



*The Lemon Zests brought the house down—what an unforgettable performance at Oktoberfiesta!*

## Family Newsletter

October 2, 2025

Dear PJ23 Families,

### Oktoberfiesta a Big Success!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this year's Oktoberfiesta—what a night of community, fun, and celebration! We are especially grateful for your incredible support, which made the event such a success. The Evanston Roundtable featured our event: [Evanston Roundtable Oktoberfiesta article link](#)

A highlight of the evening was the performance by PJ23's own Lemon Zests rock band, who brought so much energy and spirit to the stage. The excitement continued with Switchback, featuring our very own Marty McCormack, whose music truly elevated the evening.

~~{PUT TOP RAFFLE TICKET SELLERS HERE} Congratulations to our top raffle ticket sellers! We are so proud of our students' hard work and enthusiasm. Ronan Doss led the way with over 130 tickets sold, and Jessie Rodas followed with an impressive 61 tickets sold.} REMOVE THIS IF WE DON'T GET INFO IN TIME\_ WE WILL PUT IT IN NEXT WEEK'S EBLAST~~

We are still finalizing the numbers, but early reports show that we raised significant funds to support our school. We will share final totals soon.

Fr. Jean-Philippe is deeply grateful for the tremendous participation and support from our school community. A very special thank you goes to Christie Klimas and Mark Potosnak for their outstanding leadership in bringing this event to life. Whether you sold raffle tickets, volunteered, attended, donated, or simply cheered us on—thank you for all you did to make Oktoberfiesta such a success!

### **Pastor Visit**

Our 7th graders enjoyed a special visit from Fr. Jean-Philippe, who led an engaging discussion on the gifts of Baptism. He encouraged students to reflect on how these gifts are lived out in their daily lives and answered their thoughtful questions with both wisdom and humor. Moments like these help our students connect their faith learning in the classroom to their personal journeys, and they always enjoy the chance to spend time with our Pastor.

We are fortunate to have such a caring and involved Pastor walking alongside our students in their faith.

### **Attendance Reminders**

On-time, daily attendance is expected for all PJ23 students. The Office of Catholic Schools will be monitoring attendance rates across schools, and any school falling below 94% on-time, daily attendance will face sanctions. Please make sure your child is every day, on time, unless they are sick.

In the event that a child will be absent, please email Irma Mendoza [irma.mendoza@popejohn23.org](mailto:irma.mendoza@popejohn23.org) and/or [popejohn23@popejohn23.org](mailto:popejohn23@popejohn23.org) in addition to your child's teacher. You can also call 847-475-5678.

### **Safety Drills Next Week**

Next week, we will be practicing our required safety drills to help ensure that all students and staff know what to do in an emergency. Please review the schedule below:

- **Bus Drill** – Monday, October 6, 9:30–11:30 AM
- **Tornado Drill** – Tuesday, October 7, 10:00 AM
- **Fire Drill** – Wednesday, October 8, 8:30 AM
- **Lockdown Drill** – Thursday, October 9, 2:00 PM

All drills are announced ahead of time. We will have one additional fire drill and one additional lockdown drill with the Evanston fire and police present at a later date. Thank you for your support in helping us keep our school community safe and prepared.

### **Safety Update**

This week, School Advisory Board member Alex Shelley, Director of Parish Maintenance Abelardo Mendoza, and I met with Kaitlyn Wetzel, Director of Security for the Archdiocese of Chicago, to review and strengthen our school safety measures. Together, we discussed current protocols, explored options for identifying the right safety app for our community, and evaluated the security of all buildings on our campus.

Ms. Wetzel shared that she was impressed with the overall security of our campus. She will continue working with us to develop updated protocols to ensure that our school remains a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and families.


### **Chess Club**

We are excited to announce the opening of our new PJ23 Chess Club and extend a warm welcome to all students who would like to join—no matter their skill level. Ms. Irving will serve as the coordinator for this journey that will bring our young Panthers together through the game of chess.

The club will meet every Tuesday after school starting October 14, 2025, through May 12, 2026. Meetings will take place in the library/media center from 3:00–4:00 PM. The club is open to all students from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

### **Calendar for 2025-2026 School Year**

Follow the link to see the complete list of dates for the 2025-2026 school year:

 [Calendar Dates FY26](#) . The link for the calendar on our website is near the end of my letter below.

### **Enrollment**

Please remember to tell others how great our school is! Word of mouth from happy parents is the most effective way to increase our enrollment. Your personal stories and recommendations go a long way in helping other families discover the value of a Pope John XXIII education.


### **Important Links**

**Annual Fund:** <https://givebutter.com/PJ232025>

**PJ23 Staff for FY26:**  [FY 26 MAIN Staff list .docx](#)

### **Virtus training**

In order for parents to volunteer to chaperone field trips or help with class parties, you must be fully Virtus compliant. If you don't have a Virtus account, please follow this link:

 <https://www.virtusonline.org/> . When creating your account, select Pope John XXIII School as your site. If you already have an account, please check to make sure you are up to date.

**Upcoming Events:** Please check our school calendar regularly.

<https://www.popejohn23.org/calendar.html> Just scroll down the page a bit to find the monthly calendar with all events listed.

Blessings,  
Dr. Mary Maloney