

GATHERING PRAYER FOR THE FIRST STAFF MEETING 2025/2026

Theme: Rooted in Faith, Walking in Hope

PRINCIPAL: WORDS OF WELCOME

LEADER: We begin our prayer by marking ourselves with the sign of our faith, 'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.'

We light our **CEIST candle** as a reminder that God is round and about us, through us, with us and in each one of us as we begin our first meeting of this academic year. In this Jubilee Year of Hope we give thanks for the light of faith that shines so brightly in our school community.

As we gather at the beginning of this new school year we bring our hopes and anxieties, our energy and need for renewal. In the spirit of our **CEIST** values, let us pause and place our work, our students, and our community before God.

OPENING PRAYER

LEADER: Let us Pray Together

Loving God,
We thank you for the gift of this new school year.
Bless our work, our students, and all who form part of our school community.
May we be faithful to our **CEIST** values,
building a school that is welcoming, respectful, just, and compassionate.
Walk with us, Lord, as we begin again, rooted in faith and walking in hope together. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Choose one depending on context and which aspect of the theme you would like to highlight.

Colossians 3:12–15

Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

READER: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Jeremiah 29: 10-41

For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes "

READER: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

LEADER: This is a Jubilee Year of Hope in the Universal Church. Hope is not wishful thinking or mere optimism; it is the steady anchor that holds us firm amid the storms of life, rooted in the promise of Christ who is "with us always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

This year challenges us to open our eyes to the signs of hope that surround us—sometimes hidden in small acts of kindness, in the smile of a colleague, in the laughter of our students, and the compassion we show for the other in our school community. Hope is nourished when we dare to believe that no wound is too deep for healing, no failure too final for forgiveness, and no darkness too strong to overcome the light of Christ.

We are each called to embody this hope for others. We become witnesses of hope when we extend mercy, stand for justice, care for creation, and accompany one another with compassion.

May this Jubilee be a time of renewal for all of us in this school community. May we trust God's promises, rekindle faith, and walk together with courage. Let us lift our eyes to the future with confidence, knowing that "hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5).

Let us take a quiet moment to entrust this year, our colleagues, and our students and all members of our school community to God.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Feel free to add prayers that reflect your school context at this time:

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

- For our students, that they may grow in wisdom, grace and hope this year. We pray to the Lord
- For our colleagues, that we may support one another in a spirit of friendship and respect. We pray to the Lord
- For our school community, that it may be a place of welcome, justice, and faith. We pray to the Lord
- For ourselves, that we may have patience, courage, and joy in our work. We pray to the Lord
- For all who are struggling—through illness, loss, or worry—that they may find hope and healing. We pray to the Lord

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray together

Lord, at the start of this new year, we entrust ourselves to you.
Be with us in our teaching, our learning, our planning, and our caring.
Bless our school community and help us live faithfully our CEIST values.
May we walk together in hope and joy. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

Leader: May the Lord bless us and keep us.
May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

May He look upon us with kindness, and give us peace.

All: Amen.

† In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.