

# The SRS Community Embraces New Blended Learning Routines

By Gabriela Herrera Gugiu

The start of our 2020-21 school year may have looked a bit different, but the joy of being back together—whether in person or virtually—was priceless.

Of the 91 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington, nearly half reopened this academic year following a blended (hybrid) learning model. At St. Raphael School and St. Raphael Nursery School, parents made a choice between distance learning and in-person instruction with adherence to strict health and safety measures.

Over the summer, a team of staff members and health-care profes-



Sporting their SRS masks, siblings Nicholas and Alina arrive for the first day of in-person classes at St. Raphael School. Photo by MJ Zafis-Garcia



John from St. Raphael Nursery School's 4-plus program has a smile that lights up the room. Photo by Susan Wooten



WebEx connects a preschooler virtually with her classmates at St. Raphael Nursery School. St. Raphael parents choose between distance learning and in-person instruction for their children. Photo by Natalie Coene

**St. Raphael Parish  
St. Raphael School**

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sionals designed a comprehensive plan for St. Raphael School and Nursery School to reopen safely for the 2020-21 school year. This included new facility arrangements, technology integration, cohort planning, daily health surveys and temperature checks for all grade levels, and so much more.

At SRS, virtual and in-person students are taught at the same time, with students following lessons either from their desk in the classroom or from their desk at home via a WebEx online platform.

"Each day is a gift," said Principal Teri Dwyer. "The work we did over

the summer was worth it the second we saw the children connected and here in school with smiles on their faces, even behind their masks."

With a new normal underway, SRS and SRNS remain committed to their Catholic identity and academic excellence with first Communion and confirmation planning back in full swing and high expectations of our students in the classroom.

Together with our core values of "Fides et Ratio" (faith and reason) marked on the school's crest, the uniforms are a reminder that both principles are necessary for life,

growth, and renewal. This school year is certainly no exception.

### St. Raphael Golf Classic

While many of St. Raphael School's traditional beginning-of-school festivities and events were held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, the 12th annual St. Raphael Golf Classic was played on Oct. 2 at Bretton Woods in Germantown. The Golf Classic Committee and the staff at Bretton Woods were committed to the safety of participants and adhered to state and county guidelines for COVID-19. Players of all levels enjoyed 18

holes of fun and friendly competition. We extend a special thanks to event co-chairs Angela and Mike Mussio, our sponsors, and community of volunteers for their support. Follow us on Facebook for pictures of the event at [www.facebook.com/SRSRockville](http://www.facebook.com/SRSRockville).

### Upcoming Events

- First Communion and Confirmation Oct. 17
- Angels on the Run 5K (reimagined) Nov. 7

For more information, visit [www.straphaelschoolmd.org](http://www.straphaelschoolmd.org).

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## Holy Child 101



**JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION**

**NOVEMBER 2 at 5pm**

For more information, please visit [www.holychild.org/visitus](http://www.holychild.org/visitus)



## St. Raphael Sodality Events for October

On October 7, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, we will pray the rosary at 7pm via Zoom and then hear about the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima from fellow Sodalist, Anne Marie Begley. Anne Marie recently participated in a ten day pilgrimage to Fatima and is looking forward to sharing her pictures and discussing what she learned about Mary's apparition that still has meaning for the world today. The Zoom link to join this meeting will be sent to Sodality members prior to the meeting.

On October 13 we will celebrate the Fatima apparition and the Miracle of the Sun at 9am Mass, followed by the recitation of the rosary.

On October 28 at 7pm we will pray a Patriotic Rosary via Zoom for the upcoming election and peace in our country. We will pray for the conversion of our country, for the leaders of our government, and a Hail Mary for the people of each state.

St. Louis de Montfort said, "If you say the Rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, in spite of the gravity of your sins, you shall receive a never fading crown of glory. For even if you are now on the brink of damnation, even if you have one foot in hell, even if you have sold your soul to the devil... sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and save your soul. If you say the Rosary devoutly every day of your life."

This year Forty Days for Life is September



In October, St. Raphael Sodality celebrates the Holy Rosary and the Miracle of Fatima.

26 through November 1. St. Raphael's Sodality members are invited to join our Knights of Columbus to pray the rosary on Saturdays from 10am-11am during the 40 Days for Life in front of the Carhart Abortion Clinic, Wildwood Shopping Center, 10401 Old Georgetown Road. Sodality members can meet us there or carpool after 9am Mass.

Although they are not able to meet in person, members of our Rosary committee continue to make rosaries at home for those in need. We recently donated 500 rosaries to Walter Reed Hospital, 500 to Holy Cross Hospital, and 500 for Father Raymond from Holy Cross Hospital to take to Nigeria.

St. Raphael's church continues to have Eucharistic Adoration every Thursday from 9:30am through 7pm. Please come visit, adore, and spend time with Our Lord.

We invite all women of the Parish to join Sodality. Please send your Membership dues for the 2020-2021 year to Aleta Phillips: 304 Winter Walk Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Dues are \$25 through October 31 and \$30 after that date. Make your check payable to St. Raphael Church and note Sodality dues in the memo line.

We look forward to resuming our regular in-person meetings and service projects for the Parish soon, but we are continuing the good work of Sodality via Zoom in the meantime. The links to each Zoom meeting will be sent in advance.

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