

Yarn Up Newsletter

Term Three 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

St Margaret Mary's community acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land where our school now sits, the Wulgurukaba Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, for they hold the stories, wisdom and hope for our future.

We also acknowledge the close connections they have had with the Bindal peoples for many thousands of years. Together they have walked and cared for this land since the beginning of time.

Let us reflect on the millions of footprints that travelled the Dreaming pathways and give thanks for their wisdom and knowledge.

Principal's Report

I could not be more proud of our First Nations' students this Term. Our students have not just survived the busyness of Term 3, they have truly thrived. On the back of our incredible NAIDOC celebrations at the end of Term 2, our students returned energised and motivated to do well. Clear highlights for the Term included our participation in the Holy Spirit School NAIDOC celebrations where our students demonstrated leadership, care and cultural pride. Our partnership with the Garbutt Magpies AFL coaching has been a great success and one of our students Ruby also participated in the Challenge Games - amazing!



This year our Emerging Leaders' have been encouraged to focus on their Application to Learning and of course, always their Attendance at school every day. Congratulations to students involved in the Open Schools' Rugby League Team and the High Performance Netball Academy - you have been great ambassadors for our College. Our First Nations' students also shone under the lights at our Maggies' Festival of the Arts with students performing, singing and showcasing their visual art prowess.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Marine Science events were a highlight for our Year 10s with four students travelling to Orpheus Island. Congratulations also to our Emerging Leaders' students who were involved in a literacy reading program with St Joseph's Mundingburra.

As we head into Term 4, I encourage our Parents and Carers to stay connected to the College through our fortnightly Newsletter and to contact any Teachers if you are worried about your daughter's progress.

Thank you to our amazing First Nations' Education Team - Louise Martin, Willie Morganson and Zoe Brown for your incredible support of our young women over the last Term.

Finally, we are very excited for our Year 12s as they participate in their end-of-schooling celebrations. Recently they attended their Graduation Liturgy, the Blak Excellence Lunch and this week their school Formal. We wish them all well in their External Exams and look forward to celebrating them on their final Graduation Ritual on Friday 21st November, where they will proudly wear their First Nations' stoles with their uniform.

God bless,
Kathleen McCarthy

BLAK Excellence Lunch & Graduation Liturgy

On Thursday 4th September, our seven Year 12 students attended the Emerging Leaders BLAK Excellence lunch at Rydges and then went to the Sacred Heart Cathedral for their Graduation Liturgy.

The girls got to hear some inspirational stories from Stan Grant and Deb Belwea. These two highly regarded and respected First Nations speakers told their stories of how they got to where they are today, and the obstacles that they had to overcome.

The students were then transported to their Graduation Liturgy which was presided over by Bishop Tim Harris.

Congratulations to our 2025 Graduating students; Narly Doolah, Jaqlyn Kepa, Danielle Major, Dakota Namok, Maria Namok, Ellie Thomson and Rylie Toby-O'Leary.







Rylie Toby-O'Leary



Danielle Major



Jaqlyn Kepa



Narzallia Doolah



Dakota Namok



Maria Namok



Ellie Thomson





First Nations Team

Term Three started with a visit to the Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School. Seven of our Year 11 students (Amaya Pearce, Darylle Sam, Kesia Bob, Jorja Neucom, Georgia Clay and Matilda Neucom) spent the morning assisting in the schools NAIDOC celebrations by running a painting station, and helping the kids to paint wooden boomerangs, emu', kangaroos and hand prints. The girls also helped out at the Face Painting stations.

Our Year 9 students also spent some time at the St Joseph Catholic Primary School in Mundingburra. Charlotte Kirkpatrick, Tilly Westwood and Violet Ziehmer spent their lunch break reading stories written by First Nation Authors to the students. Two weeks later, Shaniqua Ahwang, Racyna Binawel and Florianna Sakail went to the school to teach the students a Torres Strait Islander dance during their lunchtime as well. These programs are part of the Emerging Leaders Cultural Engagement, but they also help to build some great partnerships with other Stakeholders.

Another important partnership has been with the Garbutt Magpies Association. This organisation runs an annual AFL competition which has a large number of our Primary Schools participate.



This event is designed to promote cultural awareness and increase youth participation in Australian Rules Football.

The day also recognises and coincides with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day with this year's theme being "Little Footsteps, Big Future". We were very proud of our students; Ava Bowman, Tilly Westwood, Kesia Bob, Shaniqua Ahwang, Gemika Tapau, Racyna Binawel and Florianna Sakail, who all spent the day working as umpires for the games.

We have attended several program graduations this Term, including the QATSIF Graduation with four of our Year 12 students attending the ceremony at James Cook University in August. Congratulations to Ellie Thomson, Dakota Namok, Rylie Toby-O'Leary and Narzallia Doolah.

Term Three also saw Calleigh Reynolds, Dakota Parker, Grace Brook and Addison Ironside graduate from the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Marine Science Program. Our team were all involved, with Zoe Brown taking the girls to the Gudjuda Ranger Day in Ayr, Mrs Louise Martin taking them to the Australian Institute of Marine Science, and Mr Willie Morganson going on the four day Orpheus Island Camp with them.

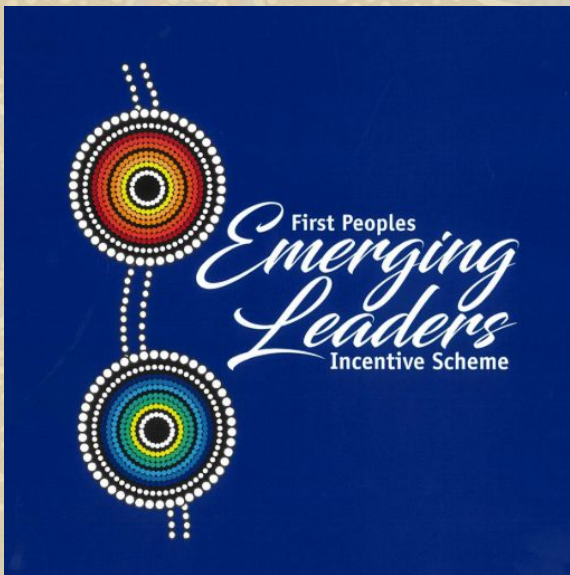
A shout out to Mrs Zoe Brown who received an award in recognition of her nomination in the 2025 Auntie Joan Hendriks Reconciliation Award and two of our students, Maria Namok and Kesia Bob, who received a Maggie's Spirit Award at our Catholic Education Week Liturgy. We also congratulate Darylle Sam who has been successfully elected as one of our 2026 School Captains! Well Done Darylle!

Our Homework Program has been going well and has seen a slight increase in the number attending, especially leading up to Exam and Assessment times. We thank Karen Flynn and Delaney Phillips for their support in tutoring our students at the afterschool tutorials.

Professional Development for our staff has also been a key focus for our Team. Zoe Brown and Louise Martin met with the First Nations Team from Townsville Catholic Education, as well as staff working in the First Nations space at other schools from across the Diocese. This workshop brings a united front and sets the tone for the passion we bring back into our schools and also gives us the opportunity to learn something new, whilst working collaboratively and seeing what is happening in other schools in our Diocese. Willie Morganson and Zoe also attended the Emerging Leaders Coordinator's Workshop at the House of Prayer. Here they discussed all things Emerging Leaders, including the vetting of all students at the end of the Program.

Kathleen McCarthy, Louise Martin, Willie Morganson and Zoe Brown had the privilege of attending the Emerging Leaders BLAK Excellence Lunch with our graduating Year 12 students. It was an amazing experience for our girls to listen to Stan Grant and Deb Belwea speak of their experiences. This was followed by watching Narzallia, Jaqlyn, Danielle, Dakota, Maria, Ellie and Rylie graduate at the First Nations Graduation Liturgy held at the Cathedral. We have finished the Term with the 2025 Formal. Our First Nations graduates looked stunning and we look forward to watching them graduate next Term.

We wish all students, staff and families a safe and Happy Holiday!



This Term has gone far too quickly, although the girls will probably disagree.

This means that the Cultural Engagement component of the program is almost complete. The final event will be the Emerging Leaders Mental Health & Wellbeing Roadshow on Thursday 16th of October at the Queensland Country Bank Stadium. A reminder that this is a compulsory event for all Emerging Leaders Students.

The girls have had an amazing journey in the Cultural Engagement space. It has been so heartwarming to watch them grow in their confidence and love for themselves and their culture. The leadership shown by many of the girls in actually leading Cultural activities throughout our NAIDOC celebration, such as teaching their fellow students some of our Cultural dances, to teaching students Cultural weaving has been wonderful to see.

Attendance has been a major issue this year for our students. Not all explained absences will be accepted as such, therefore resulting in some of these days being deducted from their overall attendance levels. We will also see "Application to Learning" being applied to their Academic results. Both of these initiatives could see some students drop in their overall level of achievement. However, we are confident that the majority of our students will still do well.

Our Team are all looking forward to our Year 12's Graduation Assembly next Term, as well as our Emerging Leaders Showcase, which will see our students being presented with their awards.

Thank you to all of our families, Mentors, staff and most importantly our students for all of your support throughout the Term.

Jezzine Cultural Day

Every year our First Nations Team takes our Year 7 students out for a Cultural Walk at Jezzine Barracks. This day includes a “Walk Talk” about the Cultural Significance of the land to its traditional custodians. The students also spend some time doing some sports and art activities.

A special thanks to Mrs Krista Hobbs from the First Nations Team at Townsville Catholic Education who will be hosting the “Walk Talk” with the students and also to Ms Hannah Bell for volunteering to run the art activities.







Year 10 World Dance Workshop

Year 10 students have enjoyed completing a world dance unit. They have learnt dances such as the Hora (Israel), Savila Se Bela Loza (Serbia) and the Virginia Reel (USA).

Special Guest Jessica Murgha, owner of Aviemore Highland Dancers Townsville, shared her experience with the students. She challenged them to learn a number of traditional Highland dances, testing their endurance with each pas de bas. First Nations student Ellie Murgha was one of the students to lead the demonstrations and helped students reach new heights with their high cuts.

Mrs Stacey Seri shared her passion and knowledge of Irish dancing with the students as they leapt over brooms and danced hand in hand, learning a traditional Celtic dance and a brush dance.

Mr Koulakis finished the unit by sharing his love of Greek dancing, ensuring that students smile and embrace the joy of the different cultures.



Year 8 English.....

During Term Two, Year 8 English students were required to read *The Inheritance Games* - an exciting, fast-paced mystery novel where a teenage girl is an unexpected beneficiary to a billionaire's fortune and must solve a series of cryptic puzzles and riddles to uncover why she inherited \$46.2 billion dollars.

Students explored Shift Wheel Ciphers, Pigpen Ciphers, and Morse Code, learning how to encrypt and decrypt various phrases. Students were then tasked with creating their own fortune and encrypting a series of riddles for their partner to find it.

First Nations students Ashlynn Murray and Amelia Clarke had it covered.



Year 8 Dance with Glen Thomas

Our Year 8 Dance students were treated to a workshop by experienced industry professional, Glen Thomas.

Glen fused traditional contemporary dance technique with traditional First Nations movements. He led students through a warm up and travelling combinations that challenged them to experience a new way of moving through space.



Year 9 Music Guests

During the Term, Mr and Mrs Lui visited the Year 9 Music class to demonstrate musical instruments of the Torres Strait Islands. They spoke about the history of the drum and shakers and then performed for the class.



Holy Spirit Catholic School NAIDOC Celebrations

A group of our Year 11 Emerging Leaders students visited the Holy Spirit Catholic School to take part in their NAIDOC celebrations.

Our students had an amazing time running the painting station, where they helped students decorate wooden boomerangs, emus, kangaroos and handprints. They also assisted with the face painting and temporary tattoo stations, making it a fun day for all involved.

These students made some great new friends and were very appreciative of the welcome that they received. Congratulations to Amaya Pearce, Darylle Sam, Kesia Bob, Georgia Clay, Eva Lui and Jorja and Matilda Neucom.

Well done to Faith Stone for being a part of the Torres Strait Islander Dance Group that performed at the assembly, and also Shaniqua Ahwang for assisting in the celebrations as well.

This is one of the highlights for our students here at the College.



QATSIF Graduation

Congratulations to Ellie Thomson, Dakota Namok, Rylie Toby-O'Leary and Narzallia Dollah who graduated on Tuesday the 5th of August at the QATSIF Graduation ceremony held at James Cook University.



Photo: QATSIF facebook 2024



ATSIMS

This year we have five of our Year 10 Emerging Leaders students (Addison Ironside, Chloe Lewis, Calleigh Reynolds, Grace Brook and Dakota Parker) participating in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Marine Science (ATSIMS) Program.

This program offers Year 10 First Nations students hands-on opportunities to explore marine science, citizen science, and Sea Country stewardship.

Delivered in partnership with leading reef organisations like Australian Institute of Marine Science, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, ATSIMS connects students with the future of reef conservation and marine management.

The curriculum is led by a range of industry leaders and experts and is supported by Traditional Owners, and First Nations Land and Sea Ranger groups.





Gudjuda Ranger Day





Orpheus Island Trip



Visit to the Australian Institute of Marine Science.



Beautiful scenery at Orpheus Island





2025 ATSIMS Graduation



Garbutt Magpies AFL Cup

In Week 3, seven of our Emerging Leaders travelled to Gills park Oval to join in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day celebrations of the annual Garbutt Magpies AFL Cup. This Carnival brought together 27 Primary School teams from across the region to compete in the competition. Congratulations to St Michaels (Palm Island) and St Anthony's for taking out the cup in the two division.

Our Emerging Leaders students spent the day displaying their Leadership skills by umpiring the games and assisting with the scoring. It was wonderful to see their confidence build as the day progressed and they became more comfortable with their roles. We were overwhelmed with the positive feedback we received from officials about the girls perseverance and flexibility with the umpiring schedule.

The girls were wonderful ambassadors for the College and the Emerging Leaders Program. Thank you Kesia, Racyna, Florianna, Tilly, Ava, Shaniqua and Gemika for your wonderful contribution to the day.



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Mundingburra

A new Emerging Leaders initiative for the College this year is to have some of our ELIS students visit St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Mundingburra and do some activities with the younger students. These visits were done in Weeks 4 and 6, with our Year 9 students participating in groups of three. Charlotte Kirkpatrick, Violet Ziehmer and Tilly Westwood enjoyed some reading time with the students in Week 4, whilst Shaniqua Ahwang, Florianna Sakail and Racyna Binawel were proud to show the kids a popular Torres Strait Islander sit down dance in Week 6.



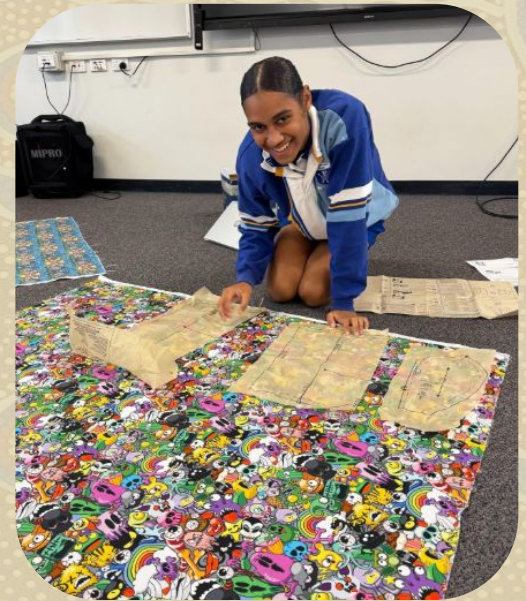
Year 7 Humanities.....

In Week 5, our Year 7 students explored the Wulgurukaba Ethnobotanical Trail, learning how First Nations people have used native plants for thousands of years as part of their Deep Time Australia Studies.



Senior Fashion.....

Our Senior Fashion students have been busy designing their own fabric prints. Once this was done, their designs were then printed on fabric which will now be used to make a garment they will claim as their very own, from start to finish.



Inaugural Science Fair.....

We celebrated Science Week with our very own College Science Fair that was led by our Year 7 UQ Science Ambassadors. Students from Years 9 - 12 showed just how fun, creative and curious science can be; from making ice cream using a bike, exploring the evolution of whales and capturing some awesome animal photography.....



Year 10 Transition Day

On Monday 15th September our Year 10 students were treated to a wonderful group of guest speakers and a delicious lunch at the RSL.

Our First Nations students had an awesome day and could not stop talking about it. Well done to Renee Deuble our Year 10 Pastoral Middle Leaders for organising a truly inspirational day for the girls.



2025 - Year 12 Formal

It was heartwarming to see our beautiful First Nations students looking absolutely stunning at their Formal on Tuesday 16th September.

Congratulations to Rylie Toby-O'Leary, Dakota Namok, Ellie Thomson, Maria Namok, Narly Doolah, Jaqlyn Kepa and Danielle Major.

We are so very proud of all of them. (More photos in the next Yarn Up)



Shout Out to...



...our very own Mr Morganson who was one of the original Cowboys Players in 1995. It was wonderful to see him being acknowledged at the 30 Years celebrations at the Cowboys Home Game.



....First Nations student Darylle Sam who has been elected as one of the College Captains for 2026.

Darylle has been a Gold Level Emerging Leaders student for several years and will Lead and Represent the College with pride.



..... Kesia Bob and Maria Namok for being acknowledged for their hard work and commitment through the Maggie Spirit Award. And also to Ms Zoe for being nominated for the Aunty Joan Hendriks Reconciliation Award.



Out & About



Thank you to Matilda and Jorja Neucom for taking part in the Clean Up Australia Day.

They were part of a group of SMMC students and staff to dedicate part of their afternoon to cleaning up McKimmon Park.

Shelise Scaife was one of our talented Year 7, 8 and 9 students who created PJs, tote bags and pencil cases to be featured at the 2025 Townsville Show. She is also a sewing wiz at Samaritan Angels.



Gemika Tapau and Teshaylia Tanna dressed as Willie Wonka and his Oompa Loompa to our SMMC Book Week celebration

Charlotte Kirkpatrick participated in the College Bake-Off in Term Three.



Congratulations to Dakota Parker and Jorja & Matilda Neucom who were part of our Bella Voce Choir who took out 1st place at the Townsville Eisteddfod



Louise Martin and Zoe Brown at at the Townsville Catholic Education First Nations Networking PD



Alumni
Ella Raciti
Class of 2023



Ella Raciti is a youth advocate from Townsville currently studying journalism in Brisbane. Since graduating from St Margaret Mary's College in 2023, she has focused on advancing healthcare, child rights and youth justice through lived experience and community engagement.

She has been selected for nine national leadership programs at major universities and holds a CSIRO Indigenous Women's STEM Academy Scholarship, which included meeting Australia's Chief Scientist and the Governor-General.

During high school, Ella was nominated for the Bishop Michael Putney Student of the Year Award and was a three-time semi-finalist in the 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards. Her advocacy work continues to centre young voices in shaping policies and systems.



ACADEMIC.
CULTURE.
FAITH.
SPORT.

Year 11 students Jorja and Matilda Neucom were part of our Bella Voce Choir that sang at the Catholic Education Mass with the St Joseph's Catholic School Mundingburra Choir to start our Catholic Education Week celebrations.



It was great to see Sadie, Zahra and Annabelle with their family, helping out at the Garbutt Magpies AFL Cup.

Dakota Parker was one of five of our Bella Voce students who went to Cairns to participate in the State Honours Ensemble Program. This event was organised by the Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University and is a wonderful way to bring together our young musicians from around Queensland.

Athletics Carnival

Congratulations to Anunaka in taking out both the House Spirit Award and Athletics Champions for 2025! An incredible effort on and off the track!

We also congratulate our very own Narly Doolah who took out her Age Group Champion and broke six records.

Along with all the other students, our First Nations students had a fun and energetic day of sport and school spirits.



Jaqi Kepa cheering with her Alinta House leaders.

Senior First Nations Leader Rylie Toby-O'Leary in the winning team for 2025.



Skye, Florianna, Racyna and Naraira cheering their teams, along with Cian and Mrs Flynn.



Senior First Nations Leader Dakota Namok, along with Maria Namok, Ellie Thomson and Narly Doolah in the Karinya team.



QISSN

Our SMMC QISSN team traveled to Bundaberg over the holidays to compete. The girls played with class, grit and dignity and we could not be prouder of their efforts.

In a fitting tribute, all of our Year 12s were on the court when the final whistle blew - their last game in the SMMC dress.

Our very own Danielle Major was named the SMMC MVP. This medal is awarded to the player in each team who receives the most votes from coaches during the tournament. Well done Danielle!



Our Vicki Wilson Shield team travelled to Brisbane to compete in the Vicki Wilson Finals in Week 4 of this Term. First Nations students Talea Major and Daijah-Lee Kupfer Sorbello were part of this team.

Congratulations to all the girls who played. They finished 14th out of over 100 teams from around Queensland



Congratulations to Dior Daisy and our SMMC Opens Touch Teams who will head to the Queensland All Schools event in October.

Confraternity

Congratulations to our SMMC Rugby League Team who traveled to Rockhampton to compete in the Confraternity Competition. Our girls finished 4th in the 1st Division.

Congratulations to all our First Nations students in the Team. Dakota Namok, Maria Namok, Narly Doolah, Ellie Thomson, Sadie Desatge and Sarah Dawson. Shout Out to Dakota and Maria who have competed in this competition for the last three years.



Congratulations to Gemika Tapau, who was one of three students who recently represented the U16s Brolgas at the Queensland Country Rugby Union Championships and came away as the U16 champions!



Congratulations to our Yr 7 / 8 Karyn Murphy Cup Team who went through the tournament undefeated. Special mention to our First Nations students, Maleah Daisy, Tameeliah Nona and Mackenzie Fogg.

Congratulations to our Year 9 & 10 AFL girls for making it to the Grand Final.. Unfortunately they lost to St Monica's College.

Well done to Teshaylia Tanna, Taya Zaro, Ava Bowman and Ursula Bengaroo.



Sera-Elaine Tilagucaguca is a member of our College Year 7 & 8 AFL Team that won their grand final against Cairns State High School in the AFLQ StreetSmarts Schools Cup. They now advance to the State Finals in Maroochydore in October. Well Done Girls.



Yarn Up Book Corner!

Ngurra Home

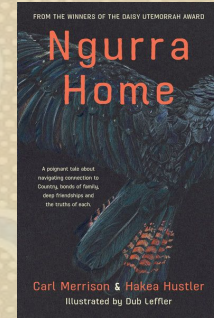
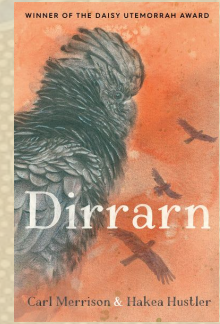
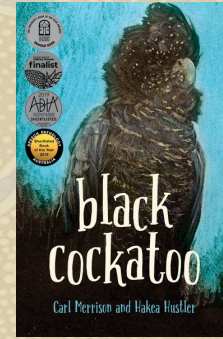
By Carl Merrison & Hakea Hustler

With Riitta Booth

Ngurra Home is the final book in the series by Carl Merrison & Hakea Hustler. It follows the life of Mia, who is now in her final year of university studying Bachelor of Conservation and Wildlife. She works part-time at a veterinarian surgery and does voluntary work for the local animal sanctuary in Perth. Mia comes from Jara, which is a community in the East Kimberleys. She required strength and determination to go to the city to study but as she keeps telling herself it is for her 'community'.

When her grandfather falls ill she goes home [Ngurra] to him as 'family always comes first'. Here she reunites with her family and discovers a rift between her community and a proposed mining development site. It is then that she is reminded that 'If you don't push out of your comfort zone, you'll never fly' and the pull of family and the stakes of protecting country lead her into meaningful action.

This is an inspiring read for young readers and reminds them of the need for strength, identity and responsibility.





Term Four Calendar

October:

6th - PUBLIC HOLIDAY

7th - PUPIL FREE DAY

8th - Back to School

14th - Homework Program starts

16th - Mental Health Roadshow

20th- FNEAC Meeting

24th - Year 12 Final Assembly

27th - Year 12 External Exams begin

November:

10th - ELIS Presentation Night

11th - Last Day Homework Program

19th - Year 7 Orientation Day

21st - Year 12 Graduation Ritual

25th - Year 11 Block Exams begins

26th - Year 10 Block Exams begins

28th - Christmas Liturgy

28th - **Last Day of School**