

St. Andrew's Preschool Seasonal Gazette

Winter 2025



From the Director

I wanted to thank you all for responding or registering so quickly for the 2025-2026 school year. My goal was to ensure our current students had spaces for next year before enrollment opened to new students in the community. Thank you for helping me achieve that goal!

Despite the 3 hour early release and a snow day, our classes still celebrated Valentine's Day with parties, a special snack, and lots of cards! They all enjoyed bringing home their decorated bags filled with cards and treats. It's always so much fun for everyone.

We hope you enjoyed the Kindergarten Readiness presentation with Mrs. Jennifer Stockburger a former kindergarten teacher at Orange Hunt Elementary and now a special ed preschool teacher at Cherry Run Elementary. She also happens to be an alumni parent. If you missed the presentation but are curious about what was discussed, we can send the presentation to you.

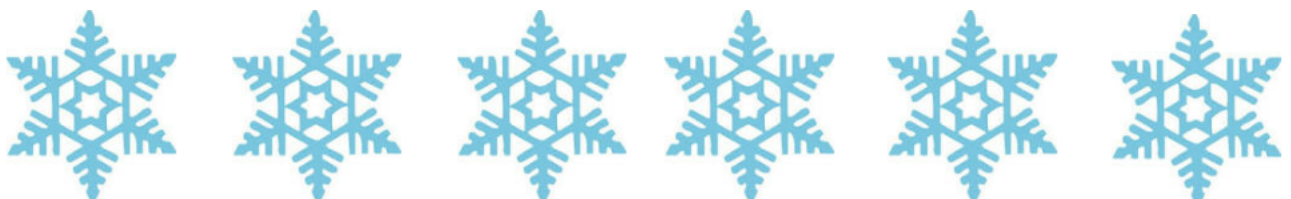
Save the date for Science Night Wednesday, March 12th from 5-7 PM. This is our biggest event of the year. Please bring your family to participate in the many science experiments your St. Andrew's students enjoy each day with Mrs. Smith. Miss Mollie the Bubble-ologist will return along with the Emerson family who create those impressive balloon animals. Dr. Amy Adair will return with a variety of dental experiments and of course a photo op with Trixie the dinosaur will be available. She always steals the show!

Our registration has opened to the community. We do appreciate those of you who have reached out to the community already! We still have a few openings. If you know of neighbors or friends who are looking for a preschool next year, please have them contact the preschool office at 703-455-8458 or email preschool@standrews.net. They can also visit our web site preschool.standrews.net to take a virtual tour, fill out an inquiry to receive more information about enrollment, or begin the registration process through our software ChildPilot.

Thank you for allowing us to work with your precious children each day!

Warm regards,

Tami



The Lion Class



Happy winter Lion families! We have been having a good time in the Lion class. Here is a sneak peek at what we have been up to in January and February and what we have planned for March. We came back from our winter break in January with gusto starting with a unit on transportation. The Lions always love this unit so it's a good way to jump back into school after having two weeks off (and a bonus snow week off too). We discussed and brainstormed different types of transportation. We talked about the fact that transportation is anything that takes you from here to there. We named different types of land, air, and water transportation. The class made many projects relating to our unit. We played with the train table in dramatic play and our "Lion Air" airplane. The Lions were excellent pilots and passengers. In the block area we had lots of fun racing cars and directing traffic. After learning about transportation, we jumped into talking about Valentine's day!

For our unit on Valentine's day we talked about love, friendship and kindness. We discussed different ways we can be kind to our friends and family. The Lions shared many ways we can show kindness and how to accept kindness from others. We played at our post office and pretended to sort and send mail matching uppercase and lowercase letters. As always, we have many different phrase cards for our Lions to use during free art to practice writing and sending cards to their friends. We created many art projects for our Lions to give you so they can share their talents with you. They decorated picture frames and created blowing kisses pictures (a favorite of mine each year!) We loved our heart suncatchers so much, we decided to make Valentine flowers for the second window in our room. Our tinker table was filled with wood hearts, pom poms, and other heart themed manipulatives. The Lions stacked, sorted and decorated with all the available materials. We love to see what these kids can create when given open ended materials. It is ALWAYS better than anything we can dream up. The Lions delivered their valentines to their friends on the 14th and we had a special snack of heart shaped blondies and ice cream with Valentine sprinkles (everything is better with sprinkles)!

After our Valentine's day fun, we started our unit on snow, snow people and arctic animals. This unit was pushed back a little, due to our snow days. We talked about precipitation and what that means and how it relates to snow. We talked about the science of snowflakes and that no two are alike. We discussed that snowflakes are crystals and start with a speck of dirt/dust and with water and cold weather they turn into a hexagon and then the traditional snowflake shape. We read a lot of fun books on Snowmen and Snow and talked about all the fun things you can do in the snow. We will create snowmen based on the book "The Biggest, Best Snowman" by Margery Cuyler. To bring STEM into the room the Lions created a snow world using cans covered in white paper and played at the tinker table with ice cubes, arctic animals, snowflakes and cotton balls. Our Arctic hut will help facilitate imagination as the Lions go ice fishing and then grill up their fish (a big thanks to Mrs. Welty in the Puppy/Kitten room for the creative idea for grilling the fish). A favorite each year is the ice skating rink that will arrive in the classroom. The kids use their socks to slip and slide on the "ice". The Lions will also be able to purchase hot cocoa at the Snack bar. We will be learning about and comparing



The Lion Class continued

many different arctic animals. We will practice making connections and help the Lions use their background knowledge to figure out how the animals' adaptations helped them in the arctic. As part of our winter unit, we will read and compare several versions of the folktale *The Mitten*. Comparing books helps kids recall details of each text and it's a great opportunity to talk about the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot). This is an important step in learning to read and we do it often in the Lion class. Also, this is a simple way to teach about similarities and differences between two things. It helps develop vocabulary and how to make text to text connections. We will end February celebrating our 100th day of school! This is always exciting for our Lions since they have been working towards this from the start of the year. Along with the calendar this is a great way for kids to visually experience the passage of time at school, as well as feel proud of the accomplishment of completing 100 days of school! We will make t-shirts (with 100 fingerprints) and have many fun 100 day activities.

In March we will talk about St. Patrick's Day and Rainbows! Rainbows are a big favorite of Mrs. Nyman's and we will not only talk about the fanciful parts of St. Patrick's day, but talk about the science of Rainbows. We will talk about the elements that are needed to create a rainbow, and we will create 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 Leprechaun always leads us on a scavenger hunt. Our Shamrock Sweet Shop will arrive for dramatic play and many lovely plates of sweet treats will be made. In March we will also read books by many favorite authors, Dr. Seuss and Jan Brett to name two. We are excited that we have started having Mystery Reader Mondays. The kids love this, and we keep it a surprise, but I remind them that each student will have someone read for them by the end of the year. In March we will start having a book exchange. This is a chance for the Lions to pick a book to keep. Right now, we don't need any book contributions, but we will let you know if our book pile gets too low. Another new thing we started in January was reading the chapter book series *Mercy Watson*. This is a great way for kids to experience different types of books. Chapter books help them focus on the story line vs. just the pictures of a book. We will also introduce the *Magic Tree House* series before the end of the year. Please check out the Kindergarten readiness tips posted outside our door. You are probably doing many of these tips already, but I find reminders are always helpful! Our morning meeting activities have continued to evolve as the Lions get smarter each day. Instead of just counting on the number line (aka our linear calendar), I will ask questions about numbers, so the Lions really have to think about what I am asking vs. just guessing. Incorporating the words more, less, addition, and subtraction into the Calendar makes it a great teaching tool for math. We have gone through the entire alphabet now, so we are doing different language arts activities during our Letter Lover time. Some of these are practicing syllables, making sentences, sounding out words, rhyming and talking about word families.

If you have any questions, please let us know. Spring is right around the corner and we look forward to warmer days and lots of outside fun.



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



The Penguin Class

We hope you all have had a great start to the New Year as we have at preschool. During the month of January, the Penguins learned about winter and transportation. We spent time making fun art projects: snow globes, mittens, winter trees, and cars with the letters of our names. The children are so creative! In doing these art projects we have practiced cutting, writing, and gluing small pieces of paper. These are all wonderful ways to strengthen our hands and improve our fine motor skills. Reading many wonderful books related to winter and transportation was also a highlight.

In February, we enjoyed preparing for Valentine's Day and will end the month with a unit on families. The children spent time making beautiful valentines by cutting out hearts, writing messages on them, and decorating them with stickers and their own original artwork. The Penguins have recently started preparing "hugs" to mail to relatives or family friends. We are so excited to start receiving mail back in March. Please remember to send in two addresses, if you have not, so that your child's "hugs" can be mailed.

During morning circle, our class has spent time working on letter recognition by playing with letter bean bags and through games and art projects. The children have been working on their own alphabet books which they will take home at the end of the year. Over the past two months, we learned about the letters "S", "J", "D", "P", "B", "R", and "K". We talked about the sound each letter makes, and the children practiced writing the letters on slates, and in their alphabet books. They enjoyed playing "What's Missing" using objects that begin with the letters we learned. A song we've been singing reminds us to start our letters at the top. The song is called "Where do we start our letters? At the top!" If you're lucky, your child might just sing it for you. We began the year learning letters formed with straight lines (vertical and horizontal), and moved on to letters with curves, and finally, to letters with diagonal lines. Developmentally, we began with the easiest letters to form and will end with the most difficult letters.

Numbers are fun to learn about during circle time! The children have been learning to identify numbers, count, and add by throwing multiple dice and figuring out the total number represented. Lastly, we recently discussed and read books about feelings and how they change. The children loved the different facial expressions that accompany feelings.

In dramatic play, our grocery store was a hit. The kids filled their cart or basket with groceries while a friend rang up their cost on the cash register! The Penguins also had fun playing with a train table and car rug with lots of different vehicles.

Since January, we've been saying the Pledge of Allegiance during morning circle. There are many big words to learn! We've talked about the meaning of the pledge as well as learning to say it. We will practice this each day for the rest of the school year.



The Penguin Class continued

We talked about first names and last names. To practice learning our last names, we will often call the children Mr. “last name” or Miss “last name”. The children really enjoy this, and it helps them remember their full names.

During free art, the children can create whatever they would like with the supplies we have. Making bracelets with beads and pipe cleaners is an activity many enjoy. Some of you have been the recipients of their lovely creations! Making love notes for parents and pictures with lots of stickers are also a lot of fun for the kids and another great way to improve fine motor skills.

Looking forward to March, we will cover units on favorite authors, fairy tales, and insects.

We hope that the weather cooperates in the coming weeks for more outside play in the sunshine!

Thank you for your support! Mrs. MacArthur and Mrs. Kockler



The Fish & Frog Classes



The weekly Lily Pond is a wonderful resource for what we teach in the classroom. Here is an overview of the last few months of learning in the Fish and Frog classroom.

In December the students worked hard on their handprint bird banners for their parents and guardians. Some of the students enjoyed painting their hands and getting “dirty” for the project. Some did not like it at all! All of the banners were completed and delivered in time for Christmas and we hope you all enjoyed receiving them!

January was full of ups and down with snow days, delays and even one day of no heat in the classroom but your children were all resilient and incredibly flexible. They enjoyed knocking over towers of cups with felt snowballs, snowman making sequencing sheets and the dramatic play hot chocolate stand in the classroom.

As we moved into February, hearts filled the room. The marble painting craft was a huge hit and the students enjoyed cutting hearts and other shapes out of the dried marble painting paper. They decorated their Valentine’s Day bags and cards with their hands crafted paper.

March will be filled with crafts and activities centered around transportation starting with space! An airplane dramatic play will start the month out.

We enjoy watching your children grow and learn each month in our room. It is such a treat to be part of their educational journey!

Amy Bailey and Cynthia Steele





The Puppy & Kitten Classes



Hello parents! We hope everyone has been enjoying this snowy winter! We had a late start back from break, but we didn't let that slow us down, and we have seen immense growth and maturity in our Puppy and Kitten classes since the beginning of the school year. They are practically professional preschoolers at this point. It was also a true pleasure to speak with each of you during parent teacher conferences at the end of January.

We began in January with our "Exploring the Arctic" unit where our playhouse was turned into an ice fishing hut complete with a mini BBQ for a fish fry in the kitchen. The dramatic play area was also filled with giant icebergs (Styrofoam boxes) and arctic animals which the children enjoyed building all sorts of different scenes with. On the rug, we combined our wooden train set with polar bears and Styrofoam shapes to create a winter scene around the tracks. The kids did a great job building the "Polar Express" in new and different ways each day, and they always made an extra cozy home for the polar bears! We followed this up with a unit all about snowmen. Our dramatic play area turned to a giant snowman build with large body blocks and many options for faces and accessories. The children loved that they could make a snowman that was taller than they were, and they were also very keen to "borrow" the snowman's various hats and scarves to wear around the room! During morning meeting, the children also learned a movement song about a big tall snowman who melted in the sun. Hopefully this song made it home to some of you!

This month we began with a unit all about hearts and love for Valentine's day. We put a doll nursery station in our little house, and the baby dolls came out to play! There was so much love in that playhouse! Our dramatic play area became a jewelry shop where the children made their own jewelry with pop beads and large rainbow shape beads on string. They also had a gem inspection station where they could use various tools like magnifying glasses, brushes, and pinchers to inspect and sort a variety of gems and jewels. This was a crowd favorite. We also took the opportunity to pull out some fairy tale toys since those are also a crowd favorite, so the kids had two big castles with princesses, knights, dragons, and horses to play with on the rug as well. We are really seeing their imaginative play skills blossoming! Currently, we are delving into transportation and all things that go. This is one of our favorite units of the year! Our dramatic play transformed into the Lion Air airplane, thanks to the genius and generosity of the lovely Mrs. Nyman! With our boarding passes in hand, we can fly anywhere...and it has a control panel with real buttons, switches and a steering wheel! Another favorite from this unit is the city road rug and all the vehicles! So. Many. Vehicles! To wrap up the unit, our train table and pop-up busses will be making an appearance as well.

March will hopefully bring some warmer weather, and will also bring two of our favorite units, "Community Helpers" and "On the Farm". After delving into all types of vehicles, we will begin to explore the brave and interesting people who operate them and what their jobs are. This allows for lots of dress-up opportunities in dramatic play, as well as a whole new set of garbage and recycling truck toys for the rug. We also enjoy learning more about our mail carriers and postal system during this unit.



The Puppy & Kitten Classes continued

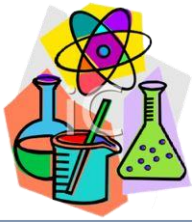


The end of the month will bring all things farm into the classroom. Be on the lookout for a big red barn, yummy veggies and fruits, and lots of cute farm animals. We won't forget St. Patrick's Day though, as we plan to have a special, second digging bin just for that lucky holiday, and we just might get a visit from our very own leprechaun!

As always, tune in to our weekly emails for the coveted digging bin pic, craft info, and other lesson plan updates. We feel truly blessed to share these moments in preschool with your children, and we are delighted to be their teachers.

Holly Welty and Kristin Stites, Puppy and Kitten Teachers





The Discovery Room

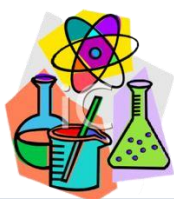
“Where no discovery is too small”

Over the winter months of December, January and February students studied three hands-on units. In December, students focused on various types of construction pretending they were "elves" at Santa's workshop. In January, students learned about space. February began with a concentration on bears and hibernation versus migration and then transitioned to weather patterns.

Students found the Santa's workshop unit to be very "riveting" in December. The elves wrapped presents, constructed cars, robots, and even constructed structures from toothpicks and gum drops. The piece de resistance was a life size "ski chalet" constructed by all the classes using styrofoam and bamboo skewers!

How does the solar system hold up its pants? With an asteroid belt, of course! At the beginning of March, we focused on planets, the sun, the moon's phases, and the day/night cycle. I introduced planets with the famous A Place for Pluto book by Stef Wade. We made planetary headbands and practiced rotating and revolving as various planets around a teacher 'sun' in the music room. The moon was discussed through 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. 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.

What did the bear say after hibernation? I'm 'bearly' awake. You guessed it! January's unit focused on everything associated with bears. We began by learning important facts including: bears are mammals, identifying eight bear species by name, bear habitats, various adaptations, and finally migration versus hibernation. The students absorbed these facts and concepts with incredible ease. Just ask your child to name all eight bear species. They can do it! After a common characteristics introduction, we dove into individual bear units beginning with the polar bear. This species of bear was introduced using a non-fiction book. National Geographic Readers: Polar Bears revealed that polar bears are the largest carnivorous land mammal. The students role played how they lived using plastic polar bears and foam blocks in individual water bins to replicate their balancing act on floating icebergs. They also played in a large fake snow diorama scene complete with white pillow stuffing caves and polar bear prey. The next bear study we concentrated on was the brown or grizzly bear. We began by reading Animal Adaptions and National Geographic Readers: Sleep, Bear! Activities related to this literature included playing with a brown bear forest scene complete with bear dens, sorting animals into hibernating versus non-hibernating categories, and a life size stuffed bear named "Big Bear" hung out in the reading nook section for companionship. During the final bear study, we focused on the cutest bear species based on class votes--the giant panda. National Geographic



The Discovery Room continued

Readers: Level 2-Pandas taught students that Pandas are primarily herbivores spending the majority of their day eating bamboo. When they need to move quickly pandas forward roll. Since giant pandas are excellent climbers, students practiced balancing figurines in a bamboo forest composed of thin wooden boards and bamboo support beams. The light table was also panda themed with more plastic figurines to place inside a forest they built from green Magnatiles. There were three board game additions to the bear centers this year. In the Beware of the Bear game two players tried to take as much food as possible from a hibernating bear before he leapt out from his den, Jack in the Box style, surprising and making the player who triggered it return the food. The player with the most food at the game's conclusion wins! An equally popular board game, Chompin Charlie, addressed hibernation and involved feeding the squirrel acorns and racing to collect them when they were spat out of the base of the squirrel's tree home. Grizzly Gears is a one player game that builds problem-solving and spatial insight skills by challenging you to twist trees and guide characters across a forest labyrinth. Board games are excellent at teaching students critical life skills such as waiting your turn, decision making, problem solving, and how to handle losing graciously.

What type of bow can't be tied? A rainbow! February concluded with a meteorology unit focusing on how seasons, clouds, wind, temperature and the water cycle impact our weather. Students created their own rainclouds by pipetting blue water over shaving cream clouds to demonstrate rainfall. Students also sorted different types of sensory weather bottles and created their own tornadoes using plastic soda bottles. They built snowmen using Floof and the digging bin contained a rubbery substance called Ploof which moves when touched. Rainbows were constructed using melted skittles and by rolling play-doh into ROYGBV arches. Students made the four types of clouds (Cirrus, Stratus, Cumulus, and Cumulonimbus) using cottonballs. There were numerous season puzzles and a season sorting game. One popular station was the Penguin Race in which penguins slid down a slippery slope and then climbed back to the hilltop using electronic gears.

Next month we will jump into one of the most popular units, the human body! I find that students love learning about the inner workings of their own bodies and use this unit as a prime opportunity to tell me about how they got their latest boo-boos. I love hearing stories from your funny, brilliant, and insightful children. Please mark your calendars and save the date for Wednesday, March 12th-Science Night! I look forward to seeing everyone immerse themselves in various science units we completed throughout the year and some new bonus experiments! 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,

Mrs. Smith



Music



We kicked off 2025 in the music room with songs celebrating the joys of wintertime! Although the kids had plenty of real snow outside to play in during January and February, we also had fun indoors pretending to build snowmen, throw snowballs, and engage in winter activities like skiing and sledding. We spent a few days learning about penguins, polar bears, and other creatures who spend their lives in the cold, snowy regions of the world. One of the children's favorite songs to sing and act out was "Walking Through the Arctic," where we pretended to see reindeer, arctic hares, and walruses, just to name a few! They also enjoyed learning different ways to play the hand drums while singing and playing along with the "Polar Bear" song.

We enjoyed celebrating Donuts and Pajamas Day with some fun songs and activities. We talked about when we usually wear pajamas (at bedtime - not to school!) and then we pretended to get ready for bed. We "took a bath" using bean bags for our washcloths - and the kids were so excited when I surprised them with a bubble machine and used it to blow real bubbles for our "bubble bath!" Afterwards we "brushed our teeth" with maracas and then listened to a lullaby while we "went to sleep." February brought more celebratory fun with some Valentine's Day songs and dances. The kids loved the "Valentine Activity Game" and enjoyed doing all the motions and actions with their Valentine hearts. We also learned what a conga line is, and marched all around the room dancing and shaking our maracas to the "Valentine Dance Song!"

In addition to tying music lessons to seasonal themes and school wide activities, several of our music lessons this winter correlated with the curriculum being studied next door in the Discovery Room with Mrs. Smith. We sang about hibernating bears and went on a pretend "bear hunt", and also played a fun game where the children got to take turns "hibernating" while the rest of the class tiptoed around them. This was a fun lesson about the musical concept of dynamics (soft and loud) - we had to be very quiet while walking around the bears, until finally we woke them up with a loud shout! We also sang some fun weather songs during the weather unit, and learned about an instrument called a rain stick that makes a sound like it's raining! The students also enjoyed waving scarves and colorful ribbons around while singing about wind and rainbows.

During the first week of March, we'll celebrate Read Across America Week with songs and activities that highlight beloved children's stories and authors. We'll also welcome the arrival of spring with music about flowers and springtime weather. I'm also planning a unit on musical concepts, during



Music continued



which we will use instruments and songs to learn about tempo, pitch, and rhythm. And finally, when the season of Lent starts to wrap up at the end of the month, we'll sing some Palm Sunday and Easter songs to reiterate the stories that the children are hearing during their weekly Chapel lessons.

Every day is a new musical adventure in music class at St. Andrew's!

Mrs. Elliff





Chapel News

Hello preschool families! We have been having a great time in Chapel! It was a delight going through the Advent and Christmas stories back in December. It is absolutely lovely how tuned into the stories the children were. I always learn so much from them! We began the new year exploring the Parables of Jesus. Those can be a bit more complex and abstract at times. Still, the children always have interesting insights and observations to share. First, we covered the Parable of the Good Shepherd and The Parable of the Sower. Then we went “back to the desert” to reflect on The Ten Best Ways to live (The Ten Commandments story). After that we looked at the Parable of the Good Samaritan, continuing the conversation about helping others, making good choices, and ways to show love. In March we will enter Easter season!

Parents are always welcome to visit and observe Chapel. In February we mostly alternated between having a new story one week, and exploring that same story the following week. During March we will have a new story (or new parts of a story) added almost every week. On the week before Spring Break, April 8 and 11 at 9:30 am, we will have special Chapel sessions, led by Father Will. We would love for you to join us.

Please reach out if you want more information or have any questions. I hope you and your sweet preschooler have been having an enjoyable Winter!

Warmly,
Aline Steele





Church News

Ash Wednesday Service

March 5, 2025 | Ash Wednesday | 12:30-1:00 p.m.

All are welcome to join St. Andrew's Episcopal Church for a special kid-friendly Ash Wednesday service lead by Rev. Maria in the church sanctuary.

Holy Week Services

April 13, 2025 | Palm Sunday

8:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist: Rite I (no music)

9:15 a.m. - Meet & Greet with a donkey friend from Bar C Ranch (weather permitting)

10:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist: Rite II (childcare available)

April 17, 2025 | Maundy Thursday

7:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist: Rite II

April 18, 2025 | Good Friday

12:00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross (no music)

7:00 p.m. - Good Friday Service (no music)

April 19, 2025 | Easter Eve

8:00 p.m. - Easter Vigil Service (starts at sunset)

April 20, 2025 | Easter

7:30 a.m. - Holy Eucharist: Rite I (no music)

9:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist: Rite II

10:45 a.m. - Easter Egg Hunt (Toddlers to 9-year-olds are welcome to hunt for eggs; 10 and older can help hide the eggs)

11:15 a.m. - Holy Eucharist: Rite II



Science Night

St. Andrew's Episcopal Preschool Science Night

Wednesday, March 12

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Come join us for an adventure into the world of science. We will have more than 20 hands on stations, raffle tickets for prize baskets, balloon animals made by the Emerson family, dental experiments with Dr. Amy Adair and Mollie the Bubble Lady.



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!!

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St. Andrew's
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