

Dr. Gay Visit- Friday, January 24

Aligned with our Episcopal identity and commitment to nurturing an inclusive school community, we are delighted to welcome Dr. Derrick Gay back to campus today, January 24.

During his visit, Dr. Gay will engage students, faculty, staff, and administration in meaningful conversations that support this important aspect of our mission. He will be speaking in Middle and Upper School Chapel from 9:25-10:00, followed by leading a Middle School Assembly from 10:15-11:00. In the assembly, he will explore how jokes that go too far, use offensive language, or target individual traits can hurt feelings and harm relationships. Later, he will meet with the Upper School Diversity Council during "flex time" from 12:05-12:45, and speak in Lower School Chapel from 2:15-3:10. As always, parents are warmly invited to attend chapel services. He will conclude his day leading conversations with our faculty and staff from 3:45-4:30.

Safety Drills

Dear Parents,

The continued safety and security of our students, faculty, parents, and guests is of the utmost importance. We will hold another set of school-wide safety and security drills on Tuesday, January 28.

All students will participate in our safety and security drills which will include a fire drill, tornado drill, and campus lockdown. Teachers will discuss and guide students during these drills in an age-appropriate manner.

If you have any questions, please contact your Division Head.

Matt Radtke
Assistant Head of School

Reminder- Parents' Auxiliary Meeting

January 31, 2025, at 8:00 am in the Middle School Erwin Library

Middle School Play

Middle School Students will be performing Friday, January 31, and Saturday, February 1, at 6:00 pm.

General admission: \$10 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens (free for Episcopal students and staff)

Pancake Supper (Support the Class of 2026) - Tuesday, February 11

The Junior Class is gearing up for the annual Pancake Supper! Mark your calendars for Tuesday, February 11, 2025 from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased from any 11th grader or [from this Google Form](#). The event will take place in the Middle/Upper School Dining Hall. Looking forward to fellowship and flapjacks!



Parents' Auxiliary Valentine's Day Cookie Buffet

Parents' Auxiliary is excited to host our annual Valentine's Day Cookie Buffet on Thursday, February 13, for our amazing faculty and staff! To make this event a success, we're asking parents to donate cookies and baked goods to show our appreciation for our teachers, coaches, and staff! Use [this link](#) sign up, and thank you for supporting this faculty favorite tradition.

Lauren Dake

Teacher Appreciation Committee

French E Auction- February 22, 2025

[Buy your tickets today!](#)

Free Tuition Raffle Tickets

We are excited to announce that raffle tickets for a chance to win free tuition for the 2025-2026 school year are now available for purchase! This exclusive opportunity is

part of our upcoming French E Auction 2025, and all proceeds will support our school community.

Tickets are available for just \$100 each, and the winner will be drawn during the auction event on Saturday, February 22. Don't miss your chance to secure this incredible prize!

Our amazing French E Auction committee is selling tickets, and you may also purchase during Middle and Upper School carpool on the following dates.

- February 6
- February 11

Please contact [Hannah](#), [Alicia](#), or [Claire](#) in the Advancement office about raffle ticket information as well. You may purchase your ticket with cash or check.

A Note from Mrs. Schuhmacher

Congrats to our RoboCats on their stellar performance last Saturday at the VIQRC tournament held at Bethel Middle School in Alexander, Arkansas. Read below for more detail about their tournaments, along with some pictures. Their next competition is March 11 at the state championship. Way to go, RoboCats!

Next week will hopefully bring some more normalcy and warmer temps! Our Lost and Found is growing by the day, so please make sure you are labeling all outerwear. Feel free to stop by our PA room to look for items your child might be missing.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Catherine Schuhmacher
Head of Lower School

Winter Spirit Week- Special Dress Days (Monday, February 3 through Friday, February 7



Christmas Program Times- December 2025

Thank you so much for responding to our Christmas program survey last week. Over 80% of respondents said that they could attend the 1:30 pm program if given advance notice. In the qualitative responses, many parents expressed that the 6:00 pm performance posed significant challenges for their families due to competing commitments and the extended length of the day. In an effort to help with your planning, I wanted to share the Christmas program date and times for December 2025.

Wednesday, December 17, 2025:

- PreK - 1st Grades, 9am
- 2nd - 5th Grades, 1:30pm

Valentine Cookie Buffet for Teachers

Each year parents provide cookies to show their love for teachers. [Sign up here to donate cookies!](#)

Congrats, RoboCats!

Last Saturday, the Episcopal Collegiate Lower School VEX Robotics teams delivered an exemplary performance at the VIQRC tournament held at Bethel Middle School in Alexander, AR. Competing with 22 teams from the southwest region of Arkansas, the RobotCats triumphed by earning two awards, including one of only three championship awards, showcasing their innovation, teamwork, and dedication.

Team B took home the Robot Skills Champion Award for achieving the highest combined scores in autonomous and driver-controlled challenges. Team A earned the Robot Design Championship Award, which recognizes a team whose robot demonstrates outstanding engineering, functionality, and attention to detail.

Both teams have secured invitations to the State Championship on March 11, where they will represent Episcopal Collegiate and compete for a chance to advance to the World Championship. The school is proud to celebrate the talent, hard work, and creativity of the following students. Team A: Eli Gray, Jeremiah Goree, Tommy Hogate, Everett Weirich, Sam Williams, and Emma Young. Team B: Margaret Bronni, Max Gutierrez, Bonnie McCauley, Kennedy Smith, and Layla Turner.

Attention 5th Grade Parents

All 5th grade parents received an email earlier this week regarding picture needs for upcoming projects. Please have your pictures submitted to Meredith Linder by 1/31. Thank you for your assistance!

Chapel News

In Godly Play this week students heard the Parable of the Good Shepherd and practiced being shepherds searching for lost sheep in their classrooms.

Next week, we'll learn about loving our neighbor through the Parable of the Good Shepherd in Godly Play.

In our PreK and Kindergarten chapels we read The Lost Sheep. In our Community Chapel, Dr. Gay joined us and shared his lessons and stories celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Next week in PreK and Kindergarten chapels we'll read Who is My Neighbor? by Amy-Jane Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and in community chapel we'll hear from Mrs. Tracy Peterson and Ms. Jessica McSpadden about the educational trip they took to Kenya over the summer.

Wednesday, January 22:

- PreK 4: 8:20-8:40am, Braunfisch-Stella Boyle Smith Library
- PreK 3: 8:50-9:10am, Braunfisch-Stella Boyle Smith Library
- Kindergarten: 9:20-9:50am, Braunfisch-Stella Boyle Smith Library
- 1st-5th: 2:30-3:00pm, Erwin Performance Hall & Gymnasium

Grace & Peace,

Michelle Moore
Interim Lower School Chaplain

Pride Patrol- January 27-31

Pride Patrol is a leadership opportunity for our 4th and 5th grade students. These students should arrive by 7:30 am, help open car doors, welcome students, and walk our youngest Wildcats to their classrooms. Pride Patrol student leaders next week include:

- Mary Harmon Dickinson
- Hayes Drew
- Hamilton Fitzgerald
- Houghton Fitzgerald
- Kennedy Fitzgerald
- Lillian Glover

Super Session Highlights

- **Bookmarks and Beyond**: Mrs. Linders Silent Book Club - Join Mrs. Linder's Silent Book Club! Calling all 3rd-5th graders who love to read (or want to love reading)! Come unwind after school with Mrs. Linder in a fun and relaxed Silent Book Club where you will talk about books, read what you love and create unique bookmarks each week!
- **Parents Night Out** A Fundraiser by the Junior Class' - Drop your children off for an evening of fun, food, and festivities on January 29! Have a stress-free evening to yourself while also helping the Junior class raise money for prom! This event is offered to Kinder-5th students only.

Looking Ahead

- February 13 | Classroom Valentine's Parties, Students wear Valentine's colors
- February 14-17 | Mid-Winter Break - No School
- March 4 | Shrove Tuesday Parade and Celebration, Students wear Mardi Gras colors
- March 7 | Family/Teacher Conference Day
- March 24-28 | Spring Break - No School
- April 18-21 | Easter Break - No School
- May 20 | 5th Grade Recognition, 1:30pm
- May 21 | Field Day, LS Dismissal at 12pm

Quick Links

Lower School Live News

Find the **LS Calendar** here.

A Note from Dr. McCormick

Dear Middle School Families,

It brings me great pleasure to announce to you that our sixth annual “Nothin’ But Net Night” is this coming Monday evening, January 27. This is when we rally the entire middle school community around our basketball teams for a late afternoon/early evening of hoops and community fun. We will have four basketball games on tap, beginning at 4pm. Here is the schedule:

- 4:00 pm - 7th grade girls v CAC
- 4:45 pm - 7th grade boys v CAC
- 5:30 pm - 8th grade girls v CAC
- 6:30 pm - 8th grade boys v CAC

Student lineups will be announced by fellow members of the student government, raffles for free food will occur between each game, the cheerleaders will perform, and there may be some half-time games as well. Additionally, middle school faculty members who attend will be enrolled in a separate raffle to earn a gift certificate to the Wildcat Warehouse. Last year, we packed the house in support of our teams, and everyone had a blast!. We hope to do the same this year, so please come for part or all of the evening!

Community Service Hours

As a reminder, all middle school students are required to complete five hours of community service each year in middle school. These hours need to be documented on a community service form and remitted to Mrs. Britt in the MS Office. Mr. Binder, Upper School Dean of Students, regularly shares a list of opportunities, many of which are open to both middle and upper school students. The list is **here**.

From Mr. Binder:

"I'd like to draw particular attention to this Saturday's litter clean-up at Allsopp Park (open to MS and US, as well as families and friends). After a lengthy cold spell, the temperature should reach the low 50s on Saturday afternoon, so it'll be a lovely day to be outside for an hour or so. All equipment will be provided."

Hope to see many of you at this Monday evening's "Nothin' But Net Night."

Best,

Chuck McCormick

Winter Spirit Week- Special Dress Days (Monday, February 3 through Friday, February 7)



Health Screenings

We have started our Health Screenings for 6th and 8th graders and all new students to Episcopal in Middle and Upper School. It will take several weeks to complete. Nurse Rawn and Nurse Hopkins have started with those students that are in PE this quarter. We will not screen students on dress uniform days. Screenings will include: Vision, hearing, BP, height, weight, and scoliosis for 6th and 8th girls and scoliosis for 8th grade boys.

Please remind your student(s) to bring or wear their glasses or contacts for the vision portion of the screening. Scoliosis screenings will be performed using privacy of the Middle School Health Room or the girl's locker room in the gym. Girls need to wear or bring a sports bra or tank top for the scoliosis screening as shirts are removed to observe the back. When performing the scoliosis test, the back is visible to the observers. The student will stand straight with hands to the side, then they will bend

forward and the scoliometer will be used. The student's skeletal frame will be observed from all sides. Both nurses will be present for scoliosis screenings.

- If your child is under the care of a physician for scoliosis please let the school nurse know.
- If your child is under the care of a physician for scoliosis and it has been greater than 1 year since their last appointment, please follow-up with the physician and send the school nurse the upcoming appointment date and time.
- If you do not want your child screened for scoliosis at school, and they are not currently under the care of a physician for scoliosis, you will need to get a current scoliosis evaluation from their physician and turn the report into Nurse Hopkins no later than March 1, 2025. When you make the doctor's appointment, please send the confirmation appointment date and time to the school nurse by Tuesday, January 21 at 8:00 AM, so they will not be screened for scoliosis. (We have already started screening students).

*Parents will receive a referral letter for further testing if there is an issue detected as a result of the screenings. **Please contact Nurse Hopkins** if you have any questions or concerns.

A Note from Dr. Graham

I'm looking forward to seeing many of our 11th grade students and parents on campus tomorrow for our College Admissions Case Studies Workshop. This is an unrivaled opportunity for everyone involved to pull back the curtain on the college admissions process.

Next week is Drugs and Alcohol Awareness Week in Upper School, and Ms. TerAvest, our counselor, has organized a week of programs for our students, delivered by some local agencies during FLEX. Below, you can read more about those agencies and the nature of their work with our kids. I encourage you to talk with your child about these programs.

Also, here's **an article** about the challenges of coaching and teaching teenagers that resonated with me. I share it because striking the balance between being a "tough enforcer" and "gentle caretaker" with our kids is tricky—and our educational philosophy calls us to strike that balance everyday in our work with students.

Please keep reading to learn more about what's happening in Upper School.

See you soon,

Kellen

Updates, Reminders, and Action Items

College Admissions Case Studies Workshop- Saturday, January 25 from 8:45 am to 2:45 pm.

Admission deans from Agnes Scott College, Florida State University, Rhodes College, University of California - Santa Cruz, and Williams College will bring their expertise and wisdom of the college admission process to juniors and their families of Episcopal Collegiate School and Arkansas Commitment on Saturday, January 25, from 8:45 am to 2:45 pm. Lunch will be provided. Please make sure you have RSVPd by using this [link](#).

Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week - A Note from Ms. TerAvest, Upper School Counselor

Next week is our Drug and Alcohol Awareness week, and I'm excited to announce that this year the Upper School is partnering with local agencies [UAMS Six Bridges](#) and the [Wolfe Street Foundation](#) for this programming.

These agencies have developed a comprehensive drug prevention program called "Youth Empowerment Project" (YEP). Next week during FLEX, each grade-level will meet with an addiction specialist for education on the science of addiction, positive decision making, value development and other prevention strategies. In addition, students will hear from a vetted person in recovery who will speak about their lived experience with addiction.

This is just one example of the services that these agencies provide. If you know someone who could benefit from addiction treatment or would like to know more about the amazing work these agencies are doing, click on the links above.

Winter Dance T-Shirt Order Form

Earlier this week, students received an email regarding the Winter Dance spirit t-shirt, including a [link to the order form](#). Please know that the order form will remain open until 4:00 pm this afternoon, Friday, January 24.

Winter Spirit Week- Special Dress Days (Monday, February 3 through Friday, February 7)



Pancake Supper (Support the Class of 2026)- Tuesday, February 11

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Coming up Next Week

- **Tuesday, January 28** - Campus Safety & Security Drills- On Tuesday morning, Upper, Middle, and Lower Schools will once again run lockdown, tornado, and fire drills.
- **Wednesday, January 29** - Family Night- Students will NOT be asked to do homework on Wednesday evening or to sit for exams on Thursday. School-sponsored events will end by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday.

Athletics Schedule:

- **Athletics Schedule** Let's go, Wildcats!

Service Opportunities:

We will share **new service opportunities** for our students as they come to us.

Health Screenings:

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Beyond Next Week (Mark Your Calendars)

- Winter Spirit Week - Monday, Feb. 3 - Friday, Feb. 7
- All-School Pep Rally - Friday, Feb. 7
- Winter Dance (Theme: "Emerald City") - Saturday, Feb. 8
- Pancake Supper (Sponsored by Class of '26) - Tuesday, Feb. 11
- Class of '24 Valentine Lunch - Thursday, Feb. 13
- Winter Break - Friday, Feb. 14 - Monday, Feb. 17
- Parents' Auxiliary Auction - Saturday, Feb. 22
- End of 3rd Quarter - Friday, Feb. 28
- Fine Arts Showcase - Monday, March 3
- Spring Conference Day - Friday, March 7