

St. Andrew's Preschool Seasonal Gazette

Winter 2026



From the Director

We love our families! We wanted to let you know how much we love and appreciate your support of our staff and our program. Our hearts are filled with gratitude. Thank you to all of you for responding quickly regarding your plans for the 2026-2027 school year. With your help, we were able to register all of our current families before opening up registration to the community. Thank you!

We will host a Kindergarten Readiness presentation Wednesday, February 25th at 7:00 PM through ZOOM. Jen Stockburger, an FCPS early education instructor will describe a typical day in kindergarten and explain expectations in a kindergarten classroom. If you cannot attend but would like the information, look for Jen's presentation in Celene's weekly email.

Save the date for Science Night Thursday, March 11th from 5-7 PM. This is our biggest event of the year. Please bring your family to enjoy a variety of science experiments your St. Andrew's students enjoy doing with Mrs. Smith. Some extras include Molly the Bubble-ologist, balloon animals with the Emerson family, music and dental experiments, and a photo op with Trixie the dinosaur. More details to follow once we get closer to the event.

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year opened to the community February 3rd. If you know anyone interested in registering, please ask them to contact the preschool office at 703-455-8458 or email preschool@standrews.net. They can also visit our web site preschool.standrews.net where they can take a virtual tour and fill out an inquiry to receive more information or begin the registration process through our software ChildPilot. If you could also help us by sharing the flyer you received with any mom groups you are a part of or preschool aged classes you attend in the community. Thank you very much!

Our days are filled with joy as we watch your children grow and learn. I love hearing their questions and watching them take off in the world. Our students are so curious and observant which are two great attributes of a lifelong learner.

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 the beginning of February and what we have planned for March. We came back from our winter break in January with gusto starting with a unit on snow and arctic animals. 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 igloo helped facilitate imagination as the Lions went ice fishing and then grilled the fish over the camp fire. A favorite each year is our ice-skating rink. The kids use their socks to slip and slide on the "ice". We include learning about non-fiction books and arctic animals during this unit. We compared several arctic animals and learned about the migration, adaptation and hibernation habits of different animals. We snuck in a quick week reading two versions of the folktale "The Mitten". We recreated the Jan Brett version as each Lion played a roll of one of the characters as they tried to stuff themselves into our giant mitten (a big white blanket). This was so fun especially when all the characters scattered around the room when the bear sneezed! We also read the version of "The Mitten" by Alvin Tressalt and compared the two books. 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. This is a simple way to teach the similarities and differences between two things. It helps develop vocabulary and how to make text to text connections.

Our snow unit came just in time for the "Elsa's Revenge" and all our very cold snow days. Thank goodness our Lions learned all about how snow is created! We jumped into February with our unit on Valentine's Day and 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. New this year for our Valentine unit is Cupid's Café. Our Lions can take orders and serve various in our cute Valentine themed cafe. 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 Mittens 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 13th and we had a special snack that the Lions helped create.



The Lion Class continued

In March we will celebrate 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 we always have many fun 100-day activities. We expect Mrs. Jacobs to be out for at least the month of March for her rescheduled knee surgery. We will miss her, but we have wonderful substitutes at St. Andrew's, and our classroom will keep moving with our unit on Transportation. This is always a favorite unit for our class each year. We will discuss and brainstorm different types of transportation. A big point we reinforce is that transportation is anything that takes you from here to there. We will talk about different types of land, air, and water transportation. We will have a train table and our dramatic play area will turn into an airport as the Lions can pilot and fly on our "Lion Air" airplane.

After learning about transportation, we will talk about St. Patrick's Day and rainbows! Rainbows are big favorite of Mrs. Nyman's and we will not only talk about the fanciful parts of St. Patrick's Day, but also 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. Thank you for signing up to be a Mystery Reader. 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 February 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 must 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 gotten 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 we all experienced it too with the freezing weather and ice! We spent time making fun art projects: mittens, snowmen, winter trees, and penguins! 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 was also a highlight.

In February, we enjoyed preparing for Valentine's Day and learning about the many forms of transportation. We 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 will soon be 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 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 few weeks, we learned about the letters "S", "J", "D", and "P", and will continue with "B" and "R" through the end of February. 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, we'll learn letters formed 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.

In dramatic play, our pizza restaurant was a hit. The kids took orders at our restaurant and then served their friends delicious "pizzas." The Penguins have also had fun playing with a train table and a car rug with lots of different vehicles.

Since December, 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.

During Circle time in February, 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.



The Penguin Class continued

Looking forward to March, we will cover units on favorite authors, fairy tales, and Easter. We hope that the weather cooperates in the coming weeks for some outside play in the sunshine!

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



The Fish & Frog Classes



Warm greetings from the Fish and Frog classroom! The year is flying by, and we are loving watching the children learn and grow. This is the time of year that we get to spend extra one-on-one time with each child in preparation for parent-teacher conferences. It is a wonderful opportunity to hear them share what they know! We are consistently impressed with how much they soak in and are so proud of them!

We are ramping up our focus on letter recognition and writing. We spend time each week learning what an uppercase letter looks like, the sound it makes, and practice writing it. We have covered 16 letters so far! At this point, our we don't expect the children to be able to replicate each letter consistently, but it is a practice that helps them get used to writing and continuing to develop important fine motor skills.

This January, we began the new year with a Winter Weather theme. We didn't see real snow until the end of the month, but we loved learning about all the fun things to play in it! We read stories about sledding, snowballs, and snowmen. We had a hot cocoa stand in our dramatic play area, which everyone enjoyed! They put in their orders and enjoyed specially made hot cocoa and treats. We had a build-a-snowman area with white paper-wrapped boxes that could be stacked up and decorated with scarves, hats, button-eyes and carrot noses. They were also fun to knock over, just like real snowmen! The children practiced using scissors and glue, making snowflakes, hot cocoa mugs, and winter scenes. A highlight was Mrs. Winand's exploding snowman experiment, where we mixed baking soda and vinegar in a snowman bottle. The result was very exciting!

The last part of January and into February was focused on polar animals, and the characteristics that make them special. We learned about their habitats and what they like to eat in our story books. Our dramatic play included an ice-fishing station, where the children caught magnetic fish, and then took the fish over to the grill to "cook" them for dinner! We explored how polar animals live in our arctic building block area, with snowy dens for polar bears and icebergs for penguins. Also, our digging bin had arctic ocean animals and funnels in blue water to enjoy. We made a variety of polar animals in art, using our painting and gluing skills. The Fish class particularly enjoyed painting a narwhal with forks!

As Valentine's Day rolls around, we switch gears to hearts and sharing love! Baby dolls and the play kitchen fill our dramatic play area, and we love seeing the children take loving care of the babies. Playdough remains a staple each day, and this month we are seeing many heart shapes made! One special art project for Valentine's Day is a marbled shaving-cream painted heart. Using different kinds of art supports the children as they develop their fine motor skills, independence, and creativity. A highlight of this season is our class Valentine party, where we share valentines in bags each child has decorated. The children have wonderful friendships with each other, and we love a chance to celebrate that together!

The remainder of February and into March will include themes on much-loved subjects—transportation and community helpers! There is something about construction vehicles and firefighters that speak to preschoolers like nothing else. We'll study a different facet each week, like trains and planes, sanitation and construction workers, firefighters and police officers and their vehicles. We love the stories, art, and play that comes with these! Plan to see some build-your-own-vehicles, trains, rocket ships and other vehicles in art. We'll have a post office in dramatic play, as well as a vet's Office where the children will be able to practice being a community helper! Next month will also bring some

The Fish & Frog Classes continued

extra fun around St. Patrick's Day, where sometimes a naughty leprechaun visits our classroom...we will see if we are lucky enough to catch him this year!

Thank you for your continued support of your children and our classroom! We love seeing their smiling faces each day. We hope you enjoy the rest of the cozy days of winter and look forward to warmer days and being outside more!

Kristin Stites and Lisa Winand





The Puppy & Kitten Classes



Hello parents! We hope everyone has been enjoying this icy winter! It's definitely been one to remember. We had a bit of an unexpected break in January, but we didn't let that slow us down, and we have seen impressive growth and maturity in our Puppy and Kitten classes since the beginning of the school year. They are practically professional preschoolers at this point. The Kitten Class has greatly expanded their morning meeting routine and class jobs since returning from winter break, and the Puppy Class has been wowing us with their knowledge of our daily routine and excellent, polite hallway walking!

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 about snow and snowmen to match our stormy weather outside. Our dramatic play area turned to a hot chocolate stand with pretend ice cubes to make things just the right temperature, and pretend marshmallows and candy canes to top things off. The children loved making drinks for their friends and teachers! 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! (Ask them about the "Once There Was A Snowman" song!)

This month we began with a unit all about hearts and love for Valentine's Day. We put a rocking chair 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, construction vehicles, and all things that go. We will also spend some time on trash and recycling trucks and firetrucks. This is one of our favorite units of the year! Our dramatic play transformed into a car wash for our many vehicles, and a construction zone with trucks, work vests, tools, and a large tool table. Another favorite from this unit is the city road rug and all the vehicles! So. Many. Vehicles! To wrap up the unit, our pop-up vehicles will be making an appearance as well.

March will hopefully bring some warmer weather, and will also bring three of our favorite units, "Community Helpers," and "Easter" (which we will celebrate at school before spring break). 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 truck toys for the rug. We also enjoy learning more about our mail carriers and postal system during this unit. The end of the month will bring all things Easter into the classroom.



The Puppy & Kitten Classes continued



Be on the lookout for lots of bunnies, eggs, flowers, and cute baby 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 Aline Steele, Puppy and Kitten Teachers





The Discovery Room

“Where no discovery is too small”

Over the winter months of January, February and March students have and will continue completing three hands-on units. January began with a concentration on bears and hibernation versus migration. In February, we transitioned to simple machines and then we will switch to our meteorology unit during the second half of the month. We will rocket into space in March!

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 tiny stuffed animal cubs 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 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.

Why did the bike fall over? It was two tired. Throughout the first half of February, we explored the physics field by switching 'gears' to simple machines. I was amazed by how much information the students retained during this unit. I spoke with a fellow teacher and she informed me that her child is also learning simple machines right now--in the eighth grade! Students explored wheels and axles,



The Discovery Room continued

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. 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 across the hallway. 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.

What type of bow can't be tied? A rainbow! February will conclude with a meteorology unit focusing on how seasons, clouds, wind, temperature and the water cycle impact our weather. Students will create their own rainclouds by pipetting blue water over shaving cream clouds to demonstrate rainfall. Students will sort different types of sensory weather bottles and created their own tornadoes using plastic soda bottles. They will build snowmen using Floof and the digging bin will contain a rubbery substance called Ploof which moves when touched. Rainbows will be constructed using melted skittles and by rolling play-doh into ROYGBV arches. Students will make the four types of clouds (Cirrus, Stratus, Cumulus, and Cumulonimbus) using cotton balls. There are 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.

How does the solar system hold up its pants? With an asteroid belt, of course! At the beginning of March, we will focus 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 will make planetary headbands and practice rotating and revolving as various planets around a teacher 'sun' in the music room. We will discuss the moon utilizing Gail Gibbon's fact filled The Moon Book. Students will practice identifying the moon's phases. We will also read Nelson's Day and Night book which clarifies a popular student idea that the sun turns off or gets too tired to keep running in the evening. We will conduct a mini experiment using a flashlight and foam earth ball to demonstrate where the light shines as earth rotates on its axis. Students will enjoy 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 will easily identify and order all eight planets with the help of the following famous acrostic: My very eager mother just served us nachos.

I love hearing stories from your funny, brilliant, and insightful children. Please mark your calendars and save the date for Wednesday, March 11th-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



Our students in Music and Movement have been having a blast this winter. It was lovely to see them after Christmas, and the recent snow and ice breaks felt almost as long! We've had themed weeks about snow and winter weather, community helpers, and cozy songs to help us celebrate pajama day. During a recent lesson, we took a break from singing about penguins to have a "waddling relay race." The students used a beanbag to represent a penguin egg and took turns waddling around a cone. They took their work of protecting the "egg" very seriously.

We will soon be celebrating Valentines, and then we'll spend some time singing about bears, space, weather, and spring. We will continue moving our bodies, working with instruments, and learning new games as we move through each theme.

Mrs. Campbell, Music Teacher



Chapel News

We have spent the early weeks of this year learning various parables. So far, we've worked with the Parable of the Good Shepherd, the Parable of the Sower, and the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Many students have especially connected to the Parable of the Good Shepherd and the imagery of the rescue of the lost sheep. They've continued to reference the "dangerous place" from that story and make connections as we have moved through new stories. Their questions and answers continue to be full of curiosity, joy, and earnestness. It is always a blessing to be able to share these old stories with your children and get to experience them in a new way. We have a few more parables to complete before we begin to move on to a few lessons on Lent and the mystery of Easter.

Mrs. Campbell, Chapel Teacher





Church News

Holy Week

Palm Sunday Services, March 29

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist: Rite I

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist: Rite II

Easter Sunday Services, April 5

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist: Rite I

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist: Rite II

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

Preschool Registration

St. Andrew's Episcopal Preschool 2026-2027 Registration

Registration opens to the community on February 3, 2026.

For more information call our office to schedule a tour. You may also visit our website and select "link to register" to send an inquiry.

We believe there is joy, depth, and purpose in play.

Website: <https://preschool.standrews.net/>

Phone: (703) 455-8458



St. Andrew's
EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA
Where the Adventure Begins



Science Night

St. Andrew's Episcopal Preschool Science Night

Wednesday, March 11

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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