



Matric leaders' induction service

FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

Our school's gardens show that we are entering the autumnal season, which has coincided with the Covid-19 restrictions being lifted to Level 1. We are slowly and tentatively recovering from the pandemic and its devastating effects, while being mindful that another onslaught or third wave may become a reality. At the same time, we have been piecing together relationships that were strained or fractured last year when racial justice in independent schools was brought into sharp focus. Our relationships in the community should be enhanced by greater empathy and respect as we engage in constructive conversations this year. The school faced a myriad of challenges last year but 2020 also provided opportunity for self-reflection, reimagination and now, with the guidance of Lovelyn Nwadeyi, director at L & N Advisors, we have renewed vision to find ways of being a more equitable and just school environment.

The gentle weather was a perfect setting for the Leaders' Induction service, which was held in The Close last Friday. Although a quiet and more contemplative service than usual, it officially celebrated the unique leadership that the class of 2021 will bring to St Mary's School. The autumn afternoons have also provided the setting for intraschool sport.

This has brought a spirit and vibrancy to our campus, which we have not experienced for many months. Slowly, the girls are beginning to enjoy the activities which bring delight and sheer joy to their school days.

The next two weeks hold several opportunities for parents and guardians. Lovelyn Nwadeyi will host a webinar on Tuesday evening (16 March); the HOPE committee will host a virtual panel discussion on mental well-being (24 March); the Foundation and PA are co-hosting coffee mornings for the Forms I and II parents (23–26 March). Details of all these events can be found on the school app.

As we approach Human Rights Day, on 21 March, please join us in encouraging your daughters to contemplate their rights and affirm the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom, as well as acknowledging the responsibilities that come with those rights.

DEANNE KING
HEAD OF SCHOOL

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

- Luke 18:9-14 (NRSV)

The words "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner" form what is known as the Jesus Prayer – a simple prayer and one that is profound for us all. It is sourced from the Biblical passage above: to pray this prayer is to uphold the tax collector as an example of humility and our need for God this Lent.

Thus, let us pray:

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner
Amen

REVD CLAUDIA COUSTAS
CHAPLAIN



Photo by Quix

HONOURS BLAZERS

Academic honours



Back row: Hannah Newman, Tali Newman, Nokukhanya Makwe, Kerry-Lynn Whyte, Yvonne Dippenaar
 Fifth row: Erin Kersten, Hannah Jacobs, Kim Raubenheimer
 Fourth row: Ameerah Omar, Samantha Pringle, Saige Turner, Caitlin Breytenbach
 Third row: Luthando Simelane, Kiara Towell, Jade Adams, Hailey Wilcocks, Sarah-Michele Ellis-Clarke
 Second row: Amy Clowes, Emma Gray, Siphosethu Mnguni, Ella Roseveare, Abigail Milella
 Front row: Kutloano Shuenyane, Lesedi Chocho, Ande Dhlomo, Mia Van Der Westhuizen, Caitlin Bloom, Ghita Economakis
 (not in photograph: Annika Gertenbach)

Service honours:



Lami'ah Nosarka and Rorisang Tlaka

Cultural honours:



Jessica Royan

Sports honours:



Jade Adams, Emma Franck and Abigail Milella (not in photograph: Holly McDonald)

GRADE 7

"You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it."

- Maya Angelou

It might seem strange to begin an article on leadership by referring to defeat, however, we often forget that to become resilient, a desirable quality in a leader, we have to face many defeats and disappointments. In fact, it is often how we respond to failure that determines our future success. While this was not the start to the year we envisioned, the Grade 7 mentors have been consistently impressed by the girls' courage, their flexibility and determination to make the most of the learning opportunities afforded to them.

The Grade 7s have now begun their leadership programme in earnest and, on 20 February, spent two full days at school, completing the second part of their leadership "camp-out" challenge. The problem-solving component was introduced in September, 2020. From team-building exercises, basic life-saving techniques to learning how to change a flat tyre and rewire a plug – the Grade 7s did not disappoint. With their characteristic "can do" attitude, the girls learned new skills and grappled with the challenge of having to work with unfamiliar tools and in groups where they were not guaranteed to be with their friends. The programme, while punctuated with a delicious lunch and consistent supply of iced water, was nonetheless gruelling. Despite the heat of the day, the teachers observed the girls working together, putting in the effort and persevering through their fatigue.

The leadership positions have now been assigned, after a careful process which began last year and which included peer voting, feedback from coaches and teachers and the observations of the mentoring team and school leaders. Certain positions, such as the house captain portfolio, required that the girls prepare a short speech, motivating why they felt they are suited to the role. Importantly, they had to address the younger grades, their peer group and the grade above them. Our house captains have already proven themselves at our first inter-house gala and the mentoring teams have had two weeks to get to know the grade they will be caring for over the year.

Each girl has received her leadership contract which provides a clear explanation of our expectations. Along with the duties and responsibilities of the roles, the Grade 7s have also contributed to these contracts in their D4C lessons and the process led to the development of three new roles, where they identified "gaps" in the programme. The EdTech team are exploring the ways in which technology can enrich and enhance learning while working closely with Miss Shuping to expand the presence of technology in certain areas of the curriculum. The library team, along with our new librarian, Miss Elk, will be revitalising sections of the library with a focus on texts which reflect the diversity in our student body. The marketing team has set itself the goal of building a greater sense of community across grades and documenting the different events and happenings in the school.

While we cannot predict the future, the mentor teachers have no doubt that this inspirational group of Grade 7 leaders will have a significant impact on their community to help to regain some of what has been lost during the pandemic.

Comments from the girls:

"I learned how to compromise."

"I found out that it is very hard to work with people who want to control the situation. They had to be reminded that they were part of a team."

"I learned that patience is the key to success."

"I learned a lot about myself. I learned that I could be bossy and that I get flustered. But I also learned that in different situations I could be calm and could come up with a plan quickly."

"I found out that some of my peers could be amazing leaders."

"I learned how to change a tyre on a car! Wow!"

"I learned that when you work in a big group, you have to plan before you take action and that you have to have patience to listen to everyone in the group."

"I learned that I have really good listening skills but I need to make sure everyone has a chance to speak and not just me."

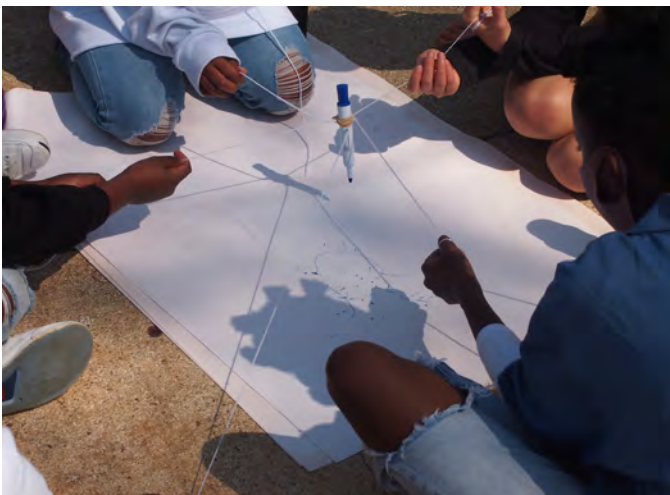
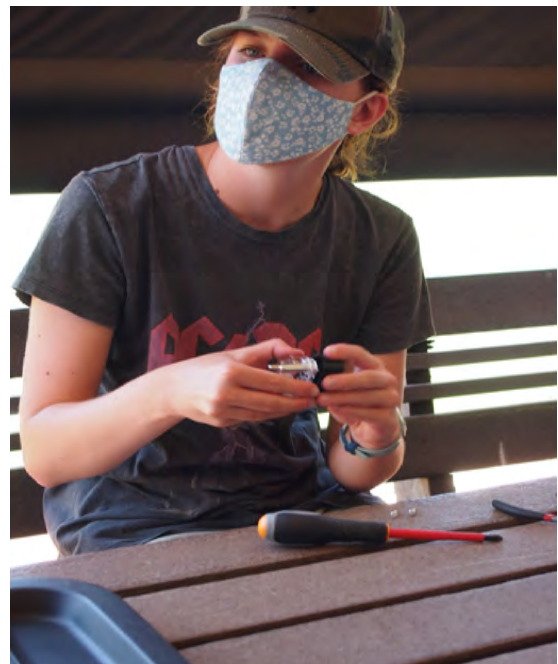
"I found out that I can still have a lot of fun... even if I'm not with all my friends."

"I learned that my peers have patience and are very sensible about other people and they have lots of ideas."

**ANNIE THOM, JEANINE DU TOIT, ROSEMARY NCOBELA
AND LAUREN HOWDEN
GRADE 7 MENTOR TEAM**



GRADE 7 (CONTINUED)



LITTLE SAINTS

At Little Saints, the children have taken advantage of the sunny weather to get out into the garden and conduct some interesting investigations. The children have experimented with sensory activities such as cutting spaghetti, floating and sinking, and exploring their senses using coloured cellophane. An ongoing theme has been the identity of the orange as part of the citrus family, and how it relates to our own identities. Outdoors, the mud kitchen has been a popular space, where the children have conjured up imaginary culinary delights.

MELANIE NIJLAND
LITTLE SAINTS TEACHER



GRADE 0

The focus of the early Maths curriculum is to develop an understanding of number. Subitising (a term introduced by the Swiss psychologist Piaget, the ability to look at a small number of objects and instantly recognise how many objects there are without needing to count) develops number sense by helping children relate numbers to actual items or groups of items. It is not uncommon for young children learn to count by rote but do not really understand the meaning behind what they are doing. By looking at groups of items, children can start to develop an understanding of how a number is made up: for example, seven dots could be a set of three dots and a set of four dots, or a set of six dots and one dot. This understanding of part-whole relationships helps children to separate and combine numbers and accelerates their understanding of addition and subtraction.



GRADE 0

Grade 0 girls created themselves using split pins, designed clothes and printed their hands and feet.



Grade 0 girls learning the number 3



Observing and identifying patterns is an important Maths and Science skill and the foundation for many more complex concepts. The Grade 0 girls went on a nature walk in the school garden and gathered some natural treasures. They had to choose two items and create a repeating pattern. Some patterns included big and small, wide and narrow, tall and short.

LYNN TROLLIP
GRADE 0 TEACHER

GRADE 4

The Grade 4 girls had a lot of fun making posters about their families in the form of a family tree. They had to present three generations which required them to do some family research at home.

LUNGA SEELE
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



GRADE 5

Sparked by the heavy, continuous rainfall on our return to campus, the Grade 5 girls began a journey of getting clued up about clouds. Between showers and lightning, we managed to spend a fair amount of time outdoors identifying cloud types, understanding their characteristics, making up cloud card games and choreographing a cloud movement routine. There is great excitement about the "Clouds above my home" task which has the potential for family participation! Back in the science lab, there were varied responses to how successful we were at "making a cloud in a bottle". The next step is to extend our knowledge into the phases and phase changes of water – the very reason for the existence of clouds.

ANGIE JENNETT
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Flip Flop Day is an annual fundraising event held to raise much-needed funds for the South African non-profit organisation, CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation. The school supported Flip Flop Day on Friday 12 February. The girls showed their hearts by wearing their soles! Thank you to all who participated - an amazing amount of over R7 500 was raised by the school for this worthy cause.

LINDA MAISHMAN
JUNIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



WRITERS CIRCLE

Writers' Circle – a place of discovery for the Senior School girls.

Stories are everywhere. They drive so much of the world from advertising, gaming, music, television, movies and, of course, books. Writers' Circle is a place where students come to dive into the world of story craft. It is a totally safe space for likeminded people. Whether you have been an avid reader and writer since you were a young child, or whether you've had an interest in stories but never pursued it, there is a place for you.

What are some of things we do? We unpack stories into their constituent parts – what makes a character interesting? What tools does the writer use to bring the character to life? What is a protagonist? What is an antagonist? What is conflict and can a story survive without it? We build worlds, and we work off provocative prompts but, most of all, we have a laugh and delight in travelling to different eras and worlds.

The skills you will learn are transferrable. Your writing will improve: not just your creative writing, but your formal essay writing as well. You will have a better handle on form, structure, and pace. You will understand stories better and you'll be able to analyse critically the messages around you. Most of all, you will develop a lifelong love of writing.

ADRIAN ASHLEY
WRITERS' CIRCLE FACILITATOR

DANCE CREW

The Senior School dance crew had a very exciting dance day planned for them by Claire van Niekerk. To take you back a bit... the girls needed to audition (as one might do trials to get into a top sports team) exhibiting their versatility in various styles, to be considered for the crew. Owing to the diabolic year that was 2020, the dancers needed to stay committed, meeting on Zoom and continuing their training independently. In an effort to inspire the dancers and keep their spirits up, Claire, in consultation with the dance leaders, Nnema Mazwai and Tatenda Chigede, devised a dance day. Guest teachers, who are top in their various genres of dance, stretched the crew both physically and mentally. The focus was on skills development, body conditioning, strength and unlocking creativity. Dance styles touched on included street contemporary and classical dance. The crew ended the day with quiet reflection and awareness of their breath and body in space. This gift was certainly one the girls needed to work for as they staggered home and slept... well.

JANE MCMURRAY
HEAD OF CULTURALS



PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURAL CORNER

Do you think that being respected is more important than being liked? What is truth? Is this sentence a joke?

These topics are examples of what we discuss once a week in philosophy. Philosophy is the field of understanding and questioning the fundamental truths about ourselves and the world in which we live. It is the opening of your mind to new thought processes that you might never have considered. You might leave a session with your brain a pounding mess but that's the beauty of philosophy. There might be a few arguments here and there but that is the life of a philosopher: a battle of opinions and theories. It is the joy of being persuaded to think about situations and scenarios in an unconventional light.

Philosophy is a cultural in the Senior School at St Mary's, with which people might be unfamiliar. You don't need to know anything specific for the sessions. Be prepared to be exposed to knowledge that you weren't aware of before. Our sessions are filled with fascinating scenarios that force us to engage with the subject matter on a different level. You will create long-lasting memories with all the girls and the teacher involved. There are always laughs and jokes thrown about whenever there is a chance.

It is incredibly beneficial to be able to learn to grasp and understand situations that we might be exposed to in our everyday lives. I have participated in philosophy since Form I and I don't regret my decision at all.

SARAH-MICHELE ELLIS-CLARKE
PHILOSOPHY CLUB MEMBER

The Cultural Corner is a Google site created to capture the range of culturally inspired co-curricular activities available at St Mary's as well as the wonderful work that is produced in the cultural subjects. It is only accessible if you are logged in with your stmarysschool gmail account. <https://sites.google.com/stmarysschool.co.za/culturalcorner/home>

PASTORAL CARE

For many of us, the past year has been characterised by loneliness, worry about the future, stress, anxiety, and this is no less true for our girls. Mental health plays an important role in general well-being and so we are making this an important part of our pastoral care offering.

Over the last two Mondays, Sue Shreuder has talked to mentor groups about resilience as well as giving us a wonderful insight into how our brains can work both for and against us. An important take away from these talks was that we still have the power of choice in our own lives. We can choose how we react; we can choose to be grateful; we can choose to connect, albeit in a new way.

The Form III, IV and V girls have also begun a three-part workshop dealing with how to cope with stress and achieve greater balance, in spite of the restrictions we are experiencing.

We have not forgotten our Form Is and IIs who will have a workshop run by a psychiatrist in the near future. They will be given the opportunity to pose questions, before the workshop occurs about mental health issues to better inform the workshop content.

The house tutors and mentor teachers continue to play a valuable role in supporting and monitoring the girls. We look forward to a year of "new": New ways of thinking, new ways of celebrating, new ways of connecting.

PHUMZILE SITHEBE AND LYNN NORTHMORE
DEPUTY HEAD: PASTORAL CARE, DIVERSITY AND
TRANSFORMATION AND HEAD OF PASTORAL CARE, HOD:
LIFE ORIENTATION

SELF-ESTEAM

Self-eSTEAM is thrilled to be kicking off the first project of the year with the Form II girls from Thursday 18 to Tuesday 30 March. The project will give our students the opportunity to take a stand for the planet by focusing on one area of the Global Sustainable Development Goals. It is anticipated that the activism inspired by the project will be felt across the entire school community and, ultimately, give us all an opportunity to take a stand in saving our planet.

What is climate change?

Climate change includes global warming driven by human emissions of greenhouse gases, and the resulting shifts in weather patterns. Although the climate has changed at other times in the earth's history, this is the first time humans are responsible for the change.

According to the United Nations: "Climate change is affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives. Weather patterns are changing, sea levels are rising, and weather events are becoming more extreme."

Although climate change is a global problem, people can act to prevent it, for example, cycling or walking instead of driving; buying food that is grown locally; and using solar energy. This helps reduce the pollution that causes climate change.

JANE MCMURRAY
HEAD OF CULTURALS



GOLF

It is most exciting to welcome two golfers to our Senior School. It was absolutely wonderful to have three girls playing in the SA Amateur at the Royal Johannesburg and Kensington course in February.

These are the words from the two 13 year old golfers.

Olivia Krige says, "The SA Amateur was the first big tournament that I have played so I was quite nervous. I can remember on the first tee, that I didn't know how I was going to hit my shot because I was shaking so much. I ended up not playing so well, but I had fun and on top of that I learned a lot about competitions and golf."

Gia-Ruby Raad says: "My handicap is 9 and I played in the B division. When I played at Royal we had to caddy for ourselves and there were no spectators. I didn't play well but I enjoyed the course and still made it into the matchplay."

Samantha Whateley is a +4 handicap who played exceptionally well to lead the tournament for two rounds. Sadly, she was outplayed on the third day, but she says: "The whole tournament was a massive experience, and I am very happy with the insights I have taken away."

Prior to the SA Amateur, Samantha ended 3rd at the EP Open and since then she has played in the North West Open where she ended 9th and is currently playing in the KZN Open where she ended 3rd in the strokeplay and will still compete in the matchplay.

We are so proud of these three girls and we shall follow their progress closely.

QUIX
HEAD OF SPORT



Olivia Krige, Samantha Whateley, Gia-Ruby Raad

TENNIS

Congratulations to both Sarah Millard (Form V) and Moroesi Tuoane (Form I) on their recent results on the tennis court. Sarah lost in the finals of the U18 singles event in the Gauteng North mini-series and Moroesi lost in the finals of the U16 singles event in a tournament held in Mpumalanga. Moroesi also won the U16 doubles title. Well done to both players on these excellent results.

RENÉ PLANT
HEAD OF TENNIS



Sarah Millard



Moroesi Tuoane

WATER SPORTS

The St Mary's aquatic centre had much action last week with all the water sports coming to an end. With our sports not being able to compete, it was fantastic to see the athletes get a chance to compete even if it was amongst ourselves.

Wacky Water Polo Wednesday saw all the water polo players from U14 through to the 1st team playing in a fun mixed-team competition where points were gained through various water polo shooting drills and skills. It was a good way to end the season with an exciting afternoon of water polo.

The following 1st team members were awarded with their 1st team gowns and costumes:

Emma Morley, Alison King, Samantha Faber, Robyn Stainforth and Olivia Haselau.

The divers took part in inter-house diving. The diving points are as follows:

- 4th Phelps (20 Points)
- 3rd Furse (80 Points)
- 2nd Clayton (129 Points)
- 1st Karney (139 Points)

The individual diving awards:

- U15: Keratile Manaka
- U16: Zalika Methula
- Open: Kerry-Leigh Morrison

The swimmers waited patiently for the dreaded lightning to clear and were able to finish inter-house swimming.

The results for the inter-house swimming were as follows:

- 4th Phelps (147 Points)
- 3rd Clayton (168 Points)
- 2nd Karney (207 Points)
- 1st Furse (294 Points)

The individual swimming awards:

- Emma Franck won the 200m IM, 100m backstroke, 100m freestyle.
- Hannah Jacobs won the 50m fly
- Kiera Cloete won the 100m breaststroke

We hope that, come the third term, we will be able to compete against other schools and that we will be able to show the true St Mary's spirit in and out of the swimming pool.

KELSEY THOMSON
HEAD OF AQUATICS



FROM THE HOPE COMMITTEE



How are you, really?

There are those days that are so perfectly preserved in our minds that we can vividly recall them with the greatest detail for the rest of our lives. Perhaps when Nelson Mandela was freed. Perhaps when the markets crashed in 2007, or when South Africa won the world cup. Those days - you know them. In March 2020, President Ramaphosa declared a state of national disaster and our country hunkered down into Level 5 lockdown. That day, the day of the announcement, is surely one of those days for many of us. A day when we remember what we were wearing, who we were with, what plans we had for the week. No doubt, 2020 is etched in our collective memory.

It's been over a year since the world changed forever. How are you doing? How are your children doing? How are you ensuring that they feel safe and free of fear in this new world?

If you joined the Muse Morning webinar on Tuesday 23 February, you would have enjoyed the talk by psychologist, [Lloyd Ripley-Evans](#). He spoke of what he terms the “corona coaster” of feelings endured in 2020. He lauds human resilience and our ability to adapt - the last year being testimony to that - but he points out a common failure to recognise that we, as humanity, have been through significant trauma, some of which we are only processing now, and some of which has been made manifest in overwhelming anxiety that many of us are still experiencing.

The evidence of the impact of the pandemic on mental health is everywhere. Last weekend the Daily Maverick ran a piece titled: [I lost my friend to suicide](#). The Flux Trends newsletter recently published an article on [The Business of Loneliness](#) which reports that loneliness has become so common it has presented a number of business opportunities. Increases in impacts on mental health in both the child and adult population (lack of sleep, changes in eating, increased alcohol and substance abuse), have been widely reported by health organisations around the world.

Parents need all the help they can get.

The HOPE committee has, as its core purpose, to hear the experiences of the parent body and to respond in helpful ways. Acknowledging the sadness, loss, stress and anxiety many in our community are experiencing, we will be hosting a two-part webinar series on Mental Wellness. The topic for the first webinar will address how to equip children with the tools they need to navigate a fast-changing world successfully. It can be said without too much controversy, that mental health is complex and needs to be addressed holistically. Panelists have been selected accordingly - to provide a range of perspectives with practical elements to apply.

Our panelists:

- Busi Nxumalo - certified counselling therapist and co-founder of [Serenity Corporate Mental Health and Wellness](#). She has been in the wellness industry since 2014.
- Dr Ronelle Price-Hughes - Clinical manager /head of department: Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Tara Hospital; Lecturer: WITS
- Luke Lamprecht - an expert consultant in child protection and development; currently completing his MSc in Neurodevelopment at WITS within the Department of Paediatrics and Pathology
- Rosanne Lombard: a qualified dietician with a passion for paediatrics, gut health and sports nutrition - currently practicing at [Nutritional Solutions](#)

SAVE THE DATE:

Wednesday 24 March at 18h00 (via Zoom)

Meeting ID: 869 4302 1519 Passcode: 701669

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86943021519?pwd=a2xCNjQ0VlBDVGpITkUzTytINzdldz09>

We look forward to seeing you there.

The second part of the series will address anxiety and coping strategies for parents. Details to follow.

Stay safe. Take care.

Sarah Cairns

THE HOPE committee

Hearing Other **People's** Experiences

A PTA committee to encourage parent engagement on topics of diversity

Reach out. **We'd** love to hear from you: hope@stmary.co.za