces! We will round out the month with another yearly favorite, our Trunk or Treat. It is so fun to see the children in their costumes, and to parade around the darling decorated trunks to get some goodies in their bags. What a great way to end October!

Coming up in November, we will begin the month with a theme on the season of fall, including leaves, forest animals, and fall fruits and vegetables. All the things that make fall so fun! Our dramatic play center will have a pumpkin and apple pie shop and a little leaf-raking center, including nature elements like pinecones and acorns. We love fall art projects, especially when we can include nature items we will collect on nature walks! We hope to take many this season. This month we will begin to spend more time in our outdoor classroom. Now that the children have a good understanding of our routines and rules, we can add in adventures to the outdoor classroom. It is a beautiful, beloved, and unique part of our school! As the end of the month approaches, we will get into our themes of Thanksgiving and



The Puppy & Kitten Classes continued

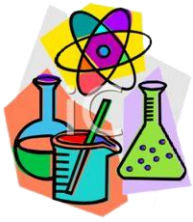


gratitude. We of course will include plenty of turkeys, in art and song and otherwise! Before we separate for the Thanksgiving holiday, we will enjoy a special event based on the book “Stone Soup.” Each child in our class will bring in an assigned ingredient for a vegetable soup, and we will mix it all together with the rest of the school for a delicious soup. One special family guest will be invited to attend Stone Soup with your child so we can enjoy a cup of soup together.

We want to let each of you know that we are so thankful for you! We thank you for all you do to support us and your child. We feel honored that we get to be a part of their lives! We hope you all enjoy this beautiful season!

Kristin Stites and Holly Welty, Puppy and Kitten Teachers





The Discovery Room

“Where no discovery is too small”

Why did the germ cross the microscope? To get to the other slide! Our September unit began with an introduction to class rules, materials, terminology, and safety. We learned about scientist parts (such as the scientist’s nose to smell and four other senses); utilized scientific tools (pipette, microscope, beaker, magnifying glass, balance scale, etc.), and I introduced the experimental method. We read a book about Einstein and students enjoyed conducting their own experiment testing whether objects sink or float. The next unit we covered was "Colors." Students were excited to mix colors using pipettes and "primary" colored water within ice cube tray compartments to create "secondary" colors. Pipetting is a fabulous way to develop pincher grip skills and I will include more experiments developing this skill throughout the year. Students sorted color balls into different test tubes and even ground water beads using a mortar and pestle. We read “Mix it Up!” and everyone reviewed their color knowledge using colored overlays. We learned more in-depth color terminology including: shades, tints, and complementary colors.

October was action-packed as students explored three topics: magnets, pumpkins, and spiders! Beginning with magnets, students performed numerous hands-on activities such as sorting objects to determine if they were magnetic/ not magnetic and painting using magnetic balls. New terminology was introduced including north/south poles, horseshoe magnet, bar magnet, attract, repel, metal, magnetic field, and compass. We made many magnetic structures such as robots, tunnels, and buildings. Students even developed writing skills using a special magnetic drawing board. The next unit focused solely on pumpkins, their composition, and life cycle. Terms in this unit included the life cycle process beginning with seed, seedling (sprout), vine, flower, green pumpkin and finally the orange pumpkin stage. This process was brought to life with many nonfiction pumpkin life cycle books and pumpkin activities. The most popular science station was pumpkin hammering. The students used mallets to hammer golf tees into pumpkins while practicing counting skills. The students picked "ripe" orange pumpkins from a large faux pumpkin patch and identified the life cycle with card labels. Students also used a balance scale to weigh various mini pumpkins until the scale was balanced. Real pumpkin dissections using tweezers were performed by students to aid in part identification of pumpkin skin (rind), stem, blossom end, ribs, flesh (pulp), fibrous strands, and seeds. The pumpkin unit culminated with a final large group experiment called "foaming pumpkin" during which I mixed two chemicals to show the process of a "chemical reaction" placed inside a jack-o-lantern resulting in spooky oozing from its mouth and eyes. It was so much fun to hear the students giggle as they observed this creepy experiment. The last week of the month we increased the spookiness factor by studying spiders. Powering a remote-controlled tarantula all around the school's hallway really seemed to make their arachnophobia disappear! It was wonderful to see 'science spirit' displayed in students' dress-up Halloween days and other school days as well. Even I got into the spirit of the season as Ms. Frizzle!

The Discovery Room continued

November was extra exciting since it was time for our month-long celebration called "Dinovember!" I began the unit explaining that Dinosaur means "terrible lizard." We reviewed important dinosaur related terms including herbivore, carnivore, predator, prey, oviparous, extinct, paleontologist, fossil, and reptile. The classes completed a fact or fiction identification sheet in their science journals. We sorted dinosaurs into herbivore and carnivore categories using a Venn diagram. The students were incredible at distinguishing that a carnivorous dinosaur ate meat, walked on two legs, moved fast, had sharp teeth and claws, eyes in front, and was predatory. Herbivores were prey who ate plants, walked primarily on four legs, had flat teeth, and eyes on the sides of their skull. We learned that the purpose of spikes, plates, and fancy spines were to protect themselves against predators. During the latter part of the month, we focused on individual dinosaurs including the Iguanodon, Ankylosaurus, Triceratops, T-rex, Velociraptor, Apatosaurus and Stegosaurus. Students completed individual chitchat sheets within their science journals by filling in missing words after listening to in depth articles discussing each dinosaur. An exceptionally popular activity was playing in Dino Land, where students recreated dinosaur habitats through dioramas using wood pieces, rocks, figurines, and fake plants. The students transformed into paleontologists with brushes and sifting tools in hand to excavate dinosaur skeletons and fossils from sand at the digging bin. Students also created their own fossils using molds and magic sand. Another popular station was taking apart and reassembling a T-Rex and Triceratops using a battery-operated 'power drill.' The students learned to match dinosaur figurines to their names and even just dinosaur Toob skulls to identify them. We watched a few YouTube clips of dinosaur episodes from a show called Storybots. If you have the chance, check them out. You won't be able to get the songs out of your head! One, two, three, check out my horns! Dinosaurs were everywhere in the Discovery Room. They were in the digging bin, on the light table, and in each of the building buckets. A special dinosaur named "Trixie" made an appearance at the end of the month. The dinosaur unit concluded with a paleontological dig challenge using chocolate chip cookies to determine how many chips students are able to excavate using miniature "tools" without breaking them apart!

Yours in Discovery,

Mrs. Karolina Smith



Music



Greetings from the music classroom at St. Andrew's Preschool! I have enjoyed getting to know all of our wonderful students over the past few weeks. We started the year singing "Hickety Pickety Bumble Bee, Will You Say Your Name for Me?" to help us learn everyone's names. During the song, my bee puppet buzzed around the room and invited each child to tell us their name in turn. The children had fun whispering, clapping, and singing each of their classmate's names.

We also sang some fun songs to learn names of body parts. "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" is always a hit, especially when we do it faster and faster, or sing it with a baby or a grandpa voice! The children also got a kick out of the words and motions for "Tony Chestnut," especially when we met his friends "Eileen," "Skip," and "Russell" - just use your imagination to figure out how we acted out those names! We learned that just like some body parts come in pairs, some instruments come in pairs as well. One example is the claves, which the children enjoyed tapping along with the beat of the music. The older classes also used the claves to perform "syllable rhythms," where we tapped the claves together for each syllable of different words.

This month we celebrated the arrival of fall with activities involving apples, falling leaves, and scampering squirrels! The children enjoyed singing a song called "Autumn Leaves are Falling Down," whose lyrics included leaves falling, raking them into a pile, jumping on them and crunching them with our feet, and finally, tossing them into the air. The best part was that we got to use pretend leaves to act out all the motions in the song! The kids (and teachers!) had so much fun tossing the leaves all around the classroom. Another day we used scarves to perform the actions of leaves spinning and dancing as the wind whooshed through the trees. We also learned all about squirrels, who are very active this time of year gathering acorns and preparing for cold winter weather. We listened to a recording of actual squirrel sounds and enjoyed hearing the funny squawking and chattering sounds they make. Sometimes they even sound like birds! We sang a song called "Let Us Chase the Squirrel" and then added a game to go with the music. The children took turns being "trees" and we sang the song while the "squirrels" went from tree to tree to find a home.

To wrap up October, we will celebrate Halloween with songs and activities about pumpkins, spiders, and bats. In November we'll learn about sharing and community with our Stone Soup song and story. And finally, we'll begin working on our songs for the Christmas singalong performances! Every day is a fun day in music class at St. Andrew's!

Mrs. Rachel Elliff



Chapel News



Happy Fall preschool families! It has been rewarding to experience Chapel time with your little ones! It is heartwarming to watch them participate, share their thoughts, ask questions, and listen when others speak. Following the Godly Play method of Bible story telling, we began our Chapel sessions with The Holy Family story. Now, we have been learning about the gifts from Creation, and next we'll look at the Flood and the Ark, Exodus, and Jonah stories.

Parents are always welcome to observe chapel, especially around your child's birthday, when they receive a special blessing and we sing Happy Birthday. We will have new stories every two (maybe three) weeks. During exploration time, on the week after a new story is introduced, the children have the opportunity to work with the story pieces and other materials. It is truly enjoyable to watch them express their thoughts and ideas.

I hope everyone has been enjoying the fall season as we steadily approach the end of another year.

Warmly,
Aline Steele



Church News

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant service (all children are invited to participate in the pageant)

9:00 p.m. Christmas "midnight" service

Christmas Day

11:00 a.m. Christmas morning service



Stone Soup



Mark your calendar for our Stone Soup Program in the Multipurpose Room.

November 20

Puppy, Fish & Penguin classes 11:45 a.m.

November 21

Kitten, Frog & Lion classes 11:45 a.m.



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!!

Christmas Program



Mark your calendar for our Christmas Program in the Parish Hall.

December 18

Puppy, Fish & Lion classes 11:45 a.m.

December 19

Kitten, Frog & Penguin classes 11:45 a.m.

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St. Andrew's
EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL
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*Happy Thanksgiving!
To You And Your Family*