



Venango Region Catholic School

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

St. Stephen School students will celebrate **Mardi Gras** on **Tuesday, February 13** with a parade, relay games, and dancing. Students have been grouped into teams and assigned a Mardi Gras color, either green, purple, or gold. At the end of the festivities, there will be a prayer service, and the Alleluia banner will be "buried." This is a great way for the school community to begin the holy, penitential season of Lent, as Ordinary Time comes to an end. The afternoon will conclude with cupcakes in the school cafeteria.

Speaking of treats, some Venango Catholic alumni may recall fond memories of eating Polish *paczki* on "Shrove Tuesday," a.k.a. Mardi Gras, when **Rev. John Malthaner** was headmaster at VCHS (circa 1999 - 2012). It was an annual tradition for Father John to order the cream or jelly-filled pastries from a bakery in Erie to share with the students and staff.

This year **Ash Wednesday** falls on the February 14 (Valentine's Day). VRCS will celebrate an all-school liturgy, and students will be marked with ashes on their foreheads. (*"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*)

Here's a digital archive throwback to Lent from almost a decade ago, courtesy of **Rev. Shane Mathew**, VCHS Headmaster from 2012 - 2016:

 Venango Catholic HS @VenangoCatholic · Feb 18, 2015
Embracing deeper spirituality for #Lent #ashtag



 Venango Catholic HS @VenangoCatholic · Feb 18, 2015
If everyone has #ashes, nobody looks different #Lent #ashtag



FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

A RECAP OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI + TEACHER FEATURE

VCHS ATHLETIC WALL OF FAME + 1000 POINT PLAYERS

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Thank you to all those who helped make the **29th Annual Reverse Raffle** on Saturday, January 27 at the Seneca Volunteer Fire Hall a success, especially our donors, volunteers, and participants.

TEACHER FEATURE

NAME: **Andréé Sporer** (SPS '78, VC '82)

EDUCATION / CERTIFICATIONS:

I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Human Growth and Development from Mercyhurst University in 1986. In 1995, I earned an Instructional II Elementary K-6 certification. In May of 2002, I met all the requirements for a Letter of Equivalency for a master's degree in Pennsylvania.

TEACHING CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

I became a teacher in 1984 at only 20 years old. Forty years ago this coming September, I welcomed my first class of second graders—that class consisted of 14 girls and 15 boys.

I taught (Kindergarten - Grade 2) for 33 years at the former St. Patrick's School. This is my fourth year teaching at St. Stephen School.

WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU TEACH?

Currently, I teach ELA, Math and Religion to second-graders and Religion to third-graders.

Over the years, I have also taught Social Studies, Health, Science, Physical Education, Music, and Art. I also taught Religious Education on Sunday mornings before I became a mother.

BEST PART OF TEACHING AT VRCS?

I love being able to talk and teach about my best friend, **Jesus**. I enjoy helping others learn the tools needed to stay close to Him. I find my purpose and vocation in life by teaching in a Catholic school. I am able to do God's will by growing the faith and passing it on to the next generation. Here at VRCS, I see people working as a team for Christ while being His hands, feet and voice in Oil City, PA.

BEST ADVICE FOR STUDENTS:

Put God first in your life and live with JOY. As long as He is the captain of your boat, you will not sink. Be positive. Be thankful. Be your best. Be Christ-like in your words and actions. Love and forgive. Don't live in the past; if God wanted us to live in the past, He would have attached rearview mirrors to us when we were born. Pick your friends wisely; you will become like them. A true friend will protect your soul. Do the job you were born to do. Be yourself. Don't worry what others think about you or say about you, because the only thing that matters is what God thinks about you. Don't be afraid; you are not alone. God loves you just the way you are. You are special! Follow the commandments. They are a gift from God and the roadmap to Heaven.

FAVORITE WORDS TO LIVE BY:

My favorite motto is from **Saint Padre Pio**:

"Pray, hope, and don't worry."

Prayer is vital to keeping connected to Jesus, and like the Bible says: "A day that starts with prayer seldom comes unraveled." **Hope**, because without it I cannot find and live with **Joy** (Remember: **Jesus** - 1st, **Others** - 2nd, and **Yourself** - last). Don't worry, because God doesn't want us to worry or be afraid. He wants us to trust and have **Faith** (a **Fantastic Adventure In Trusting Him**). Like **Saint John Paul II** would say, "Be not afraid!"

Another favorite quote from the Bible that I like is, "I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5). This reminds me to stay connected to Jesus, so that I am able to do the work that I was called to do. I feel that I was called to teach in a Catholic School.

SHARE A FEW OF SUCCESS STORIES:

I got the opportunity to teach my two daughters in second grade. One of my former students became an Erie diocesan priest and baptized my first grandson. Additionally, I've taught the second generation of three of my former students.



Mrs. Andréé Sporer has deep connections to Catholic education in the Venango region. She is the ninth child (and the seventh daughter) of the late **Sargent Lee A. Hugar** and the late **Ina Peavy Hugar**. Mrs. Sporer's dad was on the committee to have Venango Christian built in the 1960s.

She is the mother of three adult children, all graduates of St. Patrick School and Venango Catholic High School. In addition to her role as a mom and veteran teacher, Andréé is the proud grandmother of six little ones, all under the age of seven.

In her interview, Mrs. Sporer mentioned her gratitude for the guidance and support she received from the late **Monsignor John R. Snyder** and all the **Sisters of Mercy** who guided and mentored her along the way.

SCHOOL UPDATE



MULTIPLICATION MADNESS ENSUES AT ST. STEPHEN SCHOOL



One of the most important skills a student can have is to know their multiplication facts. By fourth grade, students should have a basic fluency in not only addition and subtraction facts but in their multiplication and division facts.

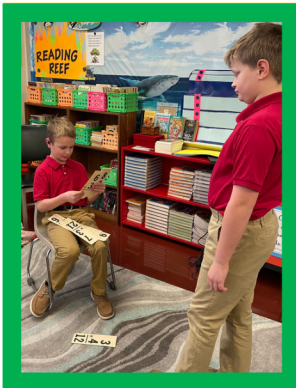
According to a recent *Education Week Survey*, most math teachers agree that it's "essential" for students to have fact fluency for topics such as: Long Multiplication, Long Division, Fractions, Decimals, Volume, Area, Ratio/ Proportions, and Algebraic Equations.

Cognitive scientists say fact fluency frees up brainpower or working memory, allowing the learner to do more complex mathematical work.

During the month of December, all students in second through sixth grade got an extra dose of multiplication to help with their math fact fluency skills.

Students practiced almost every day of the month in their own classrooms or together in groups to help each other to learn their facts. Grade 3 helped by leading the "three times tables" over the PA system. Other activities included: Group Flash Cards, Times Tables Announcements, Multiplication Bingo, and Math Fact Music.

Article and photos contributed by:
Mrs. Martina Love, Mrs. Andréé Sporer, Mrs. Alicia Damon, and Ms. Mary Anne Oliver



Rebekah Deal distributes dictionaries to all of the VRCS fourth-grade youth. Thank you to the **Rotary Club of Oil City** for this generous gift!





VC TEENS CAN DANCE + SING

Special thanks to **Ms. Shannon Goreczny**, **Mrs. Mary Beth Hutchinson**, and **Ms. Jessie Pyle** for serving as the "key organizers" for the senior high dance last month.

NOW

Saturday, January 13, 2024

Students in Grades 9 - 12 attended a winter formal at VC on January 13th. **Kyle Beichner** was crowned Winter King, while **Olivia Miller** was crowned Winter Queen. **Lincoln Kauffman** (above left) and **Morgan Wessell** (above right) were also part of the court. The theme was "Winter."



Submitted photo

THEN

Thursday, January 23, 1964

According to an article printed on page 12 of The Oil City Derrick, Venango Christian High School freshmen were invited to a "Frosh Dance" to be held in the VCHS Gymnasium on February 7, 1964. The theme of the dance was "Shower of Hearts."

PMEA DISTRICT 3 CHORUS

Venango Catholic High School seniors **Olivia Miller** and **Alice Moll** recently participated in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 3 Chorus at Freeport High School. The students' teacher is Mary Beth Hutchinson.



Catholic Schools Week: VRCS Travels Back in Time

As a fun way to celebrate, **Principal Chandley** invited students and staff to step up their fashion game. Every day presented a new theme (see daily activities below), and youth from preschool to twelfth grade got creative! The entire school community had a great time commemorating the different eras. It was a week for the memory books, culminating with the **"100th Day of School"** on Friday, February 2, 2024.

Celebrating Our Community

1950s Sock Hop

Rock n' Roll in Poodle Skirts or Leather Jackets.

SSS: Afternoon Sock Hop and Ice Cream Social

VC: Board Games and Treats

'50s

Celebrating Our Students -

Tie Dye Day

Peace, Love, Disco, and Bell-bottom Jeans.

SSS: Bring a Guest to Lunch

VC: Cosmic Bowling @ Seneca Lanes

'60s
'70s

Celebrating the Nation -

Neon Nation

Time to Party with Big Hair and Bright Colors!

SSS: Bowling @ Seneca Lanes

VC: Shark Tank!

'80s
'90s

Celebrating Vocations

A Nod to Grunge Plaid, Y2K, and Digital Connectivity.

All-School Mass at Venango Catholic

2000s



ST. STEPHEN, VC STUDENTS ENJOY BOWLING, SHARK TANK

By: Makayla Keating

Original Publication Date: 2/1/2024

Sometimes the best days of school for children are the ones where they can create long lasting memories with their friends and teachers.

That's been the case this week for Venango Region Catholic School students who attend St. Stephen Elementary School and Venango Catholic High School, both in Oil City, as they've been celebrating Catholic Schools Week.

The National Catholic Education Association website says the week is observed "with Masses, assemblies and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members to celebrate what makes Catholic schools great."

Wednesday was a busy day as almost 100 kindergarten through sixth-grade students who attend St. Stephen spent the morning bowling at Seneca Lanes.

Meanwhile, Venango Catholic High School students participated in a Shark Tank event Wednesday afternoon.

The St. Stephen kids appeared to have a blast at Seneca Lanes as they cheered each other on and celebrated whenever someone picked up a strike or spare.

The younger students bowled with the bumpers while the older kids tried their hand without them.

While kids were patiently awaiting their next turn, they would sing and dance to the music playing through the speakers, which included DJ Casper's 2000 pop classic "Cha-Cha Slide," which many students knew by heart.

Ray Feroz, the interim president of the Venango Region Catholic School system, said this week is an

opportunity for the students to get out and participate in activities that they don't usually get to do on school days.

School system principal **Katie Chandley** said the students have been enjoying themselves this week.

Second grader **Roman Hartle** confirmed as much when he said at Seneca Lanes "This is the best day of school of my entire life." And third grader **Deanna Lander** agreed.

"It's a nice week," Feroz said. "If people have been anxious about something this is a great way to relieve it."

The high school students had their chance to bowl Tuesday before doing the Shark Tank activity Wednesday.

Almost 50 students in grades seven through 12 participated in Shark Tank, and they had 40 minutes to create the next "it" invention. They were separated into eight groups with varying grades in each group.

The Sharks included **George Cavanaugh**, who served as Human Services director for Venango County from 1986-2004 and is a 1968 Venango Christian graduate; **Chris Wilbert**, also a 1968 VC graduate who had a long career as an officer with Quaker State; **Chad Snyder**, who started working with Snyder Electric at 14 years old and purchased the business from his father in 2014; and **Deborah Eckelberger**, the development director of the Franklin Industrial and Commercial Development Authority.

After their 40 minutes were up, each group had three to five minutes to pitch their idea to the judges as they explained how the invention works and answered any questions the Sharks had for them.

Inventions ranged from items such as Kat Kaboodle, which is designed to keep cats entertained while their owner isn't home; a Hamper Helper,

which comes with a strap so the consumer can carry it over their shoulder while carrying other things such as a phone or drink in their other hand; a Sea Baby, which works similarly to an audiobook but reads stories about jellyfish and other aquatic animals to babies; and more.

The Hamper Helper group won and was awarded a McDonald's gift card.

As the students were hard at work with their inventions, Chandley said the school did this activity with students a few years back and that they did "pretty well."

"I'm excited to see what they (the students) come up with," she said.

Chandley also noted that "from an adult perspective, it's nice to see them (the students) work together."

Students and staff have been dressing down as they would have in different decades throughout the week, starting with the 1950s Monday going to the present.

Activities at St. Stephen have included a sock hop and ice cream social Monday and bringing a guest to lunch Tuesday. They will participate in in-house activities Friday afternoon.

Venango Catholic students participated in board games and had some treats Monday, and they will have a pep rally Friday.

Today, all but the pre-school students will be at VC. The St. Stephen kids will have lunch in the VC cafeteria while the high schoolers will have some outdoor fun, weather permitting.

The students will also attend Mass together[...] today [Thursday, February 1st].

Friday marks the 100th day of school, so students are invited to dress like they are 100 years old. 🇺🇸

Permission to reprint this article was granted by Makayla Keating, staff writer for The Derrick and The News-Herald.

Makayla can be reached at makaylakeating.thederrick@gmail.com.



ALUMNI CORNER

Editor's Note: *If you are a "history buff," you may enjoy this information from the VC archives. If you aren't familiar with heraldry, you may want to consult a dictionary or Google for a little help with definitions... e.g. "or" is French for "gold," and "argent" refers to "silver."*

THE HISTORY OF THE VC COAT OF ARMS



BLAZON

Per pale. The dexter side or, mountains or, a river sable, an oil derrick argent, a plow argent. The sinister side or, a dove proper, the letter "V" sable, a boat proper with a star and waves argent. The chief embattled sable, six roundels argent, a Maltese cross argent, a stole argent, a cross sable. The crest a crown or. The mantling or. The motto "Reddite Deo."

SIGNIFICANCE

The shield is divided per pale (divided in three equal parts). The central or chief portion is a Maltese cross and stole borrowed from the crest of **John Mark Gannon, Archbishop**, Bishop of Erie. This is also representative of the **Benedictine Sisters** who have served the community for over ninety years.

The stole, a symbol of the diocesan priesthood, encloses the cross to acknowledge the diocesan character of the school whose development was part of a master plan which includes five high schools and St. Mark's Seminary. It is emblazoned with six roundels which are symbolic of the six parishes represented at Venango Christian: St. Joseph, St. Stephen, Help of Christians, Assumption, St. Venantius and St. Patrick.

The crest, the crown of Mary, Queen of Saints, indicates that sanctity is the ultimate goal of the Christian student and may be pursued under the loving patronage of the Mother of God.

The derrick dexter represents the communities of Franklin and Oil City, the immediate circle of influence upon which Venango Christian education will have its effect. The mountains indicate the source from which the school draws its youth, while the river winding its way through the mountains depicts the common link among the chain of parishes under whose patronage the institution evolved.

The plowshare reminds the student of his obligation to his federal, state and local governments. This symbol is adopted from the coat of arms of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The sinister side of the field, the V-bark sailing onward, represents the Venango Christian High School student (the ship is a figure often used to denote the search for Wisdom). The sails are inflated by the breath of the Holy Spirit, the store-house of all understanding. On the sail, a simple star symbolizing **Mary, Star of the Sea**, sheds its guiding light of the bark. This star is displayed on the shield of His Excellency, the **Most Reverend Bishop Edward Peter McManaman**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Erie who has chosen Mary, the constant aid of spiritual mariners, as his special patroness.

The inscription "Reddite Deo" (return to God) is taken from the scriptural passage, "Render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's." The chief tinctures of the shield — black and gold — are the school colors.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FLASHBACK >>

On December 4, 2017, **Bishop Lawrence Persico** celebrated Venango Catholic's 55th anniversary in the school chapel. **Natalie Janidlo** and **Meadow Hartle** are shown here holding VC's newly designed flag. The revised logo bears the Latin inscription "Reddite Deo," along with a refreshed version of the sailing V-bark and simple-star sail.



ATHLETICS



Wall of Fame

"Venango Catholic High School has a tradition known as the Wall of Fame. Alumni student-athletes are recognized on the Wall of Fame if they made First Team, All-Conference for any sport during their time at Venango Catholic.

Post graduation, First Team, All-Conference athletes are nominated and voted on by the coaches of the particular sport being played in VC's athletic conference.

Every other year, qualifying alumni are invited to participate in a commissioning dinner at the school, during which their photo and credentials will be added to the Wall of Fame."

Photo submitted by:
Sandra Sciuillo-Baughman

Basketball 1000 Point Players

NAME	POINTS	YEAR
Dave Lynch	1512	1969
Mark Garbacz	1470	1971
Mary Kay Lynch	1711	1981
Scott Ecker	1408	1982
Jean Ruby	1007	1984
Joe Anderton	1185	1984
Jay Schill	1318	1988
Theresa Galleta	1145	2001
Ryan Rhoades	1180	2001
Sarah McNellie	1122	2008
Alex Eckert	1156	2008
Eric Guth	1258	2008
Maxx Rynd	1745	2011
Ben Guth	1012	2012
Lindsay Homan	1303	2014
Taylor Moltz	1292	2015
Scott Toy	1086	2015
Devin Zagar	1217	2015
Ava Homan	1230	2016
Brady Kingston	1086	2016
Andrew Burda	1224	2021

(Source: www.venangocatholic.org/athletics/)

ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT

DISTINGUISHED ALUM

NAME: Teresa Lorenz-Do, Ph.D. (VC '99)

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:

Gannon University, Bachelor of Arts in K-12 Education (Foreign Languages Concentration)

The University of Arizona, M.A. in Spanish

The University of Arizona, Ph.D. in Spanish (Hispanic Literature Focus)

*While pursuing my bachelor's and master's degrees, I studied abroad in Salamanca, Spain.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS:

I have been teaching Kindergarten - Fifth Grade Spanish at a school in Kansas City, Missouri for the past eight years. For thirteen years prior to that, I taught undergraduate Spanish as a teaching associate at the University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ and as an assistant professor at Avila University in Kansas City, MO.



FAVORITE VCHS CLASS / TEACHER?

It's hard to narrow it down, but I would say my favorite classes were my Spanish classes. My favorite teacher was **Mrs. Abreu**. She really encouraged me and helped me to communicate in a language that, at the time, was completely foreign to me. Never once did I feel like I would never be able to speak Spanish; in fact, she kept challenging me and working with me one-on-one during study halls until I was able to start communicating more fluently with my exchange-student classmates from Hispanic countries, giving me confidence in my linguistic abilities. She believed in me and challenged me. I am so grateful for that, because she made such a positive impact in my life.

Article continued on next page.



Editor's Note: Teresa Lorenz-Do, Ph.D.

was the valedictorian of her class at Venango Christian High School.

Dr. Lorenz-Do and her family reside in Missouri, where she is a foreign language teacher. She has experience teaching Spanish courses at community colleges, both in Tucson and in Kansas City. After graduating with her doctorate, she co-directed and led a group of students to Segovia, Spain as part of an exchange program and taught at a university while there.

She uses her gifts to volunteer for GlobalUNO, a nonprofit organization that helps to provide inclusive and equitable education to students across the world.

Teresa also enjoys being a volunteer translator for Kiva, an international nonprofit organization that helps individuals in underserved communities around the world thrive through the aid of microloans.

SPOTLIGHT CONT'D

SHARE A FUNNY MEMORY FROM YOUR TIME AT VC:

Once, we we were traveling by bus to a volleyball game at a different school. Our teacher/bus driver took a wrong turn somewhere along the way, and we ended up in New York. No cell phones back then meant we couldn't communicate with anyone. While our families were (rightfully) worried, we were all having a good laugh on the bus. We were also late to the game, which made it even funnier.

HOW DID YOUR TIME AT VCHS INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE & CAREER?

Our headmaster, **Fr. Jay Shultz**, and all of the teachers at VCHS really prepared me to be successful in higher education and in my profession. I have always respected them, because they challenged me, encouraged me, helped me discover the career path I wanted to take in the future, and did all they could to help me begin to get there. As I myself teach young minds on a daily basis, I am reminded of all the times throughout my schooling that I felt a sense of accomplishment due to the help and patience of the faculty. I try to model those traits in my own classroom. I also appreciate the opportunities [my classmates and I] had to meet so many students from around the world who came to VC through exchange programs. They helped open my eyes to other cultures and languages.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN/RECREATION?

In my free time, I love to travel, read, write, run, and spend time with my family. My husband and I have a five-year-old son who is our pride and joy. We have so much fun with him, and there is never a dull moment. I have also been writing children's books for a few years now and am finally starting to query book agents. It is my dream to have one of my books published someday!

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR PRESENT VCHS STUDENTS:

Keep believing that you can do anything and keep striving to achieve your dreams, even (and especially!) when you get discouraged. Keep God in your daily lives, and constantly pray for guidance as you follow the path He has paved for you.

And lastly, one of my favorite quotes:

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

(Mahatma Gandhi), and keep encouraging others to do the same. 🇺🇸

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PRESIDENT, HOME & SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION



Venango Region
Catholic School

You are cordially invited to

A Starry Night

8th Annual Heritage
Gala Dinner &
Auction

5:30 PM -
11:00 PM

Saturday
March 16, 2024

**Venango Catholic
Jr./Sr. High School**

*Must be 21 years
of age or older
to attend.

**Call 814.677.3098
for more information.**

FEBRUARY 2024

HOME & SCHOOL



SENECA LANES BOWLING
2771 State Route 257
Reservations: 814.676.4618

FUNDRAISER FRIDAY @ SENECA LANES

February 16, 2024
and
March 1, 2024
6 PM - 10 PM

\$10/Person - Two
Hours of Bowling

\$1/Shoe Rental

VRCS Home & School will earn \$5 back for every paid bowler.

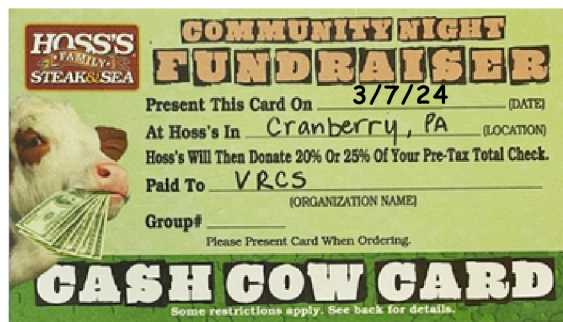
This event is open to the public! *Mention when you check-in that you are with VRCS to receive credit for this fundraiser.*

PLEASE NOTE: You may bring your own food. Drinks are not permitted, but you may purchase refreshments at the bowling alley.

HOSS'S COMMUNITY NIGHT FUNDRAISER Thursday, March 7, 2024 (11 AM - 8:30 PM)

To have a portion of your check donated to VRCS Home & School, present this Cash Cow Card* to your server when dining-in at **Hoss's Family Restaurant** (432 St. Rt. 257 Cranberry, PA).

Take-out orders do not apply. Distribution of Community Night invitations on Hoss's property is strictly prohibited!



*Screen shots are acceptable.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER:

For everyone's safety, please ensure that young children are monitored throughout your stay.

Outside of supervised trips to the bottomless salad bar, we appreciate families doing their best to keep their littles seated.

VOLUME 2 † ISSUE 2

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PRESCHOOL

Mrs. Leslie Pacior
PRESCHOOL AID

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KINDERGARTEN

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SECOND GRADE

Mrs. Alicia Daman
THIRD GRADE

Mrs. Martina Love
FOURTH GRADE

Ms. Mary Anne Oliver (VC '76)
FIFTH GRADE

Ms. Jill Lander
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Venango Region Catholic School

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Oil City, PA 16301
814.677.3035

Upcoming Events

February 12, 2024

Home and School Meeting – VCHS Cafeteria
6:00 PM

February 13

VRCS School Board Meeting – VCHS Cafeteria
6:00 PM

February 14

Lent Begins
All-School Mass – St. Stephen School
10:30 AM

February 16 / February 19

No School for Students

February 22

All-School Mass – St. Titus Church (Titusville)
10:30 AM

March 11

Daffin's Easter Candy Delivery

March 16

VRCS Heritage Gala – Venango Catholic
5:30 PM - 11:00 PM
Must be 21+ to attend.



www.venangocatholic.org



[@VenangoRegionCatholicSchool](https://www.facebook.com/VenangoRegionCatholicSchool)

