



Newsletter

January 22nd, 2026

A Message from Mrs. Thompson

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I wanted to take a moment to reach out personally and thank you for your patience, understanding, and prayers during my recent absence. While I prefer to keep the details of my health private, I want to assure you that I am taking the necessary steps to fully recover so that I can return with the energy and focus our school community deserves. Please know that even while I have been away, the well-being of our students, staff, and families has remained my top priority. I have stayed closely connected with Ms. Quade, and I am deeply grateful for her dedication and care in ensuring the daily life of the school continues smoothly.

I am hopeful to return as soon as my health allows, and I look forward to being back with our students very soon. Thank you for your continued support, trust, and partnership. I am truly blessed to serve this wonderful community.

Grace and Peace,
Mrs. Jennifer Thompson,
principal@olsss.org

Upcoming Events

January

- Jan. 25th - Open House 9-11am
- Jan 25th -31st - Catholic Schools Week
- Jan. 30th - Open House 9-11am

February

- Feb. 7th - Polar Plunge
- Feb. 13th - 12:30 Dismissal & Free Valentines Tag Day
- Feb. 16th - No School
- Feb. 18th - Ash Wednesday

Seahawk Spotlight

Thank you to our 3rd -7th graders for assisting us with celebrating Mass this week!



News & Reminders

Lunch- Orders for lunch must be placed and prepaid through the FACTS parent portal. Orders are available the week prior. To order click on "STUDENT," then "LUNCH." In the top left corner, next to your student's name, you will see "+CREATE WEB ORDER."

Volunteers Needed- We are in need of volunteers for the Fr. Alexander Gala. Volunteers DO NOT need to have completed VIRTUS requirements. Help is needed on February 14th with set up from 9:00am-1:00pm and clean up from 10:30pm-11:30pm. Volunteers are needed for lunch help as well as making Cascarones (confetti eggs). Volunteers are also needed for our annual Polar Plunge! Please sign up on [Track it Forward](#) to volunteer for any of these events.

Vacation Bible School- VBS will take place July 6th-July 10th. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Mrs. Oster at grade5@olsss.org

ADW Tuition Assistance- Applications for ADW Tuition Assistance are due February 27th. Please see the attached flyer for details

2026-2027 Enrollment- Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year has opened for returning students. If you have questions please contact Mrs. Muldoon at muldoonc@olsss.org.

FREE Chick-fil-A Lunch- On January 27th students will be getting a free Chick-fil-A lunch as part of our Catholic School's Week celebration. If your child will NOT want the lunch this day, please email their teacher to let them know.


Catholic Schools Week- Pastries for Parents will now be on Friday 1/30.

Car Safety- Please help the line move quickly and smoothly in the morning by helping your students exit quickly and safely! Also please **NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN IN YOUR CAR UNATTENDED FOR ANY PERIOD OF TIME**. This is for everyone's safety.

February Calendars

FEBRUARY LUNCH 2026



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
DOMINO'S CHEESE OR PEPPERONI PIZZA ²	100TH DAY SILVER DOLLAR PANCAKE BREAKFAST BUFFET ³	CHICKEN FRIED ⁴ RICE MINI SPRING ROLLS & FRUIT	MEATBALL ⁵ SUBS, ITALIAN PASTA SALAD & LEMON BAR	GRILLED CHEESE ⁶ TOMATO SOUP "SUGAR COOKIE APPLE COBBLER"
DOMINO'S ⁹ CHEESE OR SAUSAGE PIZZA	TACOS WITH ¹⁰ CHURRO CHIPS	SALAD BAR ¹¹ 	CHICKEN BITES & ¹² WAFFLES WITH STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE CUPS	PASTA IN RED ¹³ SAUCE, GARLIC BREAD & ROASTED VEGGIES
NO SCHOOL ¹⁶	DOMINO'S ¹⁷ CHEESE OR HAM PIZZA	VEGGIE, ¹⁸ CHEESE OR TUNA WRAPS, CHIPS & FRUIT	Chicken Nuggets ¹⁹ French Fries Carrot Sticks Chocolate Chip Cookie	EGG & CHEESE ²⁰ BISCUIT, HASH BROWNS & YOGURT PARFAITS
DOMINO'S ²³ CHEESE OR BACON PIZZA	NACHOS ²⁴ WITH FIXINGS & SWEET CORN CAKE	SLOPPY JOE ²⁵ SLIDERS WITH BAKED BEANS AND FRUIT	CREAMY CHICKEN ²⁶ & BROCCOLI BAKE WITH RICE & A BROWNIE	FISH ²⁷ SANDWICHES, MAC N' CHEESE, VEGGIES

DAILY MENU

Sandwiches Available Daily:

Peanut Butter &
Jelly
Cheese
Ham***
Turkey***
Tuna Salad

Served with Chips
& Fruit

***Ham and Turkey
not available on
Fridays

Our Lady Star of the Sea School

FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <small>† Feast Day of St. Brigid</small>	2	3 100 th Day <small>† Feast Day of St. Blaise</small>	4	5	6 9:00am Mass	7 Polar Plunge 11:15am-1pm Vera's Beach Club <small>† Feast Day of Pope Pius IX</small>
8 <small>† Feast Day of Saint Josephine Bakhita</small>	9	10	11 9:00am Mass <small>† Feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes</small>	12	13 12:30pm Dismissal Valentine's Tag Day	14  2026 Father Alexander Gala 6:00-10:30pm
15	16 NO SCHOOL Presidents Day	17	18 9:00am Mass Ash Wednesday	19	20 Stations of the Cross 2pm	21
22	23 <small>† Feast Day of Blessed Noel Pinot</small>	24	25 9:00am Mass	26	27 Stations of the Cross 2pm <small>† Feast Day of Blessed Sebastian of Aparicio</small>	28 ADW Tuition Assistance Deadline



Our Lady Star of the Sea School
PO Box 560, 90 Alexander Lane
Solomons, MD 20688
Phone: 410-326-3171 Fax: 410-326-9478
Website: www.olsss.org
Email: olssschooll@comcast.net

Pastor: Rev. Robert Kilner
Principal: Mrs. Jennifer Thompson

January 21, 2026

Dear Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic School Parents and Guardians,

As we begin our re-enrollment process for the next school year, tuition and fees have been a topic of discussion. Fr. Bob and I recognize that the difficult economy has had an impact on many of our school families. We believe that an increase in tuition would negatively impact our school families, and therefore we will **not** be increasing our tuition rates for the 2026– 2027 school year. We will continue to post our tuition, according to the requirements of the Archdiocese of Washington's Catholic Schools Office. The tuition rate for the 2025-2026 school year will remain \$8400. The Catholic Active Parishioner's Grant (CAP Grant) will continue to be \$1200 per student. Each Catholic family will need to complete the Grant application and have it approved and signed by their Pastor in order to receive the Grant. The Administration Fee will remain the same at \$200 per child (max \$400 per family) and will be due with the signing of the tuition contract. Families must keep in mind that the actual cost to educate a student (approximately \$11,500 annually) is much greater than the tuition charged. We rely on support from our very generous parishes, Our Lady Star of the Sea and St. John Vianney, as well as support from our HSA, and other advancement efforts each year. Additionally, it is vital for families to complete their **required** financial obligation of (40) volunteer hours and to participate in the life of the school as much as possible. Families are also encouraged to take advantage of the additional financial assistance and scholarships available by applying annually with the Archdiocese of Washington's Tuition Assistance Program at <https://adwcatholicsschools.org/tuition-assistance/> and the Maryland BOOST scholarship at <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Pages/boost/index.aspx> Parents and guardians are **required** to apply for **both** assistance opportunities before further OLSS tuition assistance will be considered. Please be aware of deadlines. Our continued goal is to provide the highest quality, affordable, faith-based education for your child. If you have any questions regarding financial assistance and/or tuition programs, please feel free to contact the school office.

Grace and Peace,

Jennifer Thompson, Principal
principal@olsss.org
410-326-3171

Father Bob Kilner, Pastor
kilnerr@adw.org
410-326-3535



Catholic Schools
A Faith-Based Education
that Lasts a Lifetime



2026-2027 ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NOW OPEN

Apply Now

The tuition assistance awarding timeline for the 2026-2027 school year ended on February 27, 2026. Families **MUST** apply for ADW assistance prior to requesting OLSS Tuition Assistance.

Beginning October 1, families can apply for ADW Tuition Assistance through their FACT Family Portal or by visiting factsmgt.com.

- ****IRS Integration:**** FACT is implementing IRS Integration to enhance your experience.
- ****Faster Award Notifications:**** Expect a quicker turnaround for award notifications.

****Upcoming Meeting:**** Additional information will be provided during the Home and School Meeting on October 6.

Contact Colleen Muldoon if you have any questions: muldoonc@olsss.org

❄️ OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA SCHOOL ❄️

2026 POLAR PLUNGE

Returns to Vera's Beach Club!

Saturday, February 7, 2026

11:15 AM – 1:00 PM



PLUNGE SCHEDULE

Check-In (Plungers & Spectators): 11:15 – 11:45 AM | Clubhouse

🕒 Polar Plunge: 12:00 PM

* LOCATION *

- Vera's Beach Club
- 1200 White Sands Drive
Lusby, MD 20657

* WHY PLUNGE? *

Join our OLSS community for a **fun, freezing, and** all while supporting our school!

Cheer on brave plungers, **snap photos**, and help make a splash for a great cause!



REGISTER OR DONATE: myfunrun.com/ofssschool



Our Lady Star of the Sea School
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK
JANUARY 25 – 30, 2026



Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community

SUNDAY JAN. 25	MONDAY JAN. 26	TUESDAY JAN. 27	WEDNESDAY JAN. 28	THURSDAY JAN. 29	FRIDAY JAN. 30
<i>Celebrating Our Parish</i>	<i>Celebrating Our Community</i>	<i>Celebrating Our Students</i>	<i>Celebrating Our Nation</i>	<i>Celebrating Vocations</i>	<i>Celebrating Faculty, Staff, & Volunteers</i>
Opening School Mass 11am Student Council	Prayer Cards for Belize Thank you cards for First Responders	Talent Show Free Chick- fil-A Lunch	School Mass; God Bless America Theme Spelling Bees	8th Grade Teachers for the Day	7-8am: Pastries for Parents Teacher Competition Contest Winners Announced

WHAT TO WEAR & BRING:

School Uniform to Mass	Crazy Hat Day	Free Tag Day Mismatched Clothes	School Uniform with Crazy Socks	Dress as the profession you would like to be \$2 or Donations for Sisters of Devine Providence	Tag Day: Sports Jerseys or sports team shirt with jeans, pants, or sweatpants Bring a non- perishable food item for SMILE Food Pantry
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ONGOING EVENTS DURING THE WEEK:

- Souper Bowl: Bring canned items for SMILE Food Pantry
- Guessing Game
- Scavenger Hunt
- All About OLSS Quiz
- Buddy Activities



PART 3
Chapter 5
The Great Rewiring
The Rise of the Phone-Based Childhood

IN SUMMARY

In this chapter Haidt describes the four foundational harms of the phone– based childhood. These are profound changes to childhood caused by the rapid technological shift of the early 2010s. Each one is foundational because it affects the development of multiple social, emotional, and cognitive abilities

The sheer amount of time that adolescents spend with their phones is staggering! Even when compared with the high levels of screen time they had before the invention of the iPhone. Studies of time use routinely find that the average teen reports spending more than seven hours a day on screen–based leisure activities (and that is not including school and homework). The opportunity cost of a phone–based childhood refers to everything that children do less of once they get unlimited round–the–clock access to the Internet.

The **FIRST** foundational harm is **social deprivation**. When American adolescents moved on to smart phones, time with friends in face–to face settings plummeted immediately, from 122 minutes per day in 2012 down to 67 minutes per day in 2019. TODAY'S NUMBERS ARE EVEN LESS. Time with friends dropped further because of COVID restrictions, but Gen Z was already socially distanced before COVID restrictions were put in place.

The **SECOND** fundamental harm is **sleep deprivation**. As soon as adolescents moved from basic phones to smart phones, their sleep declined in both quantity and quality, around the developed world. Longitudinal studies show that smartphone use came first and was followed by sleep deprivation.

The **THIRD** fundamental harm is **attention fragmentation**. Attention is the ability to stay on one mental road while many off–ramps beckon. Staying on a road, staying on a task, is a feature of maturity and a sign of a good executive function. But smart phones are kryptonite for attention. Many adolescents get hundreds of notifications per day, meaning that they rarely have five or 10 minutes to think without an interruption.

There is evidence that the fragmentation of attention in early adolescence caused by problematic use of social media and video games may interfere with the development of executive function.

The **FOURTH** fundamental harm is **addiction**. The behaviorists discovered that learning, for animals, is "the wearing smooth of a path in the brain." The developers of the most successful social media apps used advanced behaviorist techniques to "hook" children into becoming heavy users of their products.

Dopamine release is pleasurable, but it does not trigger a feeling of satisfaction. Rather, it makes you want more of what ever you did to trigger the release. The

addiction researcher, Anna Lembke, says that the universal symptoms of withdrawal are "anxiety, irritability, insomnia, and dysphoria." She and other researchers find that many adolescents have developed behavioral addictions that are very much like the way that people develop addictions to slot machine gambling, with profound consequences for their well-being, their social development, and their families.

When we put these four foundational harm together, they explain why mental health got so much worse so suddenly as soon as childhood became phone-based.

Reflection

Dear Parents,

As part of our ongoing reflection on *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt, I would like to share a few thoughts on Chapter 5, which introduces what he calls the **four foundational harms** affecting children and adolescents growing up in a phone-based childhood.

What this research is secular, it aligns closely with what we observe daily in schools—and with what our Catholic faith teaches us about the dignity of the human person, the importance of relationships, and the need for balance, rest, and self-mastery.

1. Social deprivation

Haidt explains that increased time on phones and social media has led to a decrease in real, face-to-face interactions. Children are spending less time playing freely, resolving conflicts, and building friendships in person. Play dates are becoming fewer and fewer as children choose online gaming for their interactions.

From a Catholic perspective, this is especially concerning because we believe we are **created for relationship**—with God and with one another. Children learn empathy, patience, and forgiveness, and love through real encounters, not curated online ones. When these opportunities are reduced, social and emotional growth can suffer.

2. Sleep deprivation

Screens—especially in bedrooms—interfere with healthy sleep patterns. Notifications, late-night scrolling, and the mental stimulation of online content disrupt the rest children need... and often that of adults.

Sleep is not a luxury; it is essential. In our faith tradition, **rest is sacred**. God himself rested on the seventh day. When children are chronically tired, it affects their mood, learning, spiritual well-being, and ability to regulate emotions.

3. Attention fragmentation

Constant notifications and rapid-fire content train the brain to shift attention endlessly. Haidt notes that this makes it harder for children to focus, persevere through challenges, or engage deeply with learning.

As a Catholic school, we strive to help students develop **attention, contemplation, and wonder**—skills necessary not only for academics, but for prayer and discernment. A fragmented attention span makes it difficult for children to listen for God's voice or to be fully present to others.

4. Addiction

Many digital platforms are intentionally designed to keep users engaged for as long as possible. For developing brains, this can lead to compulsive use and difficulty setting healthy limits.

Our face calls us to **freedom and self-control**, not dependence. When a child feels unable to put a device down, it can crowd out family life, prayer, outdoor play, and creativity.

A Shared Responsibility

Haidt is clear that this is not about blaming parents or children. Rather, it is a call to **intentional, collective action**. Schools and families must work together to set developmentally appropriate boundaries that protect childhood.

At our school, we remain committed to nurturing the whole child— **mind, body, and soul**—by encouraging personal interaction, healthy routines, meaningful learning, and a strong moral foundation rooted in Christ.

Thank you for partnering with us in this important work. Please know that we approach these conversations with care, compassion, and a shared desire to help our children grow into joyful, resilient, faith-filled young people.

May God continue to bless your families and guide us all in wisdom.

Grace and Peace,
Mrs. Thompson

Join us for a Pathfinders Pizza Party!!!

Discover Your Path. Fuel Your Faith.
Join In Brotherhood!

ALL BOYS GRADES 2 – 12

A night of pizza, games, and fellowship awaits!



WHEN: Friday, January 30 6 pm – 7:45 pm

WHERE: Providence Room

WHAT: Includes pizza, games, a vocation talk, Q&A,
a goodie bag – bring friends!

WHY: God calls each of us to a unique mission —
and discovering that path starts with community,
conversation, and courage. This night is all about
brotherhood, faith, and fun.

COST: Free



RSVP Here



What Path Are You Taking
To Get to Heaven?



RSVP Text: 443-975-0741

RSVP Date: Wednesday, January 28th

Sponsored By: OLSS VIP Ministry

OPEN HOUSE | MIDDLE SCHOOL EVENT

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 21, 2026
6PM

FRIDAY
JANUARY 30, 2026
6PM



RSVP



High School with a Higher Purpose



28299 Old Village Rd,
Mechanicsville, MD



CHESTERTON ACADEMY
OF ST. MARY'S



Our Lady Star of the Sea School



Established in 1933, Our Lady Star of the Sea School is a member of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington and is a fully accredited, private Catholic school for PK-8th grade. Located on the beautiful Chesapeake Bay in Solomons, our school instills a life-long love of learning in a safe, faith-filled environment.



OPEN HOUSES
 For Prospective New Families
 Friday, January 23, 9-11am
 Friday, January 30, 9-11am



- Daily Classes:**
- + Language Arts
 - + Math
 - + Religion
 - + Science
 - + Social Studies

- Weekly Classes:**
- + Foreign Language
 - + Computers/Media
 - + Art
 - + Music
 - + Physical Education
 - + Library



- + Average Teacher/Student Ratio is 1:15
- + Daily Prayer / Weekly Children's Mass
- + Rigorous Academics / STEM Activities
- + Before Care & After Care Programs
- + Tuition Assistance Available



90 Alexander Lane, Solomons, MD 20688
 Phone (410) 326-3171

INQUIRIES



OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA
– 2026 FATHER ALEXANDER GALA –
HOLLYWOOD FIREHOUSE BANQUET HALL
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14
6:00 PM - 10:30 PM

An Evening in Paris

TICKET PRICING

EARLY BIRD (DEC 1-31, 2025)
\$100 PER TICKET
\$700 PER TABLE

REGULAR (JAN 1-FEB 1, 2026)
\$110 PER TICKET
\$770 PER TABLE


 2026 Gala Honoree
 Deacon Andy Geisz



Wine Pull and Valentine's Day Celebration available at additional costs
Proceeds to benefit the construction of the Pre-K Building
 For more information visit: olss.org/gala or call the parish office at 410.326.3535