FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL - Rebecca McMillon

There was a new voice, which you slowly recognized as your own, that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world.
- Mary Oliver

The following is a Weekly Meditation from the Rev. Daniel R. Heischman, executive director of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES). I found this article fitting for the beginning of our school year… a year full of growth and change.

Side By Side

You may know about the amazing natural phenomenon called, “The Wedding of the Waters.” This is the place in the middle of the Amazon rain forest, some 1,500 miles up from the Atlantic Ocean, where two rivers—the Rio Negro and the Amazon—flow side by side, 15–40 miles depending on the season. The two rivers travel alongside of each other without merging. Both rivers come from different places, travel at different speeds, and carry different temperatures. They play this extraordinary game of getting to know each other, and while they eventually wed, there is, in the words of one observer, “a long courtship.”

The early weeks of the school year are, for a great many students and faculty, a time of courtship. This period may be conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit.

This period of consideration takes time. As much as we hope each individual will find a home in our school, it is not something that can be forced or controlled. We simply honor that time period, that distance each one must travel before he or she is ready to merge with our particular school culture. We remind ourselves of the importance that difference makes in all of these considerations—be they differences of speed, background, or identity.

In this new ethos and environment, our hope is that individuals will recognize, in Mary Oliver’s words, the new voices as their own. As they move deeper and deeper upstream, our hope is that a wedding of sorts will take place, that in the life of the school they have chosen each one will find a home.

-The Rev. Daniel R. Heischman, D.D., Executive Director
National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES)
The month of August brought many new beginnings for our students. We jumped right into our school year with our “Welcome to School” and “All About Me” units. In these units we rejoice all the differences that make us special. The month of September begins with our “Homes” units. During these units we are learning about the different types of homes we live in and also the homes where the animals live. After the Grandparents Day celebration we will set up grocery stores in our classrooms and learn all about shopping and buying groceries. At the end of the month we will learn all about fire. We will have an exciting visit from Abilene Fire Dept. We will talk about how to stay safe and be careful around fire. These are all the exciting events to look forward to in the month of September. Don’t forget to mark your calendars for Donuts for Dads and Muffins for Moms during. We can’t wait!

Welcome to what we are sure will be a stellar school year at SJES. We cannot wait to get started in our classrooms and to really start getting to know our students!

To start the year we will have a Welcome to School unit. The 3 yr old teachers will explain rules in the classroom, on the playground and general SJES behavior. We will take a lot of pictures and do some apple observations as well as apple taste testing!

The next week unit is All About Me and also Grandparents Day. We will make handprints, and talk about our names and things that are unique about us.

The next two weeks we will talk about homes. Either people homes or animal homes. All of the things that happen in different parts of our house, who lives in our house with us, etc. When we talk about animal homes we will talk about habitats, how some animals carry their homes with them, etc.

We will also begin collecting empty boxes that have been stuffed with newspaper, and taped shut for our grocery store unit!

Lots and lots of information! Never ever be afraid to ask a question. Email us if you're more comfortable. Call us if you remember later. We don't ever want you to feel confused or out of the loop. If we don't know the answer we will find it for you!

Remember we are a peanut-free campus. We have severe peanut allergies that require epi-pens. Please be mindful that it could be someone your child sits next to at lunch. Read labels carefully - because we will and if there is a question we will put the product back in your child's lunchbox. Thank you for your help in this matter. If it is sun butter - send a note, tell a teacher. So there is no confusion. Thank you so much!
Our Transition classes are off to a great start! We have been busy learning all about our new school family while sharing about our families at home!

In September, we will spend two weeks exploring all kinds of animals and decide which ones would make good pets and which ones are better off in a zoo, in the jungle or in the wild. We will even have the opportunity to observe as tadpoles grow into frogs! Don’t be surprised if your child brings home their very own pet to care for! (Pet rocks don’t eat much, make messes or make too much noise!)

During the last week of September, we will begin our unit on color, shape and size. After making binoculars to help us on our mission, we will go on a “color & shape safari” looking for colors and shapes all around our school! There are many colors and shapes in the world around us, and we need to be on the lookout!

We hope that you will join us for Curriculum Night on Thursday, September 12th to learn more about what your child will be learning this year! It is always exciting for the students to share their school experience with family!

Book Fair is coming to our school the week of the 23rd! Make plans to attend Muffins with Mom on Tuesday of that week and Donuts with Dad on Thursday!

Thank you for sharing your children with us! We are looking forward to a wonderful year of growing and learning!

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PK 4  Tish Ferry, Tabitha Pannell, Amy Sitzes, Kay Snead, Brooke Patterson & Diane Thompson

We are busting at the seams in PreK4 this year! Two new teachers came to PreK….Mrs. Ferry joined us from Kindergarten and Mrs. Pannell is new to our St. John’s family. Mrs. Sitzes (formerly Westervelt) and Mrs. Snead are both returning from last year. We have 56 bright and eager learners in PreK4 this year so this will be such fun! Each week will bring a new and exciting theme for us to learn about! Our upcoming themes for this month are All About Me, My Family, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, Community Helpers and My Community. The students will decorate an All About Me bag and fill it with items that are important to them. Each student will share their bag with the class in order to get to know one another. Also, we will be making a Chicka Chicka Boom Boom snack using ABC cereal, raisins (coconuts), green apple slices (palm leaves) and wafers (trunk) to retell the story of the letters climbing up the coconut tree! For Community Helpers, we will discuss fire safety and much more. During the theme My Community, students will enjoy fun centers, such as St. John’s Bakers, St. John’s Veterinary Clinic, United and Pizza Hut. We will even have a real veterinarian come and show us how to care for our pets at home and we hope he can bring some fun and unusual critters for us to learn more about! Our Saxon Phonics plays a big role in helping us learn our letters and sounds and helps us to start learning to read right away. We will be starting that next week also. We are excited about our new year and all that will be accomplished!
Kindergarten  Mary Catherine Cook & Stephanie Phelps

Kindergarten is having a great start to the school year. Our theme for August is "Back to School". We have been reading many books about school such as the Pete the Cat series, Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten, Chrysanthemum, Have you Filled a Bucket? and Cookies (Bite-Size) Life Lessons.

We are learning all about our school and our classroom. We are getting to know our friends and teachers. We are learning the Eagle Creed and what it means to be a St. John's Eagle. We are learning how to be a kind friend and a good citizen.

We are busy reading, writing in our journals, and illustrating beautiful pictures to go with our writing. We are also talking a lot about environmental print and bringing items from home to put on our word wall. We have also introduced 5 sight words this month.

1st Grade  Temi Scott & Kelsey Alexander

We are so excited to have a new group of First Graders! This year will be filled with fun and new learning. The first few weeks we have been busy getting to know one another and learning our daily routines.

We have many exciting projects throughout the year in 1st Grade. Students will work on a Flat Stanley project where we send Stanley all over the United States through the mail. We will also do an exciting weather unit and wrap it up by visiting with a real meteorologist! At the end of the year students will get to write their own Fairy Tale and dress up as their main character on Author’s day as they read it to friends and family.

We are excited to love on your children and help them grow spiritually and academically. It is going to be an awesome year!

2nd Grade  Emily Lomax

Second grade rocks! I’m looking forward to a fantastic 2013-2014 school year! This group of second graders is eager to learn and energetic about all there is to look forward to this year.

We will start the first week of school with some fun getting to know you activities. We will play people bingo to find out interesting facts about our friends, we will do a speed friendship activity, and conclude the week with a friendship web. Second graders will learn what it means to read with meaning. We will learn what readers do, where they read, and how they choose their books. We will learn all about the classroom library and how to choose a good fit book. Students will get to do reader’s theater this year. The first book we will read and act out is Cook-a-doodle-doo by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel. We will make and eat great-granny’s magnificent strawberry shortcake after acting out the story.

Please join us for Curriculum Night on September 12th to learn more about second grade, sign-up for parties this year, and ask questions.
It is one of my favorite times of year: The Beginning of School! I have taught school for years, but excitement still makes sleeping difficult for me as the new school year approaches. I love seeing your children’s faces on the first day, hearing about their summer adventures, and getting down to the business of learning!

Our 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders will be using a new Reading/Vocabulary/Writing program this year, as well as a new Social Studies program. I am confident that this new material will be a benefit to our students, and we are ready to “dig in.”

Curriculum Night will be held on Thursday, September 12. We look forward to greeting our parents on campus for this informative meeting.

Happy New School Year!

As the Upper Grades Math and Science Teacher it is my goal that each child’s experience will be filled with personal growth as a thinker and learner. I am looking forward to this year’s adventure, with that said we are in full swing down in the Upper Grades hall.

Matter is everything around you. Matter is anything made of atoms and molecules. Matter is anything that has mass and takes up space. Mass is the amount of matter in an object. The Upper Grades will talk about the difference between mass and weight and how to measure as well as describe Matter.

Third Grade will focus on addition and subtraction of whole numbers, emphasizing problem solving strategies and computational skills. Students will learn new methods for solving addition and subtraction problems. They will also be able to choose from any of these methods or to invent their own computation methods.

Fourth Grade will begin the year’s work with numbers. We will examine what numbers mean and how they are used in everyday life.

Fifth Graders will polish up on their Algebraic skills as they enter into a new Math curriculum, Saxon Math. As the students take their mathematics skills to the next level they will be introduced to new math tools to help with problem solving. We face mathematical problems in our daily lives, in our work, and in our efforts to advance our technological society. We can become powerful problem solvers by improving our ability to use the tools we store in our minds.

During the month of September in Miss Joslin’s art class, the students will be doing projects based on the Italian artist Arcimboldo. This artist is famous mostly for his paintings of portraits where he uses fruits, books and other familiar objects as the parts of the face. The students in PK4 thru first grade will be doing a project using colors and shapes to create a recognizable object. The students in 2nd thru 5th grade will be doing self-portraits using drawings or cut outs of magazines of their favorite things as the parts of their face. At the end of September, all students will be creating 3D mobiles based on the different hues of color, complementary colors and how to create other colors using the primary colors.
Library  Shelley Hughes

The Summer Reading Swim Party was a great reward for students’ grades 1-5, who read and reported on five books during the summer. There were 32 students who enjoyed ice cream, snacks, and two hours of fun away from school on Thursday, August 29th. Thank you to the parents who so willingly provided food, drinks, rides and support. You are appreciated.

September in the library brings lots of book fair fun. Scholastic Books Fair will be held in the library, **Monday, September 23 through Friday, September 27, 7:30 to 8:30 and 2:30 to 4:00**. During the week there are two family events-Muffins for Moms, Tuesday a.m. and Donuts for Dads, Thursday a.m. For our new families, this is an edible enticement which the students love. We will have muffins or donuts, juice and coffee and plenty of people on hand to help find just the right books for your family. All family members are welcome and bring friends too. At the fair you will find books and much more on almost every topic you can imagine and some you never even thought of. Prior to the fair, students will have a preview video which shows some of the items the book fair has to offer. Students hear from numerous authors and illustrators of the books. Your child will make a “Student Wish List” during their library time to aid in your selection of books. Teachers will also make “Classroom Wish List”. Purchasing books for the classroom is a wonderful way to show how much you appreciate our St. John’s teachers and the importance of literacy. Please come enjoy the fair with your child. I look forward to meeting you and if the library holds a special interest for you call or email and volunteer. You are always welcome.

Technology  Jessica Taylor

I am blessed to be a part of the St. Johns Team this year. I am excited to be in the computer lab with such amazing kids. We will start the year by reviewing computer lab and safety rules. In a few weeks we will begin learning the names for the parts of the computer
and the software that they will be using early on. In the EPK building we are using iPads and the two-year-olds will become familiar with the touch screen and play basic games that each animals, colors, shapes, and letters. This is great for hand-eye coordination! The 1st - 5th graders will begin in a small course of keyboarding. Students will become familiar with the keyboard and the proper technique for keyboarding. We will be using the program Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing and freetyping-game.net to really practice our skills. As the students progress they will begin using their skills in Microsoft Word. I am thrilled to be part of such an amazing team and to be working with such wonderful students.

**Music  Colby Walker**

Hello! This is my first year as the music teacher for St. John’s. I am so lucky and privileged to work with your children. They are an amazingly talented group of individuals! I am looking forward to watching them grow and strengthen their musical skills.

During the past two weeks, your children have been working tirelessly for the Grandparent’s Day program. Many of them performed with brand new skills including, counting steady rhythms on rhythm sticks while singing, keeping steady body rhythms while singing, playing hand chimes, playing layered percussion, and dancing.

Hispanic Heritage Month is from September 15 to October 15. During this time, your children will be learning about Spanish musical traditions. They will learn the names of the instruments associated with the mariachi. In addition, they will learn Spanish songs that will be sung in an informal program.

Every month, I will feature a composer of the month. The composer of the month for September is Antonín Dvořák. The children will learn facts about his life and will get to experience his music.

**Spanish  Lydia Molina**

Bienvenidos! (Welcome) In la Clase de Espanol (Spanish class) all our students will begin the year primarily listening to stories, following commands, playing games, and singing songs.

Our Spanish curriculum, is a multi-sensory language program for preschool through 5th grade. A basic strategy (which is applied through multi-sensory games and activities) is to encourage a playful, nurturing environment that gives students the opportunity to experiment and take risks necessary for learning a new language. Through games, music, art, and informal conversations, students will learn listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension at the appropriate age level.

Additionally, during early September, we will reading poems and some books about Abuelitos (Grandparents) in honor of Grandparents Day.

Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated from September 15 to October 15, will provide us the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Hispanic Americans in the United States and the diverse Hispanic cultures existing within our community. During Hispanic Heritage Month, I would like to extend an invitation to you or any family member to be a guest speaker during our Spanish classes. I would appreciate you sharing your Hispanic background or travel experiences to any of the Spanish Speaking Countries. Please call me or stop by my office which is located in the Science Lab. ¡Gracias!
St. John’s Episcopal School’s Mission Statement:
St. John’s Episcopal School shall provide an enriched academic program that emphasizes the development of each child’s potential within a caring and Christian environment.

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Chapel Schedule

September 3rd 4th and 5th Grade
September 4th Birthday Blessings
September 5th No Chapel
September 10th 3rd Grade
September 11th Morning Prayer
September 12th Kindergarten (Cook)
September 17th 2nd Grade
September 18th Eucharist
September 19th Kindergarten (Phelps)
September 24th 1st Grade (Scott)
September 25th Morning Prayer
September 26th 3rd Grade

October 1st 1st Grade (Alexander)
October 2nd Blessing of the Animals
October 3rd 2nd Grade
October 8th Kindergarten (Cook)
October 9th Birthday Blessings
October 10th 1st Grade (Scott)

August Birthdays

1 - Brynna Lackey
1 - Scout Hall
5 - Pete Olvera
6 - Harlie Rafter
9 - Andrew Wilson
15 - Hanna Kincheloe
16 - Gage Bryant
18 - Haylee Phelps
20 - Trevor Short
20 - Dakota Zegada
20 - Sawyer Rich
22 - Stealey Crousen
24 - Ty Galloway
27 - Elena Liew
29 - Lili Owens
30 - Cole Robinson

September Birthdays

1 - Jasi Markiewski
5 - Claire Trammell
6 - Drew Mascorro
8 - Stephen Griffith
8 - Julian Reyes
8 - Camden Krake
11 - Taylor Rae Lott
15 - Claire Yoder
16 - Charlotte Darby
16 - Grant Duwe
16 - Abigail Johnson
20 - Blake Frailing
22 - R.J. Furbush
23 - Mary Catherine Cook
25 - Elizabeth Trammell
26 - Emily Lomax
27 - Grace Padon
27 - Madison Munshower
28 - Ethan Terry
28 - Deagan Nichols
29 - Stephanie Phelps
30 - Evelyn Jaeger
31 - Carla Clifford