

EICS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monthly Highlights



Madonna Catholic School students led prayer during the school's beginning of the year Mass held in conjunction with Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School on Sept. 16. More photos on Page 8.

Board Highlights

Preliminary enrolment figures continue upward trend

FAITH FORMATION

Superintendent Paul Corrigan began the September 18 EICS Board of Trustees public meeting by discussing the Elk Island Catholic Schools theme for this school year: Rooted in Christ.

The theme is inspired by John 5 and 8: "I am the vine; you are the branches... bear much fruit, and become my disciples."

During his presentation, Corrigan noted that Jesus' use of the phrase "I Am" draws a direct line from the encounter Moses had with God ("I Am Who I Am." - Exodus 3:14) to the division's theme as a reminder of our roots.

"How are we rooted in Christ?" Corrigan asked. "Are we rooted in liturgy? Are we rooted in breaking bread? In scripture? In prayer? How do we continue to stay with Him? That's the focus of this year that we'll analyze as a



EICS Superintendent Paul Corrigan's Faith Formation presentation to Trustees focused on the division's theme for the next three years.

division as we move forward." Trustee Makowecki thanked Corrigan for his presentation and the division's focus on building a relationship with Christ that can be mentored for the students we serve: "You used the word 'evangelization,' and I think that's something people don't tend to focus on," she said. "It's not only the

responsibility of the priests." More information about the theme is available on [Page 6](#).

PRELIMINARY ENROLMENT NUMBERS

Although final enrolment numbers will not be finalized until the end of September, it appears as though student registration across

the division will continue an upward trend for the 2024-2025 school year, as the population of full-time students is up by almost 2 percent as of September 18.

FACILITIES UPDATE

Facilities Director Dennis Staniland provided an overview of the maintenance that was performed at EICS schools over the summer months.

In total, Facilities oversees 18 buildings — including the Central Learning Services admin building — which contain approximately one million square feet of space and a capacity to welcome 9,500 students.

Staniland noted that his department is focused on preventative maintenance with regularly scheduled inspections to monitor all aspects of a building from grease traps, gym floors,

See BOARD on Page 3

ELK ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Le-Ann Ewaskiw
Board Chair
Strathcona County & Sherwood Park
[Email](#)



Jean Boisvert
Vice-Chair
Strathcona County & Sherwood Park
[Email](#)



Shelley Charchun
Member
Camrose
[Email](#)



Teresa Makowecki
Member
Vegreville
[Email](#)



Ted Paszek
Member
Strathcona County & Sherwood Park
[Email](#)



Dean Sarnecki
Member
Strathcona County & Sherwood Park
[Email](#)



Al Stewart
Member
Fort Saskatchewan
[Email](#)

Board Highlights

Elk Island Catholic Schools selected for Bishop’s Assurance Pilot

BOARD from Page 2

painting, and tree pruning, to roofing, structure integrity, fire alarms and suppression, air circulation and HVACs, and everything in between.

He also provided an update on Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic School, the new high school that is slated to open in Camrose in time for the next school year.

The building’s internal walls are painted, and the flooring is starting to be installed. Externally, the parking lots have been paved and trees planted.

The expectation is that Alberta Infrastructure will hand the building over to EICS early in 2025.

BISHOP’S ASSURANCE PILOT

Our division has been selected to work with the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton (CAEDM) in a pilot project for the Bishop’s Assurance Pilot, which will explore how Catholic schools across Alberta work with their local diocese to embody the Catholic faith.

ARCHBISHOP STUDENT AWARD AND ADVISORY COUNCIL

EICS has been invited to nominate Grade 11 and 12 students to participate in the Catholic Student



Facilities Director Dennis Staniland provides an overview of school maintenance projects that have occurred over the last year.

Advisory Council, which will meet with the CAEDM’s Archbishop Richard Smith in the fall and spring.

“We are excited that EICS is the pilot board for the Archdiocese,” Corrigan said.

The CAEDM is also accepting Grade 12 student nominations for its Archbishop Catholic Education Student Award.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UPDATE

The Board of Trustees accepted a ratified memorandum of agreement between EICS and the Elk Island Catholic Transportation Association, for the period between Sept. 1, 2024 - Aug. 31, 2028.

EICS HOSTED CASS

Our Central Learning Services administrative office hosted Zone 2/3 meeting for the College of Alberta School Superintendents on September 13. More than 70 leaders from Alberta schools attended.

LINKING GENERATIONS NOMINATION

Trustees nominated Linking Generations for the Alberta School Board Association’s Zone 2/3 Friends of Education award for 2025.

Linking Generations is a charitable organization that nurtures friendship and understanding between generations by connecting

students with senior citizens.

POLICY REVIEWS

The Policy Committee reviewed the following policies during the September public meeting:

- **Policy 7: Board Governance**

This policy outlines expenditures and other matters that relate to trustee professional development and governance.

The policy’s first reading was approved with the Policy Committee hearing suggested revisions to consider adding prior to the second reading, which will be held at a future meeting.

Division News

EICS Staff Opening Day Sets Tone for New School Year

All of our school communities gathered on Wednesday, Aug. 28 for our Staff Opening Day, marking an inspiring start to the new school year.

Held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Sherwood Park, the celebration opened with a morning Mass led by Fr. Carlos with other members of the clergy from each parish where we have a school serving as concelebrants. We were also blessed to have

Bishop David Motiuk from the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton as a concelebrant.

Following the Mass, keynote speaker David Wells artfully connected our division theme for this year, Rooted in Christ, with our roles as educators and administrators. The theme is based on the Bible passage “I am the vine; you are the branches... bear much fruit and become my disciples” (John 15:5, 8).

Wells highlighted how

we serve as the foundation for our students’ academic and spiritual growth. His engaging presentation balanced humour with thoughtful introspection, encouraging us to consider how well Christ is rooted in our own lives.

The day continued with David leading an

afternoon session for school chaplains, the EICS Board of Trustees, and the EICS Senior Leadership and Central Leadership teams. This more intimate gathering allowed for a deeper exploration of what it means to be rooted in Christ and how to demonstrate this principle to others.



Clockwise from top right: David Wells delivers the keynote speech for our Staff Opening Day on Wednesday, Aug. 28; Mass was lead by Fr. Carlos; Bishop David Motiuk joined us as a con-celebrant; Holy Spirit Catholic School music teacher Nellie Kimball-Blanchard performs theme song “Kingdom of God” with a staff choir; and St. Patrick Catholic School staff wear T-shirts with “I am the vine, you are the branches” written on them.

More Photos from Opening Day are on Page 5.



Division News

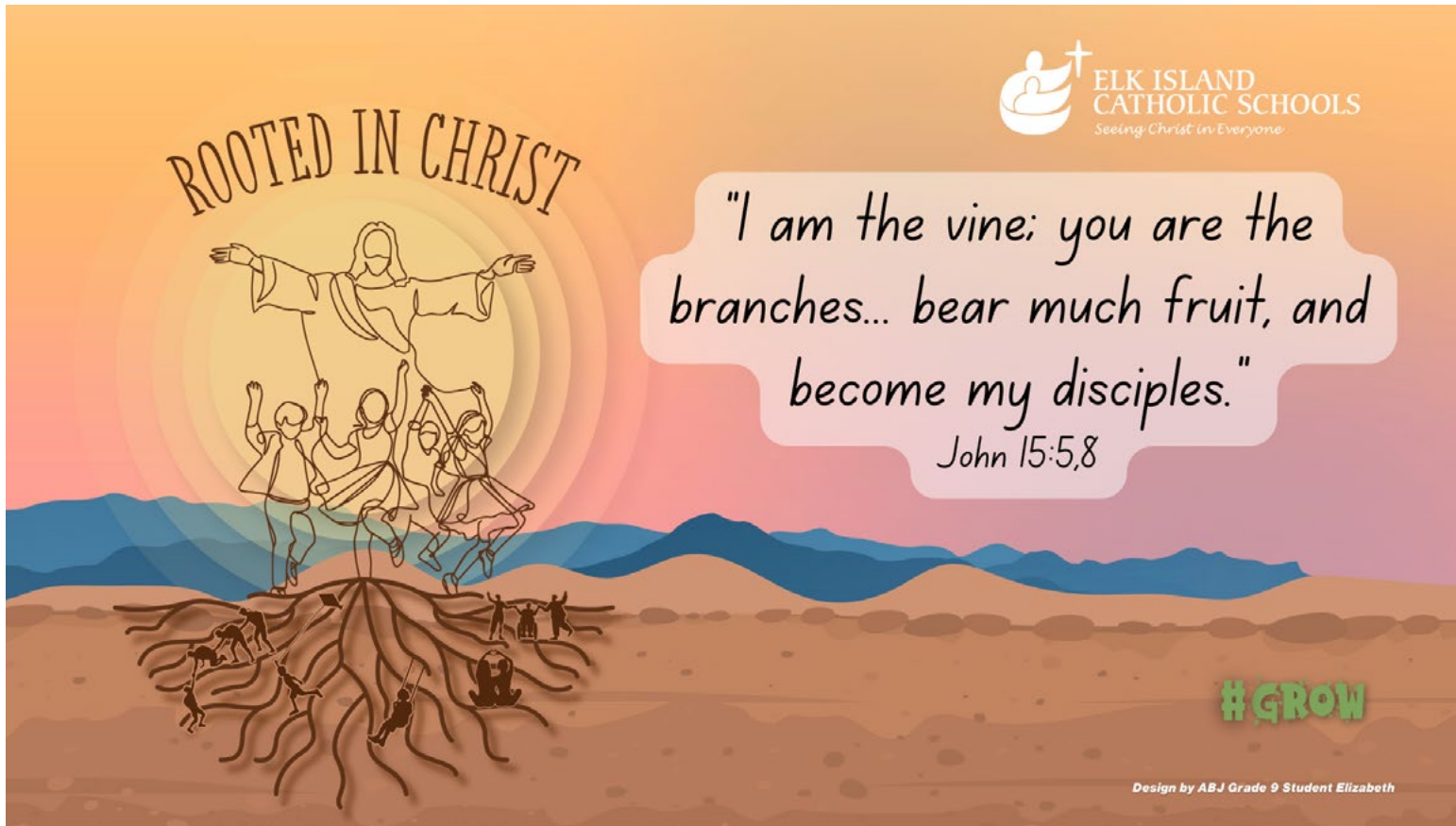


Additional photos from our Staff Opening Day.

Clockwise from top: Fr. Carlos delivers a homily; Fr. Roger Niedzielski conducts the First Reading; Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Brett Cox provides Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School Principal Ruth Tymko with a gift that was given to all school principals to commemorate this year's theme; Board of Trustees Vice-Chair Jean Boisvert (left) and Director of Student and Staff Formation Jody Seymour (right) present Sister Mary Clare from Catholic Social Services with a donation from the Mass' offering.



Division News



Rooted in Christ: Year One of a new three-year cycle

Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, Elk Island Catholic Schools is embarking on a new three-year cycle of division themes that are based on the Bible passage "I am the vine; you are the branches... bear much fruit, and become my disciples" (John 15:5, 8).

For this new school year, the theme based on that passage is Rooted in Christ. It serves as a reminder to each of us to rely on Christ as our foundation from which we grow and live in the world.

Last spring, Student and Staff Formation Director Jody Seymour worked with Faith and Wellness

Consultant Andrea Haston and a group of school chaplains to brainstorm and develop suggestions for this year's faith theme. The administrative teams from our schools also reviewed those suggestions and offered insights and ideas of their own.

The division rotates between themes of Mission, Community, and Evangelization over a three-year period, with each of these themes utilizing their own scripture. However, in their conversations with school chaplains and admin, Seymour and Haston heard a clear desire for a more

unifying connection from one year's theme to the next – so the idea of using the same scripture for each theme over a three-year period was born.

"There were a number of incredible ideas for themes for our new three-year cycle, and the idea of our faith growing and blossoming over time is such a beautiful symbol," Seymour said. "Ultimately, it is scripture that binds us to Christ, and so we decided to keep the same scripture for the next three years. I am excited to see how our schools will use their own creative ways to express and demonstrate

this for students and staff."

The themes for each of the next three school years are:

- 2024-2025: Rooted in Christ
- 2025-2026: Growing Together in Christ's Love
- 2026-2027: Christ the Vine, We the Branches: Sharing His Message

"After three years our EICS staff, students, and families will have multiple opportunities to nurture their own relationship with Christ. That is the roots," Seymour explained. "Over a three-year period, we will see

See THEME on Page 7

Division News

Art and Music: Creative Expressions of Our Three-Year Faith Theme

THEME from Page 6

that relationship blossom into service for others and the creation of disciples in our schools."

With the theme selected, a call-out was made to staff and students before the end of the last school year to submit for consideration artwork that they felt best represented each year's theme.

"We were blessed to receive so many shining examples of our three themes, and the choice to select just one for each year was incredibly challenging," Seymour recalled. "God has truly blessed many across our division with the gift of creating art, and I remain grateful to everyone who took the time to share their gift."

The selected artwork for Rooted in Christ, which depicts an image of playing children connected to Jesus by roots, was designed by Elizabeth, a Grade 9 student at Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School.

"I wanted to highlight roots spread out deeply into the ground. Then I built on that by adding people on the roots, all of them connected to the roots in some way, an interconnected community united in Christ, yet not yet sprouted," Elizabeth said. "In the place of a plant, I

put the figures of children, and above them Jesus, as everyone is rooted in Him."

She added: "My interpretation of the scripture passage was that Jesus is at the centre, being the vine, and us being connected to him, have to grow and bear fruit in our actions, to not only grow ourselves but our community."

Elizabeth also created the design that was selected for last year's division theme.

"After creating the art that was chosen to represent last year's theme (Go Light Our World), Elizabeth has designed yet another stunning illustration for our division," Seymour said. "I don't know if she intends to pursue graphic design as a career, but she certainly has a knack for it."

Elizabeth said it was a challenge for her to find the time to work on her designs, "but once I got into the feel of things, and had a clear view of what I wanted to accomplish, things flowed much more smoothly.... When I found out my artwork had gotten selected again, I was overjoyed, I couldn't stop thinking about the fact that my artwork would be used for the next three years! I didn't fully process how long that would be while making the posters, but when I found out I had been



EICS Superintendent Paul Corrigan congratulates ABJ student Elizabeth on her artwork being selected to represent the division's theme for the next three years.

selected, it was beginning to sink in."

Holy Spirit Catholic School music teacher Nellie Kimball-Blanchard wrote the theme song for Rooted in Christ, working with students to finalize the song. She began the three-week process of writing the song, called "Kingdom of God", on June 1, and presented it to her students for their input before summer break.

"As soon as I have a few lyrics and a melody chosen, I always present it to my students to see if they like it and if it sounds good in their voices," Kimball-Blanchard explained. "Their feedback is always important and at the forefront of my composing process. What I begin with as a melody and lyrics certainly evolves over time and finally I settle on how I want the

verses and chorus of the song to sound and how they complement one another."

When writing the song, she kept in mind that Rooted in Christ is the first year of a three-year cycle: "I absolutely love that we have a three-year theme that is based on John 15, and that the theme grows and builds from a rooted relationship with Christ to branching out and sharing our faith through service to others. So, as I was thinking and writing, I kept close the ideas of Mission and Community, as well as Evangelization. As we grow in our lives, we too grow in our faith."

The song made its debut along with Elizabeth's art during the Staff Opening Day on Wednesday, Aug. 28.

Listen to the full song [on our website](#).

School News in Pictures

Students and staff from Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School and Madonna Catholic School celebrated Mass at the Emerald Hills football field on Monday, Sept. 16. It is an annual tradition for these schools to celebrate Mass together start and conclusion of each school year.



School News in Pictures



Throughout the month of September, schools across the division held their annual Terry Fox Run fundraisers. Although donations are still coming in, schools have so far raised more than \$8,000 in support of cancer research.



School News in Pictures



We hosted parish priests from each of our communities at our Central Learning Services on Tuesday, Sept. 17. They were welcomed by Superintendent Paul Corrigan, Student and Staff Formation Director Jody Seymour, and Faith and Wellness Consultant Andrea Haston. This was a great opportunity for us to connect with our local parishes and show our appreciation for the remarkable work the clergy are doing in our schools communities.

Trustee Event Calendar for August/September

August 22

Evening at the Mac fundraiser for Catholic Social Services.

August 26

EICS Policy Committee Meeting.

August 28

EICS Staff Opening Day Celebration.

EICS Board of Trustees Committee Meeting

August 29

First instructional day for new school year.

September 11

Catholic Education Talks with Archbishop Miller.

September 17

Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School Academic Awards Night.

September 18

EICS Board of Trustees

Public Meeting.

September 20

Alberta School Boards Association Zone 2/3 Meeting.

September 25

Catholic Education Parent Advisory Committee meeting.

September 30

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT PUBLIC BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, October 23

1 p.m.

St. Patrick

Catholic School

4816 - 53 Ave.

Camrose, Alberta

Visit our website for meeting agendas and minutes.



ELK ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Seeing Christ in Everyone

Catholic-integrated education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in the communities of Camrose, Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park, Strathcona County, and Vegreville.

CONTACT US

310 Broadview Road
Sherwood Park, Alberta
T8H 1A4
780-467-8896
eics.ab.ca

FOLLOW US

Follow EICSCatholic to stay up-to-date on what's happening at our division!

