A new era begins at MECS

Our school community prays for Narelle during the Commissioning Service held on the weekend.
If you are lucky enough to join the teaching staff of Mount Evelyn Christian School, as Michelle, Jason, Ella, Bre and Luke were this year, one of the requirements of your employment is that you participate in our Induction program! To ‘induct’ someone into something means “to introduce, especially to something requiring special knowledge or experience.” So what might be the ‘special knowledge or experience’ that being a teacher at MECS requires?

During our recent teachers’ workbreak, our new staff met to begin work on their Certificate of Christian Education. This certificate course has been prepared by the National Institute of Christian Education to make sure that teachers new to Christian education understand some of the foundational basics of what we do and believe.

The first part of this course focuses on the fact that Christian education is biblically grounded. By this we mean that “the Christian school, as it pursues Christian education, will have all aspects of its life shaped by the living word of God. Its educational life, its structural life and its community life must all be impacted and must acknowledge that at many points it will be distinctively different from other modes of schooling.”

(Course booklet)

To do this well, we need to read and interpret the Bible well! The material we share together covers a range of ideas and strategies, but central to it is the importance of story. Understanding that the Bible contains a story – a story with a beginning and an end in which the whole of history and all people are heading towards. This story is not just for believers, but tells the “true story of life, the universe and everything for everybody.” It is also important to recognise that this story is not about us – although we often read the Bible in such a way that would suggest this – but a story about God and his big picture plan of redemption that culminates in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Jesus Storybook Bible, written by Sally Lloyd-Jones, puts it this way, “God wrote, ‘I love you’ – he wrote it in the sky, and on the earth, and under the sea. He wrote his message everywhere! Because God created everything in his world to reflect him like his mirror – to show us what he is like, to help us know him, to make our hearts sing. The way red poppies grow wild. The way a dolphin swims. And God put it into words, too, and wrote it in a book called the ‘Bible’.

Now, some people think the Bible is a book of rules, telling you what you should and shouldn’t do. The Bible certainly does have some rules in it. They show you how life works best. But the Bible isn’t mainly about you and what you should be doing. It’s about God and what he has done…

The Bible is most of all a Story. It’s an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It’s a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne – everything – to rescue the one he loves. There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them.

If we don’t see the Bible in this way, we can easily have a fragmented view and use of the Bible. We can drop a passage out of its biblical context and seek an interpretation directly to us, as individuals. Problems arise because without its original context, we will always find a new context – most commonly the dominant cultural story of our present times, distorting the original meaning intended. We forget that the whole purpose of the Bible is to reveal the person and work of Jesus Christ.

So why is this understanding of the Bible such ‘special knowledge’ for our new teachers to understand? All of life is shaped by one story or another. This has been true throughout history and continues to this day. So, if the biblical story is not shaping every aspect of who we are and what we do, then some other story will be! As already suggested, the dominant cultural story can snare us without us really knowing. This story has strong and enticing themes - rationalism, humanism, individualism, and consumerism! We need to make sure all our teachers understand these stories and the power they hold over their own lives and the lives of their students. We also need to make sure that all our teachers understand the big picture story of the Bible so that this becomes the most powerful shaper in their own lives and the lives of their students.

John van Dyke, one of the great thinkers and writers in Christian education, writes: “Quality Christian education, in short, enables our children to continue their life’s journey with ears attuned to the Story. To achieve this momentous task, Christian schools continuously need to ask fundamental questions about life, our culture, and the spirits that roam about, uttering derailing voices. Christian schools search the nooks and crannies of the Garden, to see what is happening, and what has gone wrong, and how to heal and restore.”

Please join me in praying for all our teachers that they might be equipped with the ‘special knowledge and experience’ they need for this momentous task.

Narelle
MECS Principal
Commissioning

What an honour and blessing to be commissioned for service here at MECS last Sunday. Thanks to all of those who turned out in great numbers, despite the hot, blustery conditions! Entering into a covenant relationship before God is something to be taken very seriously and so I was humbled and encouraged to be supported in such a way by the community and my own contingent of family and friends. A special thank-you to all those who made it such a lovely occasion.

Whole School Assembly

We look forward to you joining us for our whole school Assembly next Tuesday Feb 18 at 10am in the gym. You would be most welcome! It will be great to all meet together as one community and commit the year to God. This year we will have the opportunity to meet together every term as a whole school – so look out for the dates on the school calendar and plan to come along and support your children at these assemblies if you can!

Student leaders for 2014

At the assembly next week we will be presenting and commissioning our student leaders for 2014. Please pray for these young people as they have this special opportunity to serve others throughout the year by growing and exercising their leadership gifts.

Kindergarten Audit

Congratulations to Wendy, Natasha and all those who have worked tirelessly over the last 18 months to establish our very successful kindergarten. We were ‘surprised’ with an unscheduled audit inspection last Thursday of our facilities, program and documentation but passed with flying colours. This is a great achievement. Well done everyone!

New faces in the office

There has been a bit of a re-shuffle of who’s who in the main office. Natasha has taken on the role of School Services Manager which includes managing the office processes and staff, Registrar, coordinating admin support for teachers, correspondence home to parents and managing the school calendar. Some of the other current office staff have also changed some of their responsibilities. Today we had 2 new office staff begin at MECS – Sandra will be on the front desk 2 days a week (next to Cassie) and Laura joins the team as Student Services Officer, responsible for the many aspects of the student database and ever-increasing compliance.

Update on Peter

Peter continues to convalesce after his accident. He will return to work shortly on lighter duties as his foot continues to heal and his mobility increases. In Peter’s absence, Steve has been doing a fabulous job keeping the grounds and maintenance rolling along. We really appreciate the extra effort Steve is putting in!

Parents are warmly invited to attend the first Whole School Assembly

Tues February 18, 10am in the MECS Gym
MECS Notes

WANTED - Open Village

The Year 9 students will be undertaking a number of projects that require knitting, crochet and sewing. We would love some parent helpers who have skills in these areas. If you have a current Working With Children check and would be prepared to work with some of our lovely Year 9 students please email me, Sue. These projects take place during period 1 on Thursday and Friday (9-9:40) and during period 4 on Monday (11:30-12:10).

If you are unable to help but have any wool, material, knitting needles or crochet hooks that you are prepared to donate we would be very grateful.

Sue
Middle School Coordinator

Graduate News

Congratulations to Rachael

We would like to congratulate Rachael (MECS VCE 2012) who has been awarded two music scholarships. Rachael auditioned and was selected as a flute player in the Melbourne Youth Wind Symphony which is an award winning ensemble and the pinnacle of Melbourne Youth Music’s (MYM) Band program. Through Melbourne Youth Music, she was awarded the Anna Chmiel Memorial Scholarship which was established to remember MYM member and gifted musician Anna Chmiel who died tragically in 2012. The scholarship was established as a lasting tribute to recognise the significant contribution music plays in the lives of young people. The scholarship is awarded based on musical potential and the student studying a woodwind instrument.

The second scholarship she received is the 2014 Vizard Foundation Tertiary Allowance which is designed for self-funding tertiary students, recognizing the dedication required to attend a full-time tertiary program in addition to the long hours spent refining instrumental skills and performing as a part of a MYM ensemble. Rachael is currently studying for a Bachelor of Agriculture and a Diploma in Music Performance both at The University of Melbourne.

Rachael, who spent her whole schooling life at MECS participated in our music programs as well as VCE Solo Performance Music taught by Tim Wright. She is also a much appreciated member of the music team at Wonga Park Christian Reformed Church.

Dr Roger F
VCE Coordinator

Friends of MECS
Woolworths Earn and Learn

Last week equipment we received through the Woolworths Earn and Learn program in 2013 was delivered - over $1000 worth of equipment for our students!

- the Preps received 30 heavy duty bucket & sieve sets for their sandpit
- a big set of Wooden blocks went to the JP’s
- MP & SP got two large Lego sets (one with 1793 pieces, the other 2655 pieces)
- SP received a word building dominos set

A HUGE thank you to all those families who collected stickers last year.
We are planning to participate again in 2014.

Nicole
Community Relations Officer
EMA

Education Maintenance Allowance for 2014

EMA Eligibility – The Education Maintenance Allowance is paid to parents of eligible students under 16 years of age, whose child is enrolled at a Government or non-Government School in Victoria on census day, February 28, 2014 for first instalment and August 2, 2014 for the second instalment.

The Education Maintenance Allowance will be paid in two instalments, and to be eligible the following must be true for you on these dates:

- on 29 January 2014 for the first instalment and on 15 July 2014 for the second instalment:
  - (a) be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit, that is, a holder of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or an eligible Health Care Card (HCC) or Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) holder within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004, OR
  - (b) be a Veteran Affairs Pensioner (TPI), OR
  - (c) be a (temporary) foster parent AND
  - (d) submit your application to the school by the date/s listed below.

Parents who receive a Carer Allowance (formerly known as Child Disability Allowance), or any other benefit or allowance not income tested by Centrelink are not eligible for the EMA unless they also comply with one of (a) (b) or (c) above.

Submission Dates – The application form must be lodged at the school by 26 February 2014 for the first instalment. LATE APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED due to government rules. We urge all who believe they are eligible to apply as this also affects State government funding of the school.

EMA application forms will be sent out to existing families who have received EMA allowance for 2013. If you are eligible for the 2014 EMA please collect an application form from the main office. If you are uncertain about your eligibility or have any questions please contact Alison or Craig via the office.

Active After-school Communities

The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program is a major component of the Australian Government’s package ‘Building a Healthy, Active Australia’ that aims to improve the health and well-being of Australian children.

MECS Primary is once again participating in the AASC program in Term 1, 2014.

Thursday 3:45pm – 4:45pm: Netball
(discover skills in a fun way). There are 8 places left for netball.

The program will run for 7 weeks beginning 10 February, 2014.

Children attending will be offered fruit for afternoon tea prior to the activities commencing. Please ensure that your child brings a refillable water bottle to each session.

The program will offer fun, safe and inclusive activities which will provide children with the opportunity to develop their motor skills. It also promotes a healthy lifestyle in a comfortable, non-competitive environment.

If you would like your child to participate in this program, please complete a parental form (available from the office) and return this to the office by tomorrow, Friday 14 February.

This is a free program for Primary students and places are limited.

For further information, contact the office.

MECS Notes

Primary School GTs (assemblies) this term:

- Week 4: Monday, 23 February MPA
- Week 5: Monday, 3 March SPD
- Week 8: Monday, 24 March SPB

GT begins at 9am in the PUMP room. Parents are welcome to attend.

Drama for Everyday Life Program Term 1

Drama for Everyday Life is a program that uses drama games and role play to teach social skills and self-confidence in a safe and creative small group environment (4 or 5 students), and has been offered at MECS for the past 11 years. Parents, teachers and students themselves anecdotally report a significant improvement in social skills, behaviour management and confidence.

A research partnership with Latrobe University has recently been completed that confirmed these reports.

Each session consists of three main components that assist students in addressing conversation skills, non-verbal cues and role plays. Through this program, students are provided with skills to successfully manage a number of everyday situations, including:

- conflict
- meeting new people
- friendly conversations
- anxiety
- losing at games
- sharing and taking turns
- appropriate skills for the workplace (for senior students)
- identifying and expressing emotions

Students currently enrolled and new students are invited to join the program in Term 1, 2014. Students who have previously participated benefit from the ongoing nature of the program.

Generally programs run for 6 – 8 weeks, depending on the school term program with camps and other activities.

In Term 1, a 6 week program will be offered for students, with the following dates: Thursday 20, 27 February, 13, 20, 27 March and 3 April at a cost of $115. MECS recognises the positive impact of Drama for Everyday Life, and has subsidised the program for a number of years.

If you would like your child to attend in Term 1, please collect a form from the office and return as soon as possible. If you have any questions, requests or suggestions, please contact me at school by telephone or email.

Shirley
Primary Education Support Coordinator
A new era begins

Commissioning Narelle

As you can see from this pictorial review, our MECS community enjoyed a very special afternoon on Sunday both commissioning Narelle as our new Principal and sharing a BBQ together as an informal opportunity to meet Narelle. In the commissioning service we affirmed the relationship between the Board, the school community, and the Principal. As part of the covenant-making, our Board Chair, Sue, said, “Through God’s guidance we (the Board) came to the decision to appoint Narelle to the position of Principal. We recognise that God has blessed her with the necessary gifts to be used confidently and effectively for the benefit of the whole school community. That is why today we affirm the covenant of trust between the Board and Narelle.”

We say a big ‘thank you’ to Phillipa for the lovely flowers, greenery and ‘river-of-life’ feature on the gym stage. Karen and Jay worked tirelessly to prepare and cook some delicious food for our BBQ. We are especially grateful to them. While there was some anxiety due to some of the fires, in the end we were blessed with a very pleasant evening for our picnic.

Gerry
Administration Manager
Grace & Narelle

Colin & Darcy

MECS Principals get together

Paul, Martin, Narelle & Stewart

MECS Board establishing their covenant with Narelle

Jay
Calendar

2014 Term 1 Week 2: 10 FEB - 16 FEB

Fri 14 February
SP Swimming

2014 Term 1 Week 3: 17 FEB - 23 FEB

Tues 18 February
Whole School Assembly 10am
Year 9/10 Volleyball

Wed 19 February
K4 Connect Morning Tea Staffroom 9am
MP Swimming
JP visit from Mount Evelyn Vet Clinic
VCE Music excursion to the Sidney Myer Music Bowl

Thur 20 February
Year 10-12 Basketball
K3 Connect Morning Tea Staffroom 9am

Fri 21 February
SP Swimming

Sat 22 February
Working Bee 7am-1pm BBQ Breakfast

2014 Term 1 Week 4: 24 FEB - 2 MAR

Wed 26 February
MP Swimming
JP Meet and Greet family night

Thur 27 February
Years 7-10 Tribal Swimming Carnival
Prep Connect Morning Tea Staffroom 9am

Fri 28 February
SP Swimming

2014 Term 1 Week 5: 5 MAR - 9 MAR

Mon 3 - Fri 7 March
MS Camps

Admin position available at MECS
We have an Executive Assistant position available to meet the administrative and support needs of the Principal and Administration Manager. This position is 0.5 FTE (spread over 5 days per week, times to be negotiated). The successful applicant will wholeheartedly join the busy and passionate admin team implementing a distinctively biblical approach to education.

The Application Pack (including application form, job description and details of the application process) are on the MECS website www.mecs.vic.edu.au.

Enquiries relating to this position can be made to Michelle. Applications close 12 noon Friday February 21, 2014.

Taekwondo
Taekwondo and self defence classes are held at Lilydale West Primary School each Monday night from 7 - 8.30pm.

Contact Stuart.

Mount Evelyn Junior Football Club
Auskick starts soon. Register online only at www.auskick.com.au

Montrose Football Club
Montrose Football Club is looking for players to join their junior teams. At Montrose you will be welcomed into fantastic facilities and a family environment where your children will be given every opportunity to develop their skills as players whilst enjoying their experience playing football. Four of our six 2013 competitive sides played in Finals. Season commences Sunday 6 April.

Registration Day 16 February 10 - 11.30am, Ken Dowling Pavilion, Montrose Recreation Reserve. Uniform sales on the day.

For details visit www.montrosefc.org.au Contact Liane

Car for Sale

Mount Evelyn Netball Club
Mount Evelyn Netball Club will be holding registration/grading at Morristons Reserve on Tuesday 18 Feb for U9s & U11s from 4 – 5pm and U13s from 5 – 5.45pm and on Wednesday 19 Feb from 4 – 5pm for U 15s/U17s and Open age groups. Contact Sheelagh 9736 1132.

Wandin Junior Football Club
2014 Registration Day is on Sunday 16 February, 10am – midday at Wandin North Clubrooms. Sausage sizzle provided.

If you would like to join a fun family club, come down for a look and meet the 2014 coaches.

Registrations will be taken for Auskick, under 10, under 12, under 13, under 14 and under 16s. Contact Mark.

Rotary Youth Exchange
Have you ever thought how good it would be to be able to learn what it’s like to live in another country, learn a new language and experience a different culture?

If you are currently in Years 9, 10 or 11, Rotary Youth Exchange can offer this and more. Contact Stuart.

www.rotaryyouthexchange.org.au

Electrical Apprenticeship Needed
A 3rd/4th year Electrical Apprentice needs new apprenticeship. Retrenched due to his previous employers need to downsize.

Has experience in commercial, solar and airconditioning and has completed his TAFE classes. Honest, hardworking, punctual, well presented and has own transport. He is very keen to complete his apprenticeship. If you can help please contact Leon.

Don’t forget the first Working Bee Sat 22 Feb 7am -1pm
Includes BBQ Breakfast

MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES
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Diary Date

Tues 18 February, 10am, Whole School Assembly. You are warmly invited.

The Canteen is now open on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Like us on Face Book!
Mount Evelyn Christian School - MECS MECS - Kindergarten MECS - Past Students

Newsletter Deadline is 11am Tuesday on published week. Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office

MECS - Kindergarten MECS - Past Students

Don’t forget the first Working Bee Sat 22 Feb 7am -1pm
Includes BBQ Breakfast

Notices sent home this week and on Website

• JPR Information
• Careers Newsletter 1
• Year 8 Inspiring Girls Camp Letter
• Year 8 Man Camp Letter
• MP Term 1 Letter
• Year 7 Clifford Park Camp Letter
• Year 9 City Camp Letter