



THE LION'S EPISTLE

ISSUE 5, DECEMBER 2023 EDITION

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UPCOMING EVENTS

It's one of the busiest times of the year! Mark your calendar and stay up to date with these events!

- Food & Clothes Drive closes - December 22nd
- 1/2 Day - December 22nd
- Christmas Break - December 22nd - January 1st
- Christmas Eve - December 24th
- Christmas Day - December 25th
- New Years Day - January 1st
- Midterms - January 16th - January 19th
- 2nd Quarter ends - January 19th

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS

By Gloria James

Christmas is a holiday celebrated on December 25. It's celebrated by doing certain traditions such as exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, going to church, and making gingerbread houses. These traditions are both religious and secular and are celebrated worldwide. As Christians, we celebrate Christmas to celebrate Jesus's birth. However, have you ever wondered how Christmas became what it is today? The middle of winter has been a time of celebration for people all over the world. Many peoples would celebrate the winter solstice when the worst days of winter would be over and have hope of longer, warmer days ahead. According to History.com, "In Scandinavia, the Norse celebrate Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January. In recognition of the return of the sun, fathers and sons would bring home large logs, which they would set on fire. The people would feast until the log burned out, which could take as many as 12 days. The Norse believed that each spark represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year." The origin of December 25 being Jesus' birthday is unclear. Hillerbrand states in his article, "One widespread explanation of the origin of this date is that December 25 was the Christianizing of the ("day of the birth of the unconquered sun"), a popular holiday in the Roman Empire that celebrated the winter solstice as a symbol of the resurgence of the sun, the casting away of winter and the heralding of the rebirth of spring and summer...A second view suggests that December 25 became the date of Jesus' birth by a priori reasoning that identified the spring equinox as the date of the creation of the world and the fourth day of creation, when the light was created, as the day of Jesus' conception (i.e., March 25). December 25 nine months later, then became the date of Jesus' birth." Many of the modern Christmas customs came much after Christmas Day was established. Traditions such as decorating Christmas trees weren't widely done until 1605 and the advent calendar wasn't created until the 19th century in 1851. In conclusion, the preparation and commercialization of the holiday has become a worldwide celebration.

ELEMENTARY SINGS OF HIS GLORY

By Michelle Ortiz

Since the start of the school year, the students of FCS have worked hard to prepare for one special event; the annual Christmas Concert! Every year in the first weeks of December the students of chorus and band alike perform pieces in which they have prepared since the beginning of the school year. The director of the concert is the head of the music department of FCS, Mrs Debrah Simpson. Both she and the students of FCS have worked hard to prepare for the grand event.

When choosing a place to have the concert, Slate Belt church was more than gracious enough to allow it to be held there. This year, the concert was held at Slate Belt Church on December 7th and housed 300 parents, families, and students alike. There were two different times for the elementary school and the primary school. The Elementary service was held at 5:30 pm that night and featured a few songs performed by grades Kindergarten to Fifth. There to help in the concert were Mrs. Jolynn Shipman, the piano accompanist, and Mr. Jon Simpson, who controlled the song and audio. The concert began with two wonderful pieces performed by the Fifth-grade band. The band, though small, consisted of three instruments; the flute, clarinet, and trumpet. Following this, the third and fourth graders played Hark the Herald Angels Sing on the bells. This section was conducted by Mrs. Kusiak. In the chorus portion of the concert, the grades sang in this order, Kindergarten and First grade, Second and Third grade, and last but not least Fourth and Fifth. Each song they sang was fun! Some noticeable performances came from the soloists of the night; Aubree Vester, Cassidy Witten, Georgina Lago, Nadya Calder, and Vienna Moritz. After a few more performances, the concert came to a close in prayer. The fantastic performance was live-streamed and is accessible on YouTube thanks to Slate Belt Church! FCS is ever so grateful for everyone who attended and even more so to Slate Belt Church for allowing the school to practice and hold the concert there.



NHS FOOD AND CLOTHING DRIVE

By Hope Light

Did someone say ice cream party? The National Honor Society is hosting a food and clothing drive in which the class with the most donations will be awarded an ice cream party. Students K-12 can bring in food and clothing donations to the designated box in their homerooms. The donations will go to the food pantries and clothing closets of three local churches represented in the student body, namely Cornerstone Church, Innovation Church, and Light of the World Church. Money raised from the October bake sale will also be used to fund the drive. Students are encouraged to bring in donations until December 22, the day before Christmas break. Which grade will come out on top? Only time can tell!

GVS TAKES CHARGE

By Megan Erwin

On Thursday, November 30, 2023, the FCS Girls Varsity Soccer Team had the responsibility of running the weekly chapel. The team was in charge of everything including the music, message, set up, and more. This was a great demonstration of the girls' ability to work together as a team both on and off the field. After weeks of preparation, the chapel ran very smoothly and was a great experience for both the team and all other chapel attendees.

After having an amazing season together, the girls were more than willing to have one more chance to practice as a team. The girls sang a total of six songs, which they took time to select and practice in the weeks leading up to the chapel. Senior Serena Gonzalez also put in a great deal of hard work and preparation to deliver an impactful and thought-provoking message on the importance of demonstrating leadership and Christian character, both in sports and in life.

This was a very special day for the girls and for the school. It is very important for Christian athletes to remember that they play to represent and glorify God, and there are many opportunities other than sporting events to demonstrate this. If this were to become an annual tradition at FCS, it would serve as an amazing bonding experience for the GVS team and a very special chapel for the school.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

By Connor Roddy

On November 27th, students from the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior classes volunteered to go to the Operation Christmas Child center in Baltimore, Maryland to help Samaritan's Purse with various tasks needed to ship out boxes to foreign countries. This opportunity not only allowed students to be helpful in the Operation Christmas Child process, but also gain some service hours as well through their hard work. The students who were volunteering were chaperoned by Mr. Dugan, Mrs. Scales, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. McMichael, Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. and Mr. Whistler throughout their time packing boxes. The boxes, after being inspected by students, will eventually be shipped over to Tanzania, a country in Africa where over 40% of its people are in poverty. The shoeboxes students were going to pack not only contain helpful supplies for kids in Tanzania, but the Gospel as well! Students arrived at the facility at 4 PM and worked for six hours, inspecting, labeling, taping up, and scanning shoe boxes so that they were in perfect condition to be shipped out. The volunteers worked diligently that night and headed to a hotel not far from the shoebox packing center to get some rest for the next day. After eating breakfast and making sure everybody packed their bags, students and chaperones headed back to finish packing up boxes for the last four hours of their trip before getting back on the bus and heading home. Student volunteers representing Faith Christian School were able to work hard in the shoebox packing facility and leave a positive impression on the people around them during their time there.



WINTER WORD SEARCH

Use the word bank below to search for each hidden holiday word!

D	A	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	S	S	N	O
P	E	C	H	A	D	F	L	R	E	N	O	O
D	E	C	R	U	T	F	I	G	K	O	I	E
A	W	A	O	E	O	R	W	A	L	W	C	H
S	R	R	L	R	M	A	C	T	E	T	R	I
E	E	O	I	O	A	N	C	O	O	K	I	E
N	S	L	L	U	I	T	N	D	U	L	C	R
P	B	L	R	O	A	U	I	B	N	M	I	S
R	E	A	R	P	O	I	P	O	O	W	N	S
A	H	W	O	R	S	H	I	P	N	P	G	E
I	W	I	N	T	E	R	N	M	I	L	K	F
S	O	S	E	O	I	E	I	E	O	R	S	S
E	H	I	N	O	I	T	U	L	O	S	E	R

- Word Bank- Cookie Decoration
- Carol Praise Gift
- Icing Worship Holiday
- Winter Snow Resolution





HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS CONCERT

By Stephen Williams

It was that time of year again for the Faith Christian School chorus and band to display and perform their annual Christmas Concert. They have been practicing very hard and efficiently since late October into early November. On December 7, they finally were able to perform their singing and instrumental talents at Slate Belt Baptist Church. At 6:30 P.M., the elementary kids performed their songs to the audience and did a fantastic job. To start the night, the band and drummers did their performance and they did a splendid job as well. Once they were finished, the high school chorus then performed 3 songs and they successfully performed well and impressed the crowd. Next were the seventh and eighth graders, in which they performed magnificently and beautifully. Last, but certainly not least, the sixth graders finished off the concert with a fantastic performance and truly gave the audience a joyful feeling of Christmas.

Well done to the entire chorus and band of Faith Christian and thank you for all the effort and time you put in to make the holiday feel special. The entire concert was also premiered on YouTube, so if you were unable to attend it in person, it is available on Slate Belt Church's YouTube page. Let us remind ourselves though that Christmas is not about singing or performing, but it's all about the celebration of Jesus Christ. This Christmas season, we should truly remember why we celebrate the holiday and we should continue to be joyous and cheerful during this Holiday season.

STUDYING TIPS AND TRICKS

By Megan Erwin

With semester 1 finals just around the corner, many students at FCS may be wondering how they can be more successful when taking tests or exams. There are a multitude of steps one can take when trying to improve their grades, but a large part is finding studying methods that best suit one's mind and style of learning. There are many study tips and methods that can help any student be very successful in all of their learning endeavors, including exams. Take a look at these methods from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences!

First of all, one must make sure they are doing all they can to prepare themselves for studying. Getting the right amount of sleep for a few days leading up to your study session and fueling yourself with the right kinds of foods are two vital parts of being alert and focused while preparing for exams. The environment one studies in is also very important. Even the smallest distractions can ruin a student's focus and make it harder to retain information. For this reason, one must find the right study area for themselves. Trying new places to study can be very effective, but each person should stay in an environment where they are sure to have good concentration. One should try to eliminate as many distractions as possible, including distracting music. While studying, instrumental music, such as classical or lo-fi, can be very beneficial to one's mind, while lyrical music can break one's focus. There are also certain times that work best for studying, such as after exercising or shortly before going to bed. Color-coded notes may also make for easier studying; for example, one could write important points in red and highlight important information in yellow.

Certain study methods, such as the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) or PQ4R (Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, Review) methods suggest starting by previewing the information and taking note of the important pieces rather than reading the whole of the material. One should then ask questions based on the material, and then take the time to read through the section, finding answers to the questions and either writing or speaking the information in their own words. Finally, one should review the information, answering any remaining questions and going over any information that is still unclear or difficult to understand. Overall, these methods can help one get a good grasp on the information in a small amount of time; these methods would be useful for the last few days of studying before an upcoming exam or test.

A helpful method for visual learners is known as Mind Mapping, where a diagram is created that displays the information. One should start by writing the title of the information in the center of a blank piece of paper. Then, form branches and subbranches displaying the information in a way that links it together. One could also try a method known as retrieval practice, where they ask themselves questions, either of their own making or from a previous test or quiz. The student then answers these questions without going back through the material. Once all of the questions have been answered, these answers should be checked. The Feynman Technique is one that involves writing down the title of the information at the top of a sheet of paper and then writing down the information in their own words as if they were teaching it to someone. They should then use their notes or book to make any necessary corrections to what they wrote.

Another method is spacing out the time you review the information. For example, one should review the information the day they learn it, then again the next day, then a week after they learned the information, then two weeks. The Leitner System instructs students to make five boxes and a set of notecards for the information they are studying, putting them all in the first box to start. One is then to go through the notecards, moving the correctly answered questions to the next box and keeping any incorrectly answered questions in the first box. Each day leading up to the test, they should study box one. Box two is to be studied every other day, box three every four days, box four every nine days, and box five every two weeks. Both of these methods involve a great deal of time management and long term preparation. They are not the best choices for those who only have a few days left to study, but they could be very useful for those who like to study far in advance.

No matter the method or tip used, exam season does not have to be as chaotic and stressful as it may have been for some in past years. Each student is responsible for carving out time in their schedules for the things that are important to them. Hopefully, one of the things on that list is studying and being well prepared, both for big exams, and any other tests or quizzes that may fall on their calendar. These tips, along with hard work and prayer, will help any student to do their best and get grades that will showcase their efforts.

DECK THE DOORS OF FAITH CHRISTIAN!

By Hope Light

This past month, the middle and high school classes took part in the annual Christmas door decorating contest! Each grade was assigned a different building in a gingerbread village to portray with their door. Once completed, the doors were judged based on creativity, craftsmanship, and accuracy to theme. The winners this year were the sixth graders! They turned their door into a gingerbread grocery store, surrounding their door with boxes and candies. The sophomore class came in second place, staging an elaborate gingerbread bank heist on their door. The seniors came in third place with a gingerbread town hall, decorated with a different eccentric gingerbread man for each student. The eighth graders also deserve an honorable mention—they turned their door into a post office and went above and beyond at every turn. They had a postal worker and mother to one of their students come in and even turned their classroom into a true post office by distributing Christmas postcards for students to fill out and 'mail' to other students through a mailbox outside of the eighth grade homeroom. Thank you to all the participants in the FCS gingerbread village!



HOLIDAY SUGAR COOKIES

By Michelle Ortiz

Holiday treats are a great way to get festive during the season! With so many delicious snacks to enjoy during this time, one proves to be a holiday classic; Sugar cookies! Follow this simple recipe to make your own sugar cookies at home for the whole family to enjoy.

For this recipe, you'll need...

- 1 cup unsalted butter softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon table salt

1. Combine butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer (or with a large bowl and hand mixer) and beat until creamy and well-combined.
2. Add egg and vanilla extract and beat until completely combined.
3. In a separate, medium-sized bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt.
4. Slowly and gradually stir dry ingredients into wet until dough is smooth and completely combined.
5. Divide the dough in half. At this point the dough will still be a bit sticky, but that is okay!
6. Using wax paper or plastic wrap, wrap on half of the dough in plastic and mold it into a flat disk, wrapping it tightly. Repeat this for the other half.
7. Refrigerate the wrapped dough for at least 2-3 hours.
8. Once dough has finished chilling, preheat the oven to 350° F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper (or bake cookies directly on an ungreased baking sheet). Set this aside.
9. Generously dust a clean surface with flour and place one chilled cookie dough disk onto the surface. Lightly flour the dough and roll out to ¼", for thinner, crispier cookies, or ½", for thicker, softer cookies. Add additional flour as needed both on top of and beneath the dough so that it doesn't stick.
10. Cut out your cookies and place them on a baking sheet.
11. Bake at 350° F for 8-10 minutes (bigger cookies will need more time), or until edges just begin to turn lightly golden brown.
12. Remove the cookies from the oven and let cool before eating them or decorating them with an icing of your choice!



BASKETBALL RECAP

By Stephen Williams and Joseph Vitti

It's that time of year again for Faith Christian School to relaunch its new basketball season. Many new and important changes have been made this year, including adding a brand new girl's middle school team. This year Faith Christian has a boys and girls middle school basketball team (BMBB and GMBB), along with the boys varsity basketball team (BVBB). Each team looks terrific and hopes to have a good season. The first game of the season for the BVBB was an away tournament held at Calvary Baptist. They played Calvary Baptist and unfortunately lost 45-52. The next day, they played at the same location against West Chester and lost 37-65. The real season began with a game against Quakertown, in which they played great but lost 31-42. Then they played Veritas and sadly lost 41-48, but they played great. Next, they played Bethlehem Christian, and sadly, ended in another loss. Then they played Columbia County, and even though they played a good game, they lost 65-41. The following game they played Kearny, and they won 53-22. To wrap up December, they played Trinity, and even though they played amazingly, they lost 41-45. The Boys Middle School team is currently sharpening their skills for the season. There are high hopes that the BMBB team will have a good season this year. For the first time in years, the girls have their own middle school basketball team! Faith Christian School is happy to introduce the GMBB team to the wonderful world of basketball, and are excited to experience the camaraderie that comes with it. It has been around a decade since Faith Christian School had a middle school girls' basketball team, so this will be a new adventure for all of the players. If you know a member of the team, make sure to give them encouraging words. The Lion's Epistle wishes you all good luck, and God bless.



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