Indigo enjoys picking grapes from the first MECS grape harvest!


Are you easily distracted?

2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house.’”
3 Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

1 Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. 2 You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

7 This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. 8 Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured,” says the Lord. 9 “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the Lord Almighty.

“Because of my house, which remains a ruin while each of you is busy with your own house.” Haggai 1:2-9.

In 538 BC, the King of Persia issued a decree allowing the exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem. About 50,000 returned and one of their first jobs was to re-build the temple. Within two years they had completed the foundations and there was much rejoicing. However, work soon came to a halt not only because of political unrest in the region, but because the Jews took their eye off the main game! Haggai tried to arouse them from their lethargy and reminded them that their disobedience in not completing the temple was leading to dissatisfaction with their lives and a curse upon their land!

It seems to me that the Jews probably came back with very good intentions about the way they would rebuild their community, starting with their temple life. This was going to be a great new period in their history! However, within two years they had become distracted. When faced with opposition, instead of standing strong, they started to focus on their own lives and households, pouring their time and resources into the beautification of their own homes.

And God says to them – “Give careful thought to your ways!”

We too, often begin with good intentions – both in our faith journey, family life and in our commitment to Christian education – and yet we often become distracted by our own priorities and agendas. We can even be distracted and busy doing other really good things, but neglect the main task of building God’s Kingdom. And the curse that comes our way is that we can become dissatisfied with our own lives – what we have doesn’t seem enough, or satisfy us anymore.

God’s gentle rebuke in this situation is simple, and repeated a number of times throughout this Old Testament book: “Give careful thought to your ways.” May we be encouraged to do this often, and help our children and students to also persevere and focus on the important task of Kingdom building and Kingdom living!

Importantly, a number of our school leaders met this week to pray, plan and dream about the coming year and years ahead. This is an opportunity for us to make sure that our focus is also on ‘Kingdom’ things. Like a home, we as Christian teachers and leaders can become distracted by our “panelled houses”. We can put a lot of time and energy into making our classrooms look great, our curriculum programs ‘just so’ and our school very busy! Whilst all these things have merit, all of these things don’t make us the sort of school that God has called us to be! Our leadership planning day gives us an opportunity to think carefully about our ways and re-orientate our practices to those that will bring honour to God.

Our leadership planning day gives us an opportunity to think carefully about our ways and re-orientate our practices to those that will bring honour to God.

As always, we value your prayers and partnership in the important task of seeking God’s Kingdom in education.

Narelle
MECS Principal

Friends of MECS

Community Cook Off day Thursday March 12

We would love donations of the following goods for our cook off day. We plan to make about 75 meals for our community freezer. Please bring donations to the main office over the next 3 weeks. If you would like to be a part of the cook off please email Amanda.

Donations required:

- 3kg grated cheese
- 1kg butter
- 30 onions
- 5kg carrots
- 10kg potatoes
- 5kg zucchini
- 3 whole cabbages
- 10 jars pasta sauce eg. Dolmio
- 4 x fruit chutney
- 4 x frozen vegetables
- 1 x tomato sauce
- 1 x worcestershire sauce
- 6 x chicken noodle soup sachet
- 2 x french onion soup mix

Donations of money towards missing elements would be helpful too.
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Working Bee
Thanks to our fabulous parent community who turned up bright and early on Saturday morning for the first of our working bees this year. An egg and bacon breakfast fuelled the morning’s activity as both the regular jobs and those one-off tasks were completed. Peter and Steve could not keep our school grounds and facilities looking so good without the hard work of our parents (and those students who also turn up to help!) We really appreciate this practical expression of your partnership with us.

Leadership Workshop Day
This week our broader leadership group met to review and set operational goals for the coming year. It also gave us an opportunity to share together some of the great things happening across our school. It is always exciting to hear how passionate our leaders are for the mission and purpose of the school, particularly as we begin to plan for the increased enrolment pressures we are facing. What an exciting challenge and opportunity to face together as more and more families want to join our community here at MECS.

FOCUS On... Social Media
Navigating Social Media
It’s become a part of the very fabric of our lives - indeed if you have a child over the age of 13, you are most likely navigating the various intricacies of social media that permeate teenager’s lives. Legally, children need to be aged 13 to be able to hold a social media account such as Facebook and Instagram, however anecdotaly we know that many children are accessing social media much earlier!

Although our children have been born with this technology, commonly referred to as ‘digital natives’, they are not well versed in cyber citizenship skills. In other words, they are technologically savvy, but do not necessarily possess the tools, strategies and maturity to deal appropriately with online issues or protocols.

As parents, we have a responsibility to understand the world our children are regularly a part of (some adolescents are spending up to 5 hours each day on social media!), know what they are doing online and help guide them through any problems they encounter.

NICE Studies
Post-graduate studies with the National Institute of Christian Education are a compulsory requirement of employment for teachers here at MECS. On top of an already demanding job, this ‘extra’ requirement, however, is essential to what we do. Teaching ‘Christianly’ does not come automatically just because all our teachers are Christians. It requires thinking carefully and deeply about how a biblical worldview needs to shape all that we do in life, including the task of teaching and learning. This is an ongoing challenge! This year we have over 20 of our staff completing Units with either Jacqui, our Director of Teaching and Learning or Dr Ken, the CEO of the Institute. We were pleased that Ken was able to join us from Sydney for a full-day intensive at the beginning of the year. Please pray for all our teachers who are completing studies this year.

Year 7-10 Swimming Carnival
On Tuesday, our four tribes ‘splashed it out’ as they enjoyed the festivities of our Secondary School Swimming Carnival. It is always great to see so much colour and action as our Year 7-10 competed in a variety of events. Thanks to all those involved in making this a great day, particularly Anne-Maree and Luke. Congratulations to those students who were able to swim their best and will represent MECS at the inter-school level. (Photos and full story next week).

Some suggested tips include:
• Have regular discussions with your child about what they are doing online and who they interact with.
• Monitor your child’s social media account on a regular basis. I recommend you insist you are a ‘friend’ on their account as part of them having this privilege.
• Monitor the amount of time your child is using social media.
• Have a set time that devices are no longer used at night. If you need to change the home wifi network password after 10pm - do it!
• Have the conversation with your child ‘What would you do if…..?’ Discuss with your child how you as the parent would respond if they experienced bullying on social media (or if they made a poor choice online!) Many children don’t tell their parents because they are scared they will lose their online privileges.
• If your child experiences any bullying online or on social media, encourage them to save any information, block the user and report to you! Take your concerns to the school if the offender attends the same school, or the police.
• Finally, be alert, but not alarmed.

You can access some helpful information at: http://www.cybersmart.gov.au

The MECS office currently has some free resources from ACMA (DVDs and pamphlets) available for interested parents.

Sharon
MS Teacher and Author of the ‘Girl Wise’ ‘Teen Talk’ books

Primary School Grandparents & Special Friends’ Day
Thursday March 5, 9-11am
MECS Notes

Changes to Parent-Teacher Meetings

In just under two weeks, our first Parent-Teacher meetings for 2015 will begin. We have made a few additions/changes/tweaks to these meeting arrangements that you should be aware of. Many of the more significant changes are being trialled; we would like to see what works best, and ensure that parent-teacher meetings are effective and accessible. An outline of the changes are as follows:

Senior School
- All Senior School interviews will be held in the Library. You may still park in the Senior School car park and walk down the path to the library.
- All Senior School interviews will be subject based, and 7 or 8 minutes in length.
- There will be no interim reports for this round of interviews.
- Parents will need to book times with their child’s individual teachers using the online booking system. Students are still expected to attend Parent-Teacher meetings.
- We will be offering tea/coffee in the Library teaching room.

Middle School
- All Middle School interviews will be held in the Year 9 Open Village rooms (Rooms 9 and 10a) – please enter from the library side.
- All Middle School interviews will be 7 or 8 minutes in length.
- There will be no interim reports for this round of interviews.
- We will be offering tea/coffee in Room 8 on Thursday, March 19.

Primary School
- There are no significant changes to Primary Parent-Teacher Meetings.
- Interviews will be held in the classrooms as per usual.
- We will be offering tea/coffee in the PUMP room on Thursday, March 19.

A more detailed letter and your log in details will be emailed to you early next week. If you have any questions, please contact Corrie

Jacqui
Director of Teaching and Learning

Primary & Middle School:
Wed 11 March (3:45-6pm);
Mon 16 March (3:45-6pm); &
Thurs 19 March (3:45-9pm)

Senior School:
Mon 16 March (3:45-9pm) &
Thurs 19 March (3:45-9pm)
Class of 2014 - Destinations

This week begins ‘Orientation Week’ for many of our class of 2014 graduates and with this, a brand new adventure of tertiary education. For those who have chosen a gap year or work, it will bring other challenges. Whatever the pathway, let us commit these young men and women to God in prayer so that they would be strong and continue to worship Him in whatever they do.

Dr Roger Fernando
VCE Coordinator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Destination 2015</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Film and Television Production</td>
<td>Footscray City Films</td>
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<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Teaching (Outreach &amp; Community Education)</td>
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<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Information Technology (Degree)</td>
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<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Psychology &amp; Sport Science (Social Science)</td>
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<td>Lachlan</td>
<td>Arts</td>
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<td>Rebecca</td>
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<td>Samuel</td>
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<td>Specialist Make-up Services</td>
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<td>Music</td>
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<td>Teaching/Arts (Humanities)</td>
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<td>Ryan</td>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>Adara</td>
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<td>Eryn</td>
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<td>Nathaniel</td>
<td>Game Design and Production</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Jessie</td>
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<td>Brianna</td>
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MECS Notes

Access to the MECS calendar

Did you know that you can access the full MECS 2015 calendar to see all the events for the whole year? You can check dates for excursions, Connect Morning teas, parent teacher interviews, camps….anything that’s happening at MECS!

You can view it on the MECS website (from the home page click on ‘Calendar’) AND you can set up access to it on your phone, tablet, home computer etc, so long as you have a gmail account: from the calendar on the website, click on the “+(Google Calendar” button in the bottom right hand corner. You will be asked to sign into your gmail account, then google will ask you if you want to add this calendar.

Events and dates sometimes change, although we minimise this as much as possible, so be sure to double check before you turn up at something!

Natasha
School Services Manager

Working Bee February 2015

It’s always good to start the day with bacon, eggs and coffee and a wonderful group of people. Sadly the Boss couldn’t make it; Nareille our wonderful Principal badly twisted her ankle on Tuesday and couldn’t join us - hopefully she will be at the next one.

We had a great day doing a whole list of jobs including planting an Indonesian garden with a dripper system outside the new Indonesian room, loading a skip full of prunings, washing the buses, spreading mulch, blowing all the pathways and car park areas, trimming bushes, building a sleeper wall, painting a store room floor, sanding and oiling some Kinder play blocks, changing all the fluro lights in the Prep classrooms, raking the fitness track around the primary playground, shifting metal picnic seats up to the senior school and all the wooden seats down to the middle school area, erecting a couple of new signs and cleaning all the pits and drains. Lots of fantastic work to make the school look and feel great - and this only happens because of the great help of Dads, Mums, children and other family members and friends. Thanks for your help to make MECS the place that it is.

Peter and Steve
Maintenance
The Grape Harvest

3 years ago Pa, our volunteer gardener, rescued some grape vines from an orchard that was being dug up and destroyed, and planted them around the pergola in the Primary MCG (MECS Creation Garden). For the first time this year, the vines have produced fruit – sweet, delicious grapes in abundance! The students and staff have thoroughly enjoyed the harvest!

Natasha
School Services Manager

Year 11 and 12 Basketball

Last Thursday our VCE basketballers headed down to Dandenong for a big day of interschool sport. Our teams played 4 back to back games of 25 minutes against the other teams in the competition. The Boys team, made up of Caillan, Nick, Justin, Joel, Jay and James, played very well against fierce competition. The skill level was very high from all teams and whilst our boys did not win a game they lost two by 1 point and the other 2 by less than ten. An excellent effort from all our boys.

The girls started out with a loss on their first game, losing by a point from a free through after the siren. They then managed to convincingly win their next two games and draw their final game. This effort was just enough to scrape them into the grand final. After 100 minutes of almost constant running the team of seven including Jordan, Bec, Georgia, Emily, Jess, Shannan and Reona, were extremely tired and discussed jokingly that they could forfeit the game just so they could have a rest. However when the girls got onto the court they all played like champions, out running, out rebounding and out shooting the opposition to win by 8 points.

Congratulations to all our players who were excellent ambassadors of our schools, Jesus and of themselves.

Luke
Sports Teacher

Year 9 & 10 Volleyball

Some Year 9 and 10 boys and girls enjoyed a great day of volleyball last Tuesday at the Springy Sports Centre.

While no MECS teams made finals the play was fair and plenty of fun. Many great rallies, sets and spikes flavoured the day as did the well supplied canteen.

These interschool sports days are a great opportunity for the students to challenge themselves, enjoy some healthy competition and practise both their sporting skills and their sportsmanship.

Lance
Year 9 Teacher

Year 9 City Experience

On Monday of last week the Year 9 students made their way into Melbourne for our annual instalment of ‘The Amazing’. This educational treasure hunt involved having the students organise their own transport itinerary and navigate their way through the CBD (and just beyond) in small groups to five secret locations. Using clues given to them by a teacher, the student groups had to find a place of significance and answer questions/complete activities, before getting their next clue. We were blessed to have the very best of Melbourne’s weather for the excursion and would like to congratulate the students on their navigational and improvisational skills. The sacrifice of the teaching staff on the day is also greatly appreciated… sitting in one place all day, being forced to drink coffee and eat food while waiting for students to find us is not an easy thing to endure!

Tim
Year 9 Teacher
MP Community BBQ

Last Wednesday, we had the great privilege of coming together as a Middle Primary community to share in conversation and, more importantly, food as we kicked off a new year. We got to welcome lots of new families and some returners as well. Our evening started off with a little insight into an example spelling lesson where, although the parents were showed up by their children, the adults got to share their own experiences of spelling when they were at school ‘back in the day’.

With the proceeding BBQ, we were able to continue to build relationships and have our students serve their parents. The evening was rounded off with a short presentation about the year ahead and sharing the vision for Middle Primary students being independent thinkers who chase goals!

It may sound warm, fuzzy and sentimental but opportunities like this make us Middle Primary teachers feel encouraged and blessed to be doing our God-given role.

Alistair
Middle Primary Cluster Leader

Last Week we had a MP BBQ which was fantastic. The food was amazing. For dessert I think I had a bit too much - two icecreams and a can of Solo made my tummy feel sore. My favourite part was the food.

Zoe

It was a fantastic BBQ. It was also great because we got to see our parents stumbling on spelling. Also it was great getting together.

Lily

At the MP BBQ there was sound and laughter. There was icecream, sausages, soda and bread. Mr C talked to the Mums and Dads and we watched a film.

Tahisha

4 Year Old Kinder Family Night

Last Monday night 4 Year Old Kinder families came to kinder at 5pm to play! We started off with the children showing their families ‘their’ kinder and what they like to do. Each groups educators led a short information discussion on how children learn through play and the learning opportunities that are made available to the children through careful planning. Afterwards families had their picnic tea, sharing community together. The night was a valuable time together and we are so grateful for the families who were able to participate.

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator

Neve, Amelia, Talisha & Tom
### MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES

MECS does not endorse the products or services of any private advertiser. No responsibility is accepted by Mount Evelyn Christian School for the accuracy of information contained in advertisements or claims made by them.

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**iPad 2 for Sale**

iPad generation 2, 32gb for sale. Well looked after and in very good condition. Comes with a bonus leather auto sleep cover. $225. Contact Heather on hmellow@mecs.vic.edu.au

**Unit in Lilydale for Rent**

Fully furnished 2 bedroom unit available to rent in Lilydale from May 16, 2015 onwards. $280 pw. Air-con, lockable garage, gas stove, gas heating, recently painted. Contact Stuart on 0409 511 388 or stuart.little@bigpond.com

**Hay for Sale**

Good quality, 'clean' pasture, small square bales. $8/bale. Available now from Gladysdale (about 35mins from MECS, towards Warburton). Delivery possible at additional cost. Phone 5966 6059 or 0490 464 852.

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### Calendar

**2015 Term 1 Week 4: 23 Feb - 1 Mar**

- **Fri 27 February**
  - 4yo Kinder Connect Morning Tea Staffroom 9am
  - SP Swimming
  - New Parent Dinner 6.45pm

**2015 Term 1 Week 5: 2 Mar - 8 Mar**

- **Mon 2 - Fri 6 March**
  - MS Camp Week
  - **Mon 2 March**
    - MS Connect Morning Tea Staffroom 9am
  - **Wed 4 March**
    - MP Swimming
  - **Thur 5 March**
    - Grandparents and Special Friends Day
  - **Fri 6 March**
    - SP Swimming

**2015 Term 1 Week 6: 9 Mar - 15 Mar**

- **Mon 9 March**
  - Labour Day Public Holiday School Closed

- **Tues 10 March**
  - JP Zoo Excursion

- **Wed 11 March**
  - MP Swimming
  - PT Interviews PS & MS 3.45-6pm

- **Thur 12 March**
  - Year 7-10 Interschool Swimming

- **Fri 13 March**
  - SS Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
  - SP Swimming

**2015 Term 1 Week 7: 16 Mar - 22 Mar**

- **Mon 16 March**
  - School Photos
  - PT Interviews (see page 4 for times)

- **Tues 17 March**
  - 3yo Kinder - Bluebirds Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
  - Preps Puppet Event

- **Thur 19 March**
  - 3yo Kinder - Rosellas Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
  - PT Interviews (see page 4 for times)

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**Primary School GTs (assemblies) this term:**

- **Week 5: Monday, 2 March**
  - SPUDS

- **Week 8: Monday, 23 March**
  - MPW

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

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

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**School Photo Day Monday 16 March**

School photo order form envelopes will go home this week, family photo envelopes are available in the office for anyone wanting to have a family photo done. Payments must be made online or envelopes need to be returned to the office by **Friday March 13**.

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**Next Working Bee Saturday 21 March, 8am-1pm**

Morning Tea Provided

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- PT Meetings Letter
- Year 8 Boys Man Camp Notice
- Year 9 City Camp Donations Request
- School Photo Order Forms (not on web)
- Year 11 Legal Student Excursion Notice
- Year 11 Business Management Notice
- Careers Newsletter No 1
- Kinder 4 Connect Morning Tea Invite

**Year 9 Project Help Needed**

For one of our Year 9 projects, we are collecting items at the main office to help homeless people. Items such as;

- Winter Jackets/beanies/scarves
- Toiletries (e.g. toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, women's sanitary items, etc.)
- Blankets (good repair)
- Canned goods (e.g. tomato soup, baked beans, etc.)

All items must be nonperishable, clean, in good repair and unused.

With our thanks,

**Year 9 Students**

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