Elijah, Lucas, Oliver, James, Josiah and Matthew at Camp Jungai
Empty Promises

I recently read a story about a wealthy family whose son was about to graduate from high school. It was the custom in their affluent neighbourhood for parents to give their graduating student a car. For months before the graduation, the son and father had looked at many different cars and a week before the graduation they found the perfect one.

On the eve of his graduation, the father handed his son a gift-wrapped Bible. The son was so angry that he threw the Bible on the ground and stormed out of the house. What about the promised car? The son and his father never saw each other again.

A few years later, the father’s death brought the son home. As he sat going through the possessions that he was to inherit from his father, he came across the same Bible. He brushed away the dust and opened it, to find a cheque – dated the date of his graduation – for the exact amount of the car they had chosen together.

Some of us may have been taken in by empty promises! We see ads on TV that promise us we can be rich, attractive or famous as long as we buy whatever it is they are selling. We may have been let down by friends or family that promised something, but didn’t deliver. We may have been promised our dream job but it didn’t eventuate. It is so easy to be devastated by promises that are not kept!

But God’s promises are sure. And in God’s upside down Kingdom, it is in his ‘empty’ promises that he really delivers! The empty cross, the empty tomb, the empty burial clothes – they are all promises that remind us of his great love for us, the salvation he offers and the new life we enjoy in relationship with him. These ‘empty’ promises are actually the path to being full!

Going back to the story of the young man who tossed away his father’s generous gift because he thought it was an empty promise, I wonder how many people do exactly the same thing with God. Because they don’t understand what God promises, or don’t believe the gift is for them, they toss it aside. They miss out on the fullness and freedom of living life in relationship with God.

At MECS we hope that the culture and experience of this school is one in which students know and understand that the promises of God are sure and can be relied upon. That the witness of their teachers and parents, the story of this school and the experience of their friends is one that leaves them in no doubt that God’s ‘empty’ promises are not empty! However, this is a big ‘hope’.

We know that for some members of our community this is not the case, and we hope and pray that each and every member of our community may experience the peace and hope of God in their hearts and minds. We want each person to know the unconditional love offered by God. This is our prayer for all those in our community, but particularly for our students who are yet to know and rely on the promises of God in their life.

Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. Hebrews 10:23

Narelle
MECS Principal

MECS Principal

Open Day
Sat May 9
10am to 1pm

135 York Rd Mount Evelyn
Entry Gate 1, 14 Hawkins Road
9738 6000
mecs.vic.edu.au
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Working Bee
To coincide with our Open Day this week, we had a fabulous working bee last Saturday morning. There was a great group of parents and students who came to help with a variety of jobs. I just want to voice my appreciation for the invaluable work that is achieved on these mornings. Hundreds of volunteer man-hours make it possible to plant, clean, paint, stain, tidy, repair and build new and old things around our school! We value your commitment to the good stewardship of the resources that God has blessed us with.

Open Day
We look forward to our Open Day this Saturday from 10am-1pm. It’s a great opportunity to bring family and friends along who are not already part of this community. Whilst the main focus of Open Day is introducing new families to MECS, it is also an ideal time for our current Year 5 & 6 students to come and check out the Middle School in more detail. We’d love to see as many people here as possible enjoying the hospitality of the day!

Primary School Cross Country
Yesterday, our Primary students enjoyed the chance to participate in their Cross Country running event. It was great to see so many enthusiastic faces run by as they tried their best on the school track, as well as so many parents and friends there to support them. Thanks to Jason, our Primary PE teacher, who had everything superbly organised and was encouraging to all students to do their best! Not everyone has gifts and abilities in this area, but it’s important to have a go! Congratulations, however, to those students who are athletically gifted and were able to complete the course in impressive times. We look forward to you representing MECS at the inter-school level.

Mother’s Day Stall
Dad Alert! Don’t forget to send along some money with your children this Friday so they can buy something nice for their mums at the Mother’s Day Stall. We look forward to this being a huge success and by only selling fair-trade items, we also hope to bring attention to the need for all of us to think about our consumer choices. Mums – enjoy your special day on Sunday!

PSG Meetings
Late last term and in the first few weeks of this one, the Education Support team were very busy meeting with parents and other staff in PSG (program support groups) meetings. PSGs are established to support students who have specific and individualised programs to meet some their particular learning needs. Parents, teachers and education support staff come together twice a year to review goals, celebrate successes and make sure everyone is on the ‘same page’ in regard to these programs. These meetings are longer than regular parent-teacher interviews as there is much that needs to be discussed. The commitment to these meetings is one of the ways we seek to partner with parents.

FOCUS On... NAPLAN

Did you know? NAPLAN stands for National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy.

Next week our Years 3, 5, 7 & 9 students have the pleasure of completing a series of NAPLAN tests on reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. These tests are completed by students in both government and non-government schools across Australia.

So why do our students have to complete these tests? According to the Australian Government “NAPLAN is the measure through which governments, education authorities, schools, teachers and parents can determine whether or not young Australians have the literacy and numeracy skills.” They go on to add that these particular skills are required to “provide the critical foundation for other learning and for their productive and rewarding participation in the community.”

So what do NAPLAN results tell us? At MECS we carefully look for trends in individual, class and section results. We can determine whether there are areas of strength that we can celebrate, or areas of weakness that need our attention. We are also able to track growth of students as they progress through the school. We recognise that this method of testing is a limited snapshot of a child’s understanding on a particular day; it caters particularly for students who perform better on written tests. However, we also glean insights from the results so that we can improve our teaching practices, and ultimately, the learning of our students.

More information can be found at www.nap.edu.au/information/faqs/naplan--general.html

Jacqui
Director of Teaching and Learning

Donations needed by Year 9 Students
Year 9 students would appreciate donations of old shovels and farm type relics for a waterfall sculpture that a small group of Year 9s will be making to carry storm water from the overflow pipe into the upper pond behind the Year 9 area.

Lance
MS Teacher

AGM
Thursday 28 May
7.00pm - Coffee & Supper
7.30pm - Meeting Start

We will be meeting at MECS Main Staffroom
**MECS Notes**

**After School Care at MECS**

Places are available in the MECS After School Care Program.

Information and enrollment packs can be picked up from the office, from Casey at After School Care between 3pm and 6pm in the PUMP room, or from the MECS website.

The program has had a great start and is being enjoyed by children and staff. You are more than welcome to come and have a peek at the program. We look forward to the rest of the term.

The program includes a daily devotion, group games and activities, a varied healthy afternoon tea, planned crafts, games and activities and free playtime directed by the children's interests. We aim to provide a safe and fun program for your children.

**Casey**

**Dress Code Reminder**

Just a reminder for parents to check our dress code on the website at http://www.mecs.vic.edu.au/Resources/Downloads/School-Wear

Students in Primary need to have their hair tied up if it is longer than shoulder length. We know you hate head lice and this significantly reduces the risk!

Girls need to wear shorts/skirts over leggings. The requirements for PE are:

- **Prep – Year 2:** parents to be aware of PE days and dress their child appropriately.
- **Years 3 – 10:** black shorts/black track suit pants (no zips or buttons), green MECS sport top. No jeans. Leggings only with appropriate shorts over.

**Diane**

**Assistant Principal - Primary**

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**Friends of MECS**

**Think Global and Local**

**Mother’s Day Stall, Tomorrow - Fri 8 May**

This is the theme again for this year’s Mother’s Day stall. Friends of MECS have an exciting range of fair trade and locally produced gifts for the Mother’s and Father’s day stalls. Sales will be supporting communities in Uganda, Thailand, Cambodia and Africa.

Let your children know that the range of gifts will be different to past stalls and will support people who do not have the same opportunities as we do in Australia.

Primary students will be taken by their class teacher to purchase their gifts. Please have your child’s money in a named envelope. Middle and Senior School students can come and shop at lunchtime in the PUMP room.

**Nicole**

Community Relations Officer

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**Open Day - This Sat 9 May 10am-1pm**

If you have family or friends who are interested in Christian education, you are most welcome to take them on a personal tour on Open Day or encourage them to come along. We have quite a few activities happening around the school on the day.

If you are available we need help with:

- Face painting
- Serving Devonshire Tea
- Supervising jumping castles
- Cup cake decorating
- Assisting with classroom activities
- Assisting with the Sausage Sizzle
- Setting up between 9am-10am
- Packing up between 1-2pm

If you are available to help us (even for an hour), we would really appreciate it. Please phone Nicole or email.

If you have a busy day and are not sure if you can squeeze it in, please just drop in to school when and if you can. Thank you for your support.

**Nicole**

Community Relations Officer

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**Welcome Ann**

**New Staff Member - Ann**

Ann started at MECS last week and is our new Community Relations Assistant for the next six months. Ann comes to us with lots of experience – having worked at Belgrave Heights Christian School assisting the Community Relations Officer there. Ann will be at most of our parent events and morning teas this term and next, please make her feel welcome when you see her.

**Nicole**

Community Relations Officer

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**Canteen News**

**Online Ordering**

Our alternative ordering system for the canteen is now up and running.

**This online ordering system is the preferred method for ordering at MECS.**

Flexischools is a simple four-step process:

- **Register:** Log on to flexischools.com.au and register, then add your child’s details
- **Top-Up:** Top up your account via Visa, Mastercard, PayPal or Direct Debit
- **Order and Pay:** Select the ‘Canteen’ option and place your order
- **Review or Edit:** Review and/or edit the order, then submit

There is no charge to set up your Flexischools account, however they do charge a 25c order processing fee and between 29c-35c to top up your account (direct debit top up is free). Access is available via your desktop or mobile device, so you can log in from anywhere before the 8am cut-off time on Canteen day to place your order. Easy!

We would encourage you to give Flexischools a try, however order bags will still be available from the office for those families who wish to use them.

**Sheryl**

Canteen Manager

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**Sheryl**

Canteen Manager

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May Working Bee

What a great autumn morning it was for our Working Bee on Saturday. Lots of mums, dads and children turned up and worked like a well-oiled machine to achieve an amazing amount of tasks.

We spread Lilydale toppings on the running track and mulch in the playground; we made garden beds in the kinder, cleaned the dry creek bed of all the dead leaves, cleaned pits and drains, mowed lawns, cleaned the pathways and car parks, pulled blackberries and weeds, pruned bushes and planted plants. Some hard workers pulled up the artificial grass in the Senior School then cut out some of the tree roots that were causing lumps, laid sand then re-laid the turf. Other workers replaced chair and desk tips, cleaned up rooms, painted window frames and sanded and painted lots of picnic tables and seats. There was even some admin work going on. The staffroom was overflowing as we took a break to share morning tea together!

It was great to see some new families there, and sad to farewell families for whom it was their last working bee.

What a great achievement and a wonderful way for families to build community and make the school look fantastic for Open Day. Thanks again to everyone who came and made Saturday a great day.

Pete & Steve
Grounds Managers

VCE Soccer

The Boys

On the beauteous, sunny day of Thursday April 30, an eager and bright group of MECS Senior School boys went out to play a hard and exhausting day of soccer. The lads played fiercely, not backing down from any challenge and although we managed to lose three of our games and draw one, we finished the day with large smiles on our faces. The day ended in bright hearts, tired bodies and a toasty warm bus.

Joshua

The Girls

The VCE Interschool soccer day was a great success, despite losing the grand final by 1 goal. The day consisted of beautiful sunshine, great competition and many laughs. The girls did a wonderful job winning one game and drawing all the others to make it to the grand final. Everyone gave it their best shot and I’m so proud to say that I was a part of the team. Thank-you to Mrs Emma Tresidder for teaching us all she knows about soccer. Bring on next year!

Gabby

MECS Notes

NAPLAN Testing

NAPLAN testing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students will be held between 12 - 14 May. NAPLAN tests are used to gather data on Literacy and Numeracy levels in Australia. They are a snapshot in time of a student's performance and contribute to the school's reporting and assessment processes. MECS uses the results to evaluate teaching programs and identify specific student needs in literacy and numeracy.

The tests should not be feared or cause any anxiety. Please reassure your child that there is no ‘pass’ or ‘fail’. MECS teachers ensure that the tests are a normal part of school. Students are prepared for the tests and provided with appropriate support and guidance.

NAPLAN will occur as follows:

- Tues May 12: Language conventions test, Writing test
- Wed May 13: Reading test
- Thur May 14: Numeracy test

Some students may be eligible for an exemption from, or additional support during, NAPLAN - you can speak to your child's teacher about this.

Students may be withdrawn from NAPLAN by their parent or carer. You need to discuss this with your child’s teacher or the principal. If you decide to withdraw your child, you must sign a Student Withdrawal Form (available from the office) by Friday 8 May.

Later in the year you will receive your child’s personal NAPLAN report. The report will describe your child’s particular skills in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. The report will also show how your child performed in relation to national minimum standards.

If you have any questions about your child’s involvement in NAPLAN, please speak to your child's teacher.

Laura
NAPLAN Coordinator

Apples & Pears

Next delivery is tomorrow, Friday May 8. Varieties available include Fuji, Granny Smith, Pink Ladies, Golden Delicious and Green Pears. Bags are 5-6kg and the cost is $10. Please submit your order to the main office by 10.30am on the day of delivery and ensure you have your name and order written on the front of the envelope, with the correct money enclosed.

Cassie
Receptionist
Performing Arts

For the last couple of years the Performing Arts group has done very comical performances, but this year’s play by Year 9 and 10 students is going to be sad and tragic.

We are doing a play written by our own Drama teacher, Marlene, called Only Children. It’s a story based on an event her mother was involved in. The main characters, June Calder (Isabel), Patricia Bergmann (Siennah), James Fraser (Brenton) and Eileen Lynch (Erica and Bethany) take a group of primary students to the beach for a holiday program.

For the first time the Performing Arts group will be performing in two one act play festivals, the Dandenong Ranges Youth One Act Play Festival in July and the Monash One Act Play Festival in September. We will also be doing a performance for our family and friends in Week 5 of Term 3.

by Performing Arts students

Kinder Happenings

Since the weather has turned colder the children at Kinder have been looking at, and wondering about, trees. Small groups of children went into the MECS creation garden in the Primary School to lie on the ground and look up into the trees. Then we drew what we saw. We collected some leaves and made ‘A leaf pool’. We had lots of fun tossing and rolling in the leaves. Through our investigations, observations and discussions the children discovered that:

“Trees can be very tall.”

“They have a trunk, branches, leaves and roots.”

“Trees help clean the air.”

“Trees give us food like apples or bananas.”

“You cut trees down for wood.”

“Paper comes from trees.”

Such a lot of learning just in thinking about trees!

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator
Year 6 Camp Jungai

My favourite thing about camp...

... was the cultural session because we got to experience new ways to show our mood, and learn how to dance and talk about stories like aboriginals.

Tahila SPC

... was the chance to try new things and to explore the forest. I loved canoeing and the nature walk!

Izzy, SPD

... was canoeing because we got to relax and play games in the canoe.

Evan SPC

... was probably the canoeing because it was my first time and I found it really good.

Ella SPK

... was going on the bush walk and doing the low ropes course.

Tahila SPK

Something else that I really enjoyed...

... was canoeing, it was a challenge collecting the rubber ducks from the lake with the end of your paddle.

Josiah SPC

... was being able to have two bonfires because the lights went out.

Caleb SPK

... was being able to share the camp time with my friends.

Caleb SPC

... was the food because it was really yummy and you could pick what you ate.

Lucas SPC

My biggest challenge on camp...

... was canoeing because I’ve never done it before.

Nathan SPC

... was orienteering. Some of the numbers were missing and this made it really tricky.

Julia, SPD

Something I learnt...

... was that aboriginal people believe that their god is an eagle called Bunjil.

Noah SPC

... was how to make a kookaburra sound in the cultural session.

Oliver SPC
Calendar

2015 Term 2 Week 4: 4 May - 10 May

- Fri 8 May: Mother’s Day Stall
- Sat 9 May: Open Day 10am-1pm

2015 Term 2 Week 5: 11 May - 17 May

- Tues 12 - Thur 14 May: Naplan
- Tues 12 - Fri 15 May: Year 8 Inspiring Girls Camp
- Year 8 Man Camp
- Wed 13 May: Prep Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
- Koalas & Possums Photo Day
- Thur 14 May: MP Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
- Year 12 Mentor Supper 7.30pm
- Fri 15 May: Year 11 Physics Scienceworks Excursion

2015 Term 2 Week 6: 18 May - 24 May

- Tues 19 May: Bluebirds Photo Day
- JP Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
- Wed 20 May: Year 9 Interschool Soccer
- 4 yo Kinder Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
- Thur 21 May: Rosellas Photo Day
- Friends of MECS Cook off Day 9am start
- Fri 22 May: Secondary Tribal Cross Country

2015 Term 2 Week 7: 25 May - 31 May

- Mon 25 - Fri 29 May: MS Special Week
- Mon 25: JP CERES Excursion
- Tues 26: Year 10 Interschool Soccer

Lost Property

Just a reminder to please check the racks at lost property for your children’s belongings, today or tomorrow. There is a red & black Manchester United back pack there along with lots of jumpers and jackets and it would be good if they went back to their owners. This would clean up the area for Open Day. Thank you.

Melinda Beimers
Lost Property

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