



St. Bernadette Elementary School
13130 65B Ave. Surrey BC V3W 9M1

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December 18th, 2019

Dear Parents,

One thing I think about when pondering the nativity narratives is the notion of visits. Mary is visited by an angel, then Joseph has an angel visit him in his dreams. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth and both Mary and Joseph must travel to visit Bethlehem for the census. Shepherds are visited by angels and finally, the Holy Family is visited by the magi. These visitations are very prevalent throughout the narratives.

Today, Christmas traditions are steeped with visits of all kinds. Some travel very far to be united to loved ones, while others may only have to travel minutes to have a visit. The children are excited to have a visit by Santa Claus and another way one might experience a visitation over Christmas is by being the one who is hosting the visitors.

I mention this because St. Bernadette's has been a host for many visitors over the past few years. When guests, parishioners, teams from other schools, teachers from within our system, contractors, and my fellow principals come to our school, we are proud to be their host. I enjoy watching their expressions as they step inside our classrooms and see the dynamic learning environment we have created. I enjoy listening to the interactions they have with our students and staff. These visits always confirm that we are a great school.

Over this last year, we had a member of the Ministry of Education come to our monitoring visit that happens every six years. He was so impressed with our school that when the members of the ministry got together a week or so later in Victoria, a member of the CISVA was there and overheard him talking about our school with the other members. And just the other day, I heard two parents from another school talking as they were walking past our Lights of Hope display. One parent said to the other "This is such a beautiful idea. I wish our school did something like this." The other parent responded by saying "Yes, and I wish our classrooms looked like theirs..." and the conversation continued on as they walked to their cars. These are just two examples of the many times I hear people speaking in glowing terms about our school and the community.

Christmas is a time of visitation and with there is the gratitude I feel and experience whenever I think of our school community. We are a special community that has created some very meaningful and important opportunities and traditions for our children. I am appreciative of all the parental support and encouragement that is



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given to the many on goings throughout the year. I am also appreciative of the generosity families show towards the school, each other and the wider community. Every charity appeal that we bring to the school is met with enthusiastic generosity. It is a joy to see how much our students are involved in helping others.

We are blessed with a wonderful school community. I am very proud to hear all the delightful and pleasing comments about you and your children, about the teachers and their classes and about the school and its community. On behalf of the teachers and staff at St. Bernadette Elementary, I would like to thank you for being such a generous and precious gift to our school. You are an important and vital part of the education of all the children at our school. Our prayer for you and your family is that you may know the joy, faith, love, and hope of the Nativity of our Lord this Christmas Season through the numerous visits and encounters you will have with family and friends.

May you have a safe and blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Michael van der Pauw
Principal

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified. But the Angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.’”