Kinder in the Bush

Faith exploring a wonderful environment
Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?
Mary did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you.

Mary did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?
Mary did you know that your baby boy will calm the storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little baby, you kiss the face of God.

The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again.
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the Lamb.

Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?
Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day rule the nation?
Did you know that your baby boy is heaven’s perfect Lamb?
That sleeping child you’re holding is the great I AM.

(Music and Lyrics by Mark Lowry)

A highlight in recent weeks was watching on YouTube, a performance of this song, performed by Mark Lowry and a vocal group called Voctave. I would encourage you to check it out at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaRpeMTfjQ; it really is an amazing rendition.

I love Christmas! I love the festivity, the celebrations, the carols, and the gift-giving. I love putting up the tree and setting out our beautiful nativity scene in our home. I love the sense of expectation that comes with the advent season.

At school, we are also looking forward to our Primary Christmas Concert next Monday evening where we will sing songs about baby Jesus and enjoy the ‘cute factor’ that comes with our Foundation students performing their nativity play. However, it’s easy at this time of the year to get carried away with all this cute stuff. We can forget that the Jesus we celebrate at Christmas is the Christ that we celebrate at Easter; the one who died and rose again for our salvation and reconciliation with God.

This year in morning devotions, our staff have been considering the names of God in the Old and New Testament. This song brings so many of those ideas and images together – the miracle worker, the redeemer, the healer, the prince of peace, the perfect lamb, the creator, the ruler of all nations, the incarnate God, the great I AM.

It is my prayer for every member of this community that as you join in the festivities of this season, that you will know, deep in your soul, that this is who Jesus is! That at Christmas time, God came into our world as a baby, so that he might not only be part of the human story, but also that through his life, we may see His face – the face of God!

Thank you for your partnership with us throughout 2016! Enjoy a safe and festive holiday season with your family and friends. We look forward to seeing you all in the new year!

Narelle
MECS Principal

Jesus... the miracle worker, the redeemer, the healer, the prince of peace, the perfect lamb, the creator, the ruler of all nations, the incarnate God, the great I AM.

FOCUS On... Multi-age Classes

Why does MECS multi-age so many of their classes?

At MECS our multi-age classes are a deliberate choice.

Any teacher will tell you that there is no such thing as a class that is made up of students who are working at the same standard. The spread is wide and varied in all levels of schooling. Achieving a specific level at a certain age is only realistic for probably less than half of students; and to try to limit them to this, or to assume that they have failed if they do not reach this standard for a particular age, is to box their potential and does not give honour to them as an individual learner. Having multi-age groups promotes teachers structuring a curriculum that is flexible enough to cater for all levels within the class. In teaching terms we call this ‘differentiation’. Having a multi-age system is one way we acknowledge that not all children are the same – they have different learning rates and abilities that is not confined to an ‘age’ standard.

Our structure also allows children to work and interact with younger and older students. Some thrive being in the older level, some love to be working with children slightly older than themselves. Children are not confined to one class group that they remain with the whole of their primary school. Every new year, half of their class remain pretty much the same and half of the students are new. This is a good balance between familiarity and new people to develop working and social relationships with.

Because we multi-age, our students come to accept differences far more readily. Tall, short, older, younger – each class has so many variables that no one stands out as being the only one different from the rest.

As teachers in the Primary School, the biggest plus is that, in most cases, we have the same children for two years. This means that by the second year, we already have a very good understanding of a child’s needs and strengths and we can immediately differentiate the curriculum for them without having to take the time to establish this. Likewise, the students know the teacher well and know their expectations and the way they function.

Melissa
Assistant Primary Coordinator & Senior Primary Coordinator
Wrap Up for 2016!
As this will be our last full newsletter for the year, we want to wish every student and family a safe and happy break. The coming week will be filled with special assemblies and concerts, class parties and sad farewells, cleaning and sorting and sharing excitement about the holidays ahead. Some of this will be captured in a special Christmas flyer published next week, featuring photos from our Year 6 Graduation and Primary School Concert in particular. We look forward to seeing you all back at school on Monday January 30.

Orientation Day
On Tuesday we had a fabulous day as new students who will be joining us in 2017 came to meet new faces, as well as all our Kinder-Year 9 students having the opportunity to ‘step-up’ into their new classes and year levels. There was lots of activity and excitement throughout the day, with even new parents getting the opportunity to meet over tea and coffee. Transitions are exciting, but they can also be difficult for some. Let’s pray that the transition from this year to the next is a calm and positive one, but particularly for those that are coming to join our MECS community.

Year 6 Graduation
The last of our significant ‘rituals’ for students happens this Friday night. Our Year 6 students are graduating! Looking resplendent in their fancy clothes I’m sure, they will share in a meal together before the graduation evening commences with family and friends. Each student will present a short speech and be presented with an award. This is always a lovely evening as we honour each young person and wish them well as they enter secondary schooling. Congratulations to our Year 6 students!

Primary Christmas Concert
We’re looking forward to seeing many of you at our Primary Christmas Concert next Monday night at 6pm. We are hoping that this new timeslot will enable more of our Primary families to come and enjoy our final ‘gathering time’ together. It will be a great time of celebration as we bring the year to a close and as is our tradition, the Foundation students will bring the Christmas story alive with their nativity play. Remember, entry to the evening is a grocery item for each family member that will be donated to The Salvation Army for their work with disadvantaged families over Christmas. We will have a representative from the Salvos at the concert to receive our donations.

Primary Reports and Class Lists
Hopefully you picked up from recent newsletters that we will be sending home Primary reports next Tuesday, the second last day of term. That way, we can make sure you receive them before all the excitement of the last day when reports could easily be misplaced in an overcrowded school bag! More importantly, class groupings for 2017 will be emailed to families in the third week of January. This is now common practice across many schools. It allows teachers to make final adjustments in the days after students finish, and for leaders to complete final checks when they return to school mid-January. It also means that primary students and families receive this information fresh after a few weeks of rest and relaxation, ready to start thinking about 2017!

School Magazine
Congratulations to Heather once again for the fabulous school magazine that has been produced. As always, it really captures the sense of community at the heart of our school. You can look forward to receiving your copy next week.

Family Farewells
Finally, we want to say farewell to the students and families who are moving on to new adventures! We thank you for the opportunity to partner with you as we work together in Christian education and pray God’s blessing on the next part of your journey wherever that may be.

Senior Primary Choir
The Senior Primary choir have been busy in action, enjoying performances at Camberwell Salvation Army (Nov 22) and most recently, the Evelyn Ridge Christmas Carols last Thursday.

The choir embraced the festive season, and sung their first set of Christmas carols at Evelyn Ridge. It was a packed house, and the choir were well received, singing 6 Christmas classics, and an encore. Some of which included Mary’s Boy Child, Angels we have Heard on High, and Oh, Holy Night. The choir did a fantastic job, and sung beautifully on both occasions.

A big thank you to Narelle for organizing the Camberwell Salvation Army excursion, and to Helen for spearheading the choir’s debut caroling extravaganza at Evelyn Ridge.

Scott
Primary Music Coordinator
**MUSIC Notes**

**Music Enrolments**

There is still time to enrol/re-enrol for Instrumental lessons next year. We have a great team of experienced and skilled tutors who still have spaces free for next year in drums, singing, guitar, bass, strings and piano.

Please pick up an enrolment form from the Main Office or complete the re-enrolment form that was emailed a few weeks ago.

For further information, please contact me. I’d be happy to help.

Annora

*Instrumental Coordinator*

**MECS Notes**

**Scholastic Book Club**

We have come to the end of our first year of Scholastic Book Club and are pleased to let you know that through your purchases, we have collectively raised $459. This money will go to Jinja Christian School in Uganda and Gawa Christian School in the Northern Territory, to expand their library collections. Thank you for your support.

Simone

**End of Year Information**

**School Finish Time:**
The last day of term will be Wednesday December 14. School will finish at 2pm.

**Distribution of Reports**

- Reports for all Foundation-Year 6 students will be distributed on the second last day of term.
- Reports for Middle School students will be distributed on the last day of term.
- Reports for students in Years 10 and 11 will be sent home with a younger sibling, or posted home.
- Reports for any students absent on the last day of school will be posted home.

**Distribution of Class Lists:**

Class lists for 2017 will go home via email in January (January 16-20). The exception will be 2017 Foundation students who will receive theirs at the end of this year, via post, just after school finishes.

If you have any questions about any of the above, please contact me via the office or nstaunton@mecs.vic.edu.au.

Natasha

*Enrolments & Office Manager*

---

**Indonesian Visitors**

On Thursday and Friday last week, MECS hosted two special guests. Lisa and Ningsi are two Indonesian women from Hodidiai, a school and orphanage in Indonesia who MECS have raised money for this year. They are visiting Australian schools as part of their own studies, to gain experience in speaking English and explore Australian schools.

Students from across the Primary School and from Year 7 had an opportunity to meet these women and to ask them questions about their language and culture. A highlight was when the Foundation students sung to them in Indonesian and danced to a well-known Indonesian children’s song. Our Indonesian guests joined in and were so pleased to see MECS students engaging with the Indonesian language with so much excitement.

The ladies were able to do a range of activities including assisting with translation for signage in Indonesian in our classrooms and offices; supporting Year 7s to complete assignments, and teaching Middle Primary and Junior Primary students how to play an Indonesian game called ‘Congklak’.

It was a wonderful opportunity for me to spend time immersed in the language, brushing up on my own fluency! It brought back such fond memories of Indonesia and my Indonesian friends and made me miss my time studying and travelling there. MECS looks forward to strengthening this relationship with Hodidiai in the future as our students continue to engage with our near neighbours with curiosity, confidence and respect.

Ibu (Mrs) Rachel J

*Indonesian Teacher*

---

**Enrolments now open for 2017**

3C Kidz Care is a ministry of Casey City Church
JP Construction

If you have walked past the Junior Primaries in the last two weeks, you might have noticed a hive of boxes, pipes, plastics and other recyclables! We have been busy with our minds and hands to create our very own vehicles. It has been spectacular to see students working with each other and independently problem solving to construct a vehicle. They gave careful thought when designing their vehicle, and considered what was needed to make it move. Well done Junior Primaries!

Viv
JP Teacher

MECS Notes

2017 Swimming Program

We are very excited to announce that we will be running an 8 week swimming program for Years 7-10 as part of the Sports program. We will split this into 2 x 4 week sessions, one at the beginning of the year and one in the final 4 weeks of the year. The first sessions will prepare students in the lead up to both the MECS Tribal Swimming Carnival and the interschool Carnival. The second is in preparation for summer holidays.

The focus of these sessions will be to develop student’s individual swimming and survival skills. Students will be split into two groups based on gender and skill level, where trained pool staff will coach them in developing new skills and refining technique for both competitive swimming and survival.

The Royal Life Saving National Drowning report showed that in 2016 there were 280 drownings in Australia; 43 in Victoria. Living in Australia we are continually exposed to incidental water activities. Our 2017 program is an excellent opportunity to prepare all students for a full summer of water activities.

Luke & Anne-Maree
Middle School Health & PE Team
Bush Kinder

Last Thursday we had the Kinder Parent Information evening. Many parents came along to hear about learning in the kinder, and especially ‘learning through nature play’, a topic that the Kinder team have been investigating this year, and which has resulted in the introduction of our Bush Kinder program. Andrea, who retires from MECS at the end of this year, wrote a beautiful reflection which was read by Cherie. It is such a beautiful reflection that I thought we would share it with the MECS community.

Andrea
Year 4 Kindergarten Educator

Bush Reflection

There is a place, (a wonderful place), where trees and birds and bugs have congregated.

Some of the trees were born from long ago and tower up to the moon and back. Other trees are little ones, sheltering under the giants, until they gain strength and resilience and can protect their own young trees.

These native gums offer a perching place for the birds of the area to come and rest, and sing the songs of the land. And their boughs invite nests to be established there, welcoming new life as the babies are born, nourished and encouraged to leave. Many a tree have wept a few red tears when that day of flight has arrived.

And then there’s the community of bugs, scurrying and hurrying their way throughout the undergrowth. Their world of survival is complex and structured, instinctively carried out. Some have marching lines of precision, transporting their needs productively and effectively. There are no strikes, or slackers, but rather a highly-developed work ethic which serves them well.

This wonderful place full of flora and fauna has participated in the ever-constant cycle of life, for thousands of years. Growth has succumbed to decay and decay has birthed new life, allowing for change and freshness, new shapes and slightly altered ways of doing life there.

Then one day, not so long ago, a tribe of little humans (and a few big ones), arrived. They were not in rows of order, but instead were jumbly and tumbly, excited and perhaps a little anxious as to what lay before them. I think, if truth be told, that the trees and birds and bugs all came to a silent halt as these new creatures appeared. But it didn’t take long for them to see that these small ones were rather intriguing and quite beautiful indeed. And so, they quickly gave their corporate assent for them to remain.

So, week by week they kindly share the land with them and enjoy watching them, squat and peer, poke and prod, drag and build, plan and gather. These funny humans congregate in groups to accomplish a task or remain alone to wonder and wait. Strategies are formed and executed, territorial conflicts are resolved, suggestions are made, ideas are trialled, failures are renegotiated and victories are celebrated. Also, teamwork is heightened, unrecognized leaders emerge, imagination has freedom to thrive and the inner Tarzan gets to climb, and swing and leap. Academic concepts are easier to grasp in this natural classroom and the art of relating takes on a whole new level.

Amongst this eclectic hive of activity, the peaceful pockets of meditation, the ground cover of creative arts, a small piece of Mount Evelyn land is cohabitated and enjoyed.

Welcome to Bush Kinder!

Andrea
Year 4 Kindergarten Educator

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator

Bethany

Noah
Bush Kinder

Alexandra

Evan

Alfi

Henry

Jeremiah

Koby

Isabella

Miller, Emma, & Kahila
Work Experience

During Week 7 a number of Year 10 students took the opportunity to undertake a Work Experience placement. For some, this was their second placement for the year.

Students worked in a variety of places including: a vet, a child care centre, a helicopter service centre, the Melbourne Magistrates Court, a graphic design studio, a seed propagation company and a hospital.

All students reported having valuable and enjoyable experiences. A highlight of the week was the feedback that was received from one employer who has taken on a number of our students over the last four years. He said that he had hosted many students from many schools over the years and that he always looks forward to having students from MECS. He commented on how impressed he was with the way our students conducted themselves, their courtesy towards others and to the amount of effort that they put into the tasks set.

Students should be commended on their effort to arrange these placements for themselves and to move out of their comfort zones. They will have had an experience that will benefit their job prospects and help them make more informed decisions about their careers paths, both in the short and long term.

Amelia
Year 10 Coordinator, Careers Coordinator, VET in Schools Coordinator

Working Bee

Eggs, bacon and brewed coffee were a great way to start our last Working Bee for 2016. After the great breakfast we got stuck into lots of work: mulching, cleaning pits and drains; painting, lots of work in the Kinder and MECS community garden; tidying up in the manual arts room; cleaning desks, doors and around light switches and cleaning out classroom store rooms. We had a great morning tea together and were finished by 12pm. It always great to see so many parents and children working hard and having a great time. A big thanks to everyone who came to working bees this year - it helps so much to keep the grounds and buildings at MECS looking great.

Have a great Christmas and New Year and see you all next year.

Peter and Steve
Property Maintenance
Garden Party

In Memorial

Last Thursday afternoon, a small number of past staff and personal friends gathered to celebrate the opening of the Kay Vandersluys Memorial Garden.

Kay was a much loved member of our MECS staff for over a decade and sadly passed away 11 years ago. It was wonderful to be surrounded by some of Kay's dearest friends as well as her husband Rod.

Kay's garden is located outside the staffroom and can be seen from the office car park. We also give much appreciation to Peter and Steve and others, who spent many weeks ensuring that the garden was completed and looking amazing.

Sharon
Middle School Teacher
Camp had its ups and downs
But in the end it came around
Our tent was hard to put up
It was really stuck
We went for a walk
We had a little talk
We went to the beach
We didn’t go very deep
Only to notice our thongs weren’t in reach
The tide came in
And swept them away
Much to our great dismay
The sand castles were fun
Group 1 won
The tide had its fun
And smashed more than 1
Day 2 the wind blew
And our tent nearly flew
We picked up some rubbish
It was really sad to say
How humans are ruining things today
I learnt a lot at the shell museum
Someday you have got to go and see ‘em
I learnt about sea snails and how they drill a hole
In other snails and they then eat them whole
Day 3 was a breeze
We went to the seas
We did some art
That was very sharp
We drew a view
That I would love to show you
Day 4 we explored
The deep and unique
Hopped in a tube
And went down the creek
We had a fun night
That was a great sight
The skits were cool
And Emma’s group made the teachers look like fools
(then we left)

Izzy, Parker & Emma

Cycle B Inverloch Camp

It was a great experience learning about introduced weeds and all the different sea shells. One of my highlights was when we went to Phillip Island and saw the mutton birds coming down from the North Pole. It was so cool to see the birds as they swooped down and nearly hit our faces as they looked for their burrows. During this event I also had a thought of making a mountain bike track down the steep cliff faces and rocks.

Caleb

Cycle B camp was awesome. The first day we spent at the beach, playing in the water and building sandcastles.

During the rest of the camp we were involved in ‘environmental rescue’ and ‘intertidal investigation’. ‘Environmental rescue’ involved five activities. We looked at the Wonthaggi wind farm, then the Wonthaggi desalination plant. We did two things on the beach, first we picked up rubbish on the beach then we went and dug out weeds that were harming the environment and the animals. Lastly we went to the Inverloch Shell Museum which was really cool.

‘Intertidal investigation’ involved firstly tubing down mangroves which was lots of fun. After that we went rock pooling and looked at all the anemones under the rocks. Lastly we went down to the beach and we drew, painted and photographed it. Camp was filled with other enjoyable activities such as going to Phillip Island and watching the mutton birds come in. We also played lots of games, ate and slept. Overall camp was a 10/10.

Isaac & Amberliah
Term 4 Music Recital

Last Wednesday evening we celebrated the achievements of our Instrumental students at our final Recital for the year. It was wonderful to see some students perform for the first time in a Recital and also to see the growth of some of our more experienced performers, some performing for the final time at school.

Thank you to each Instrumental staff member for their commitment and care of each of their students and also to the parents who support and encourage their children to grow in their musical gifts and abilities.

It’s been a great year and we look forward to hearing our students perform in 2017.

Annora
Instrumental Coordinator
Lost Bear

Lost Pooh Bear Teddy. If found please bring to SPR or the Main Office because someone is not going to sleep tonight...

Calendar

2016 Term 4 Week 9: 5 Dec - 11 Dec

- **Mon 5 Dec - Fri 9 Dec**
  - Year 12 Compulsory 2017 Orientation Classes

- **Fri 9 Dec**
  - Possums & Koalas (K4) Last Session
  - Year 6 Graduation 5pm Gym

2016 Term 4 Week 10: 12 Dec - 14 Dec

- **Mon 12 Dec**
  - Year 7-9 Indoor Sports Day

- **Tues 13 Dec**
  - Primary Christmas Celebration 6pm

- **Wed 14 Dec**
  - Kinder Clean-up Day
  - Last Day of School - Finish Time 2pm

2016 Summer Holidays: 15 Dec - 29 Jan

- **Fri 23 Dec - Mon 2 Jan**
  - School Office Closed from 12noon on Friday 23 Dec and will reopen on Tues 3 Jan

- **Tues 24 Jan - Wed 25 Jan**
  - Year 12 Camp

- **Tues 24 Jan**
  - Year 12 Mentor Dinner and Discussion

- **Thur 26 Jan**
  - Australia Day Public Holiday School Closed

2017 Term 1 Week 1: 30 Jan - 5 Feb

- **Mon 30 Jan**
  - First Day of Term 1
  - Welcome Back Morning Tea 8.45 Main Staffroom

Lost Property

A reminder to please check the racks of lost property for your children's belongings. We have accumulated plenty of clothes, hats, lunch boxes etc and it would be good if they went back to their owners. Those that are not collected by the end of term will go to the local Op shop. Please clearly label your children's clothing. It makes getting items back to your child easier!

**Melinda Beimers**

Lost Property Merchant

Free Table and Chairs

Pick up only, Seville East, 0409 552 144.

Lost Property

Please clearly label your children's belongings. We have accumulated plenty of clothes, hats, lunch boxes etc and it would be good if they went back to their owners. Those that are not collected by the end of term will go to the local Op shop. Please clearly label your children's clothing. It makes getting items back to your child easier!

**Melinda Beimers**

Lost Property Merchant

Free Table and Chairs

Pick up only, Seville East, 0409 552 144.

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.

Loft Bed for Sale

Single loft bed with desk and wardrobe. Single mattress included. In good used condition. Very solid and heavy construction.

$350 (negotiable). Pick up Seville. Call Shane 0411 244 639.

Cane Furniture for Sale

3 piece set, relatively new and in very good condition. $250 ono.

Pick up Mitcham. Contact Heather on 0419 935 312.

Christmas Gift Idea

‘Patches of Godlight – poems, prayers, contemplations’ by Janette Fernando would make an ideal Christmas gift. This is what Middle School teacher Sharon Witt says about it:

“Patches of Godlight is a raw, honest and inspiring account of the wrestle so many of us face in life; the questions we seek of God and the desire to know Him with greater depth and intimacy. This book reflects how, in our deepest struggles, and darkest hours, the Lord shines His light through the cracks and crevices of our lives, to remind us of his eternal presence.”

Available at the office at a Christmas sale price of $27. (RRP $30).

Dog Minder

Looking for a friendly Dogminder this summer? I’m an experienced and passionate dogminder living on an acre. Make your best friend feel at home while you’re away. Affordable rates and excellent care. Contact me - Oni 0406 806 691.

Rental Wanted

Couple looking for a rental house, unit or self-contained bungalow in the Ringwood or surrounding areas, beginning January 2017. If you know of anything we would love to hear from you. Please contact Tiffany on 0419 366 968 or Michael on 0412 685 070.

Apple Man

The Apple Man is coming for the last time this year on Friday Dec 9 and the following varieties will be available: Granny Smiths, Fujis, Royal Galas, Pink Ladies and Green Pears. Apples $10 a bag, Pears $8. Please put the correct money in an envelope with your order written on the front, and hand it into the office before 10.30am on Friday Dec 9.

Family Carols

Sunday December 11 from 6pm, next to the Seville Water Park. Sing your favourite Christmas carols & songs. Guest artists. Support Seville CFA. BBQ from 6pm. Presented by the local churches in Seville & Wandin. If rain occurs, the event will be cancelled.

We invite you to bring along Christmas gifts of new toys and personal items for disadvantaged people and families in the Yarra Valley. To be distributed through LinC and Anglicare.