

Herald



The Board and Staff Newsletter ~ December, 2019

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Wisdom from Above

Mr. Brian Kuiper, Administrator

*“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:
teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.” (Proverbs 9:9)*

This past October, about 160 teachers and prospective teachers gathered in Iowa to fellowship together and challenge each other to grow in the calling that the Lord has laid before us. Each teacher seems to cherish something different about the convention, but for me the trip to Iowa was, well, a trip to Iowa! Lest you Iowa folks misunderstand me, what I am saying is that the trip to and from the convention was as much a growth experience as was the convention itself. This was especially the case on the way home as we continued to discuss and extend the learning from sectionals we attended.

Another highlight was the keynote address delivered by Rev. Josh Engelsma who opened Convention by speaking from Proverbs 9:9. Rev. Engelsma reminded us of the importance of wisdom by quoting from Proverbs 4:4, “Wisdom is the principal thing...”. If we understand the word properly, this means wisdom is of great importance. He suggested that the goal of all instruction is wisdom, and he developed that idea under the following points:

The Principles: We understand that there is a difference between knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Wisdom is a matter of the heart. It is the fear of the Lord and comes from an awe of him. For this reason, true wisdom is only experienced by His children. These children of His can and do grow in wisdom through means that He provides.

The Practice: In this point, he specifically addressed the calling of teachers. Teachers, and thus parents as well, cannot MAKE the students wise. So, we must acknowledge our dependence upon God. Having done that, we must press on because God is pleased to use teachers as means for the children to grow in wisdom. As we teach we must show them the fear of the Lord, teach them Christ, and correct them (9:8). The school and home must be one in this goal. Without supporting each other, the goal will be more difficult to reach. Teachers use opportunities to bring the law, but must also bring the gospel. When students fail, it must be treated as an opportunity to grow in knowledge and wisdom. Thus, our goal as those who rear God’s children must be to teach His children to live in every sphere of life to the glory of God. This rearing must focus on the whole child, not simply on their brain.

The Perspective: This must not lead to discouragement. We will not see exponential growth. But the long term view says there will be growth. As believers, we must plant in faith and wait for the harvest. The encouragement comes from Psalm 90 and I Corinthians 15 - God will establish the work of our hands, and it will not be in vain.

In response to this instruction to each of us, I would add the message of our recent All School Program. Let’s pray - individually and collectively - that God will continue to use us as wise stewards for the gathering of His church and for the glory of His name.

Federation Committee Report

The annual fall Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools meeting was held October 23, 2019 at Adams Christian School. The purpose of the Federation is to deal with those matters pertaining to Protestant Reformed School Societies in common. This committee usually meets yearly and includes representatives from each of our schools. Members from distant school associations participate via video conference.

Here are a few highlights from the ongoing Federation work:

History & Principles of Reformed Education Class

The Federation is sponsoring another session of this important class. The class meets Wednesday evenings at the seminary and is taught by Prof. Dykstra. Course topics include:

- History of Christian Schools
- School governance
- Contributions of Kuyper, Bavinck, and Hoeksema
- Foundations of Reformed Education
- Alternative approaches
- Worldview development
- The Value of the Christian school

The Federation plans to record the class and make it available online so that teachers, who are unable to take the course in Grand Rapids, can take the course online in their location and on their own time.

<http://www.prcs.org/history-principles-of-reformed-education>

Teacher Mentoring Program

The Teacher Training Committee has been diligently working to develop a mentoring program for teachers and those working towards becoming teachers. An update of their work was presented at the meeting. The mentoring program will provide a structured path of instruction and will aid in teacher development. The program will help teachers grow in their ability to apply Biblical principles to all areas of the curriculum. The program aims to foster professional growth and provide teachers with a broad source of educational resources through this structured mentoring plan. Work has begun on the tier 3 program focusing on 2nd and 3rd year teachers.

Teaching Promotional Videos

The Federation has also been active in producing promotional videos. The videos include interviews with teachers, parents, and board members. Let's pray the Lord uses these videos as a means of encouraging young people to think about teaching as their calling in life. These videos can be found on YouTube by searching "Federation of PR School Societies".

It is encouraging to see the cooperation of the school societies across the country. May the Lord continue to bless this important work.

The Federation website can be found at www.prcs.org.

In Christ, Jon Bult, Kent Deemter, and Tomm Heyboer

Technology Committee Report – Mr. Jon Bult, Committee Chairman

So far this year my fellow committee member, Kent Deemter, Greg Johnson, our I.T. Director, and I have been working on executing our first LCR project. LCR is an acronym that stands for Life Cycle Refresh. An LCR plan is simply a well thought-out program to replace assets each year according to a set schedule versus replacing them as they fail.

Although the LCR acronym is more common to the technology area, everyone creates and executes LCR plans and projects. For example, if you know the shingles on your home were installed 10 years ago and the expected lifespan of the shingles is 20 years, then you may have a plan to budget now for a reroofing project for your home in 5-10 years. That LCR plan to refresh the shingles at a certain point in the product's life cycle allows you to budget and save for the expense early so that you're not surprised with a major, unplanned expense at some point in the future. If you do not plan for this expense and instead wait to replace the shingles until water begins to drip inside the home, then you're going to be in trouble. It is the Technology Committee's purpose and desire to keep HCS from getting into that type of trouble regarding technology.

Keeping up with technology is challenging. We expanded our inventory list this summer to include additional devices to be considered in the LCR plan. The table at the right shows our current inventory list.

The total replacement cost of these devices is around \$150,000. Each device type has a different useful life calculation that is used as the refresh rate for the LCR plan, but on average we hope to budget enough for a refresh of this equipment every 4 years

(\$37,500 annually). Unfortunately, the current budget for technology does not cover that annual expense at this time. To cover the cost of implementing the LCR plan this year, we are using the Technology Fund (savings account) balance. We are asking for assistance via the upcoming school auction in March of 2020 to keep the LCR plan moving next year, while we look for ways to acquire the necessary budget on a more permanent basis.

Device Type	Count
Laptops	43
Desktops	41
iPads	21
Chromebooks	104
Servers	2
Networking	9
Printers	9
Projectors	27
	256

Although the LCR plan was the focus of this year's Herald article, we are also looking into ways to better allocate technology within the school, optimize the money that we spend on technology, and also improving the stability, usability, and supportability of the new technology we implement at HCS.

Foundation Board Report – Mr. Tomm Heyboer, Board Representative

Thanks be to our heavenly Father who bestows all gifts upon us! We are thankful again this year as we anticipate the performances of faithful and gifted saints at the annual Evening of Praise. We are hopeful that by the time you read this, we will have had another successful event. We are always thankful for those who are willing to perform. This year, we enjoy musical performances by With One Accord, our HCS third graders, Dana Van Dyke, the Phelps family, the Hope Heralds, and students of CCHS along with our PRSO.

While the evening of praise is a favorite of many, another fundraiser for the HCS Foundation is the annual golf outing. We are happy to report a successful golf outing again this year, once again breaking the record for the amount raised! Included are 2 pictures taken during this year's outing.

Many thanks to all of those who work on the committees to organize the golf outing (year after year!), as well as those who perform and contribute at the Evening of Praise. We certainly see God's handiwork in the gifts He has given as well as the desire to serve these causes.



While these fundraisers are certainly enjoyable, through all of this it is important to remember the mission and goal of the foundation, and that is to support the cause of Christian education at Heritage. Since its inception, the foundation has donated \$808,500 to Heritage. It is our continued hope to increase this through growth of the foundation, and continue to seek out ways to help Heritage and promote the education of our young saints.

Whether you are planning your estate, or would like to give a gift to the school, we hope that you will consider giving to the Heritage Christian School Foundation. This is a wonderful way to give as we have been blessed to support Christian education for many years to come.

The Foundation Board is thankful for this opportunity to serve our covenant children and covets your prayers as we continue in this work. Let us as covenant families always remember to keep the cause of Christian education in the forefront of our mind..."One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." (Psalm 145: 4)



Snow Much Fun – Mr. Randy Kuiper

Winter. You either love it or hate it. As the first snowflakes drop from the sky, the comments fly out of our mouths. "It's so beautiful." "I love the snow." "Is it spring yet?" "I hate driving in this weather." While everyone certainly has a different opinion of the season, one thing is sure. Winter time is here.

For me, winter is agonizing. I cannot easily rank the seasons, but winter permanently falls dead last. Yet, I am mindful that every year brings at least four months of cold and snow. So, in early November, when the first snowfall of the season made a somewhat early appearance, I decided that this was the year my attitude about winter needed to change.

Then, I stumbled upon an article that made me seriously contemplate my attitude regarding winter. The article explained that in the dead of winter, when the sun can barely be seen over the horizon, residents of northern Norway are able to view the long, dark, cold season as a reason to celebrate. Simply put, the Norwegian people live by the mindset that they will enjoy winter, instead of endure winter. To do this, they find many reasons to get

together with family and friends, and numerous ways to enjoy the winter days.

Days later, Psalm 51:7 appeared on the pages of the devotional I was reading to my students. Fittingly, my class also studied this verse earlier this school year in Bible class as we learned about the Psalms. Psalm 51:7 reads, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." What a beautiful reminder that our sins are forgiven, and we are made clean through the blood of Christ. I can't help but reflect on the words of this verse when I gaze out the window on a fresh snowfall that has blanketed the ground.

Now, back to the part where I need to change my attitude. Of course, winter is cold... which means I can enjoy an extra cup or two of steaming coffee during the day! Sure, the sun is non-existent and it gets dark so early... providing me extra time to enjoy the twinkling of Christmas lights or the flickering of the fire. Yes, driving on the roads is extra stressful... allowing me added time to sing along to Christmas carols. Another snowstorm dumped

countless inches of snow on the driveway... better climb back in bed and hope for a snow day!

Following are thoughts about winter from my second graders' points of view.

Winter is very fun. I enjoy playing with my friends and we enjoy having snowball fights. My favorite thing to do in winter is drink hot cocoa. – Sophia Boverhof

Winter is a joyful time. I enjoy playing snowball fights with Evan and Connor. I like to ride on my dad's snowmobile. I like to tell stories in the dark and watch TV while drinking hot cocoa. When it is Christmas, we open presents. – Isabelle VanBaren

Winter is fun because I like getting snow in my shirt! I enjoy snowball fights and snowboarding! I like to play games and watch TV with my family. I really like building forts and snowmen. – Joshua Boven

Winter is amazing. I like going to Charlie's Dump to sled. My sled goes very fast. Afterwards, I enjoy hot cocoa while playing games with my family. – Addison Potjer

Winter is super fantastic! I enjoy playing pie tag with my friends and sledding with my friends. I also enjoy my Florida vacation and the ride in the car! I do not choose to have snowball fights, but I do prefer playing in the snow. – Lily Lubbers

Winter time is awesome! I enjoy sledding at Charlie's Dump and playing snowball fights at home with my brothers. I prefer to drink hot cocoa while watching TV. My favorite thing to do is sit on the couch by the fire place reading books. – Jedd Zandstra

Winter is awesome. I delight in playing pie tag with my dad and Joelle. I choose to watch TV in the dark. I like to set up the Christmas tree. – Lael Pastoor

Winter is so fun! I enjoy making snow forts and snowmen. I like to stay inside and play games on my mom's phone. I do not enjoy snowball fights! – Ian Kamminga

Winter is very fun. I adore making forts with my brothers and sledding with my neighbors. I enjoy cocoa and presents. Most of all, I like snowball fights. – Kialynn VanDyk

Winter is enjoyable. I prefer to make snow angels and go ice fishing. I choose to watch TV on the couch. I enjoy drinking hot chocolate. – Asher Koops

Winter is fun! In the winter, I like to go sledding and build a snowman. I love hot chocolate while playing games. My favorite thing is presents and setting up the Christmas tree. – Maci VanOverloop

I enjoy winter because I like snow. I appreciate sledding and playing pie tag with my family and friends. I delight in watching videos while drinking hot chocolate. My favorite thing to do is play in the snow. – Melise Terpstra

Winter is pretty! I enjoy snowball fights and sledding with my brothers. I love to watch TV in the dark with my brothers. I do not like to drink hot chocolate. – Justin Spriensma

Winter is very cold. I enjoy walking on my Nana's pond and making snowballs to have a snowball fight. I delight in drinking hot cocoa and putting up the Christmas tree while listening to Christmas music! My favorite thing to do in the winter is make a Christmas tree in the snow! – Addalyn Doezema

Winter is a very happy time! I really like snowball fights and sledding. I like to drink hot cocoa and I enjoy getting presents. My second favorite thing in the winter is to build snowmen. Winter is my favorite season. – Noah Kooienga

I think winter is the loveliest season of the year! I enjoy sledding with my sister and having snowball fights with my dad. Also, I like hot cocoa while sitting by the fireplace. Winter is the best! – Brooklyn Warren

Winter is so joyful! I like to sled so much and playing snow ball plate is so fun. I enjoy drinking hot chocolate so much. I care about making snow pies and eating them. – Calvin Wigger

Winter is amazing. I really love sledding and delight in making a snow fort. I love drinking hot chocolate and eating popcorn. My favorite thing about winter is opening Christmas presents. – Zoe Noorman

Winter is really fun! Sometimes I like sledding and making snowmen. I enjoy playing games with my family. A lot of times I like to set up the Christmas tree. – Olivia Gritters

I enjoy winter because it is fun! I prefer sledding and playing a snowball fight. I enjoy drinking hot cocoa and playing games with my family. My favorite part of winter is playing pie tag and building snowmen. – Justin Holstege

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made – Mrs. Kelly Ensink

On November 15, 2019, Heritage Christian school held its 11th annual Fearfully and Wonderfully Made Day. This is a special day set aside where the students learn about how God made us all different and try to understand the challenges some people face each day. They also discuss how to treat someone they might know with different disabilities. We begin the day with chapel where we focus on all being created by God, despite our differences. Often we have special numbers by students from our Special Education program and their general classroom. After chapel, each class has time where presenters come in and speak to them on different disabilities. In the elementary grades, there are activities and simulations to experience what it is like to live with disabilities. They also get to meet special guests that live with these disabilities. The older grades have presentations as well to hear about more advanced disabilities people face. Here is a brief glimpse of what happened on this day.

This year, Mr. Mike Noorman led us in chapel, teaching us about God as the Potter, and we as the clay. God molds us into who we are. We are given the truth of the Holy Spirit to dwell inside of each of us, and we bear the fruits of the Spirit towards others. Each of us has a story to tell to lead others to God. This story is seen in our actions toward those around us. Mr. Noorman used the examples of David fighting Goliath and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace to show how our actions can point others to God.

Kindergarten learned about limb differences. They tried activities such as putting a penny in a bank with their toes and throwing and catching one-handed. They talked to families that deal with this and got to ask questions.

First grade learned about vision impairments. They experienced Braille, tried to identify objects by just smelling them, and had friends lead them around when they were blindfolded. They also had the opportunity to talk to someone who lives with this disability and ask questions about her daily life.

Second grade learned about hearing impairments. They learned how the ear works, about sound vibrations, and how hearing is affected if any part of the ear is not working. They learned about hearing aids and also talked to someone who does have a hearing impairment.

Third grade learned about cognitive impairments. They did activities to help them understand what it is like living with a cognitive impairment, such as trying to keep up on a fast paced spelling test and buttoning a shirt with others yelling at them to hurry. They also got to meet and talk to guests that live with this impairment.

Fourth grade learned about motor impairments. They tried out wheelchairs, walkers and canes and also did activities to see what it is like have fine motor impairments. They got the opportunity to talk to people who have family members with these impairments and what life is like for them.

Fifth grade learned about learning disabilities. They did activities (like drawing while looking in a mirror) and simulations (like reading a passage with letters flipped and mixed up) so they could feel what it is like to live with a learning disability.

Sixth grade looked more in depth at cognitive, visual, and motor impairments and focused on friendship with people who have these impairments. They did activities to understand the frustration of

motor and cognitive impairments. Then they watched a skit that showed how some people with visual impairments are treated and discuss how they should act around them. They, too, got to meet someone with a disability related to these topics, but also got to see his great abilities.

Seventh grade learned about chronic illnesses, specifically Type 1 Diabetes and Multiple Sclerosis. They saw presentations given by people who live with these illnesses and learned what life is like for them. They had the chance to ask questions and some even experienced finger pokes.

Eighth grade learned about cancer and Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. They had presenters that have been through and/or live with these types of illnesses/disabilities speak to them.

As you can see, it is a great day of learning. We cannot do it alone. This program takes the help of about 55 people in order to present to each grade. We want to sincerely thank all who gave of their time and helped out this year and in past years. Our volunteers have a training night before the official day and learn what role they will have in helping this day to be successful. To see how special this day is, consider volunteering next year and you, too, can learn how we are all Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.

Talking with the Teacher - Mrs. Sarah Decker

Heritage Christian School is a parental school run directly by parents of like-minded faith who comprise a school board which in turn gives directives to its teachers. Parental involvement goes beyond serving as members of the school board. The effectiveness of the school is greatly enhanced by the numbers of parents in the school working and volunteering during the school day. It's great to see parents and grandparents serving hot lunch, leading small groups, reading tests, and helping with building projects. In addition, students have the best growth when parents and teachers work together with regard to the child's individual needs in the classroom. Vital to this teamwork is good communication between parents and teachers.

Heritage has recently held a round of Parent-Teacher Conferences. This can be a valuable time to connect with each other, albeit briefly. With 113 students in just the junior high, the time slots are brief and only allow time to touch base with each other. Parents, please don't let Parent Teacher conferences be the first time, the last time, or the only time of communication with teachers. Stop in before or after school or at lunchtime. Teachers do want and need to hear from you -- you have a depth of knowledge of your own child that a teacher will never have. Teachers want to know you what makes your child tick and how your child learns best. If your son is obsessed with baseball and learns best through hands-on activities, let us know. If your daughter is very artistic and absorbs information best when it is explained out loud, mention that. Parents, you have spent years teaching your kids, from potty training to tying shoelaces, so you have a good idea of their learning styles. You most likely have gleaned valuable insight by teaching your child catechism lessons year after year. Please share strategies you have found to work well with your child. Being informed about the special interests and learning style of a child can help the teacher in the classroom.

Additionally, your child benefits when you tell the teacher not only about his strengths but also his weaknesses. Mentioning that your son struggles with multiplication or telling the teacher up front about your daughter's reading difficulties will give the teacher more time to help your child improve in the areas they need it most.

Some parents may be hesitant to talk with teachers because of a fear of treading into unfamiliar or unknown territory. But that is exactly the reason why you would want to have conversations with the teacher. Teachers have a deep understanding of your child's particular age group. They know what development at that age looks like, what a child needs, and how the child is faring in comparison to peers. Teachers can give parents valuable information about how their child is growing academically, socially, and spiritually.

Additionally, parents may be hesitant to talk with teachers because it may be difficult knowing how to start the conversation. Try to have a collaborative, problem-solving approach. Telling the teacher what has helped and made a difference is helpful. Here are examples of how you might start a conversation with a teacher:

- "My child is having this problem. Can we meet to come up with strategies to help her?"
- My daughter is very excited about the robotics team. I have some concerns about her social skills. Can you share with me any observations you may have from the classroom?
- We see many incompletes listed for our child on Gradelink. Can you help us understand some ways we might use with our child to improve this situation?
- My son enjoys reading about history. Yet, he is not being successful on history tests in history class. Are there some study strategies we should try with him?

God's Calling for Me: Teaching 34 Years Later - Mrs. Sandy Glashower

When I decided to stay home and raise my 6 children after a few years of teaching, I never expected to step back into the classroom and back into that role as teacher 34 years later. I imagined that I would live out my years happily, enjoying the rewards of motherhood and grandmotherhood while I stayed at home. I'm realizing now that that wasn't all God had in store for me.

Many family members and friends have asked me, "Why did you go back full-time after all those years? Why now?" My reply is always, "I was called." What follows is my testimony of how God called me to Heritage Christian School.

In 1982, as a recent graduate from Dordt College, I signed a contract with Hope PRC School to teach 2nd grade. I jumped right into my profession, and I loved every second of it. I taught there for 3 years until I had our first son, then moving to teach at Hope PRC Preschool until our second son was born in 1986. After that, I stayed home and raised our 6 children. As their roles changed from student to husband/wife to parent, I too grew from the role of teacher to mother and grandmother. I began to get comfortable in these dual roles. I had no intention of leaving where God had nested me.

Suddenly, in October 2018, God whispered in my ear and nudged me towards a substitute job opening that would take place from February until June. Kaitlyn Bylsma was about to go on maternity leave and step into the wonderful role of motherhood. So, hearing God's voice, I applied for the position as a substitute for her class.

I originally dismissed applying for this position because I did not want to take it away from someone else. I had been out of the role of teacher for far too long. I was sure that someone else was better equipped for her class.

As time went on, the Lord put the position into my mind ALL THE TIME! The thought of me being in this teaching position would not go away! I respectfully asked God if this truly was what He wanted me to do.

While I "threw a fleece", I petitioned God saying, "Lord, please send someone to encourage me to apply." And, "Please give me my

husband's support." And, "Please help me write a resume after 34 years of being out of the classroom." If I was going to listen to the call of God, I was going to need all the support from my family and my God as possible.

He answered my prayers in two days. Even though His answer was clear to me, I still delayed writing a resume because I was planning Georgetown PRC's "Girls Get Real" conference which was to be held in four days. I asked myself, "How can I find time to write a resume during this busy week of final planning for this conference?"

I decided I would write the resume after the conference; it just made sense. That night the Lord took my sleep away. I tossed and turned until 4:30 A.M. when He finally let me sleep for 2 hours.

Hearing God once again, loud and clear, I rose that morning and yielded to writing a resume as soon as I could. I wrote my resume that day and the Lord gave me my sleep back that night.

Even when I felt as though I was ill-equipped for the position, I stepped out in obedience to God, believing that He would always equip those He has called. I see that He has been faithful to me and equipped me for this position. I am right where God has called me to be - teaching.

My challenge to you is: Do you hear God's call for you? Where is God calling you? Is He calling you out of one position and into another? Is He calling you into an additional position? Might that call be for His Kingdom work? The next questions are even more important: how are you responding to this call? Do you ignore it or complain about it? As you hear God's call, remember: God will equip those He calls, no matter what age, even if 34 years or more of your life have gone by. He will give you the strength and his sustaining grace to do His calling for you well.

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work...." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

These Are a Few of Our Favorite Things – Mrs. Brenda Pastoor

"What do you do?"

"I'm a teacher."

"What grade do you teach?"

"I teach Kindergarten!" ...

The response is pretty split after that bomb! It can include head shaking and under-the-breath mutterings of "Better you than me!" or "I don't know how you do it!" Others kind of get it: "You must just laugh all day." (While there is laughter every day, it's not all day.) Or "How fun! You get to see them learn to read!" YES! This is so exciting! However, it's not even the best of the things. Following are some of my favorite things about Kindergarten.

I would have to say my favorite thing about teaching Kindergarten is the absolute reverence the kids have for God and His love for us! Bible stories are filled with shouts of "God!" and "Jesus dying on the cross!" They know that the devil is all around us and tempts us, but through Christ we are saved, even when we fall. When talking about the busy day we were to have a while back, one sweet girl said, "But we'll for sure have Bible story, because Bible

story is the most important part of our day!" So true, sweetheart, so true.

Closely following their love for God is the love they have for their families! There's just such a special little twinkle that comes into their eyes when they talk about their families. And I always get to hear about all of the great things: mom's birthday, dad's birthday cake, a new baby!!!!, spending time with grandparents, family trips, and just plain how amazing their families are!!! Parents, you never have to wonder if you are "making enough memories" with your kids. Just being there and talking to them and sharing with them is making such an impact! They love you and everything you do for and with them! I'll tie to this point the fact that I kind of love it when someone accidentally calls me mom or even grandma or dad. It took awhile for me to accept the grandma part, but when I really thought about it, who does a five year old love more than parents and grandparents? It's really a compliment that they feel as comfortable with me as they do with their favorite adults!

Now I do have to admit that I absolutely LOVE the love my students show to me! This love is shown every day in the bright

smiles I am greeted with each morning. I can even interrupt a trudge to the hooks and lockers and still be met with a drop-everything smile and "Good morning, Mrs. Pastoor!" It's also shown in the daily love notes I am gifted. Oh, how I love these notes! I currently have a bulletin board, a set of magnet boards and a notebook full of such notes. A sincere thank you for helping with a zipper or loose shoelace or opening a LunchAble shows love, too. The fact that Kindergartners still love to acknowledge me when they see me in public? Yup! That's love in my book! And finally, what better way to show your love than a random hug and a softly whispered "I love you"? Even the hugs that seem to be needed more by the student who is upset or hurt warm my heart, knowing I am allowed into that inner circle of people allowed to offer comfort and healing.

Since the title of this article is "These Are A FEW Of Our Favorite Things" I'll try to stop there. I could go on and list the inquisitive nature of kindergartners ("What does 'yearn' mean when learning program songs), the joy on their faces when they master a new concept or skill, their enthusiastic singing, their made up knock-knock jokes (well, maybe not always...), when I hear that the things we do at school follow through at home, new friendships formed, and I could still go on and on!

And now, since what you really want to read is what the kids have to say, here are a few of their favorite things about school!

Lunch (Me, too! Especially hot lunch!)

Eating

Recess and gym! (So great for social skills!)

My friends

Bible story ~ I love to learn about God! (See my top fave above!)

Morning Work: circling and saying our sight words, and saying our verse.

My favorite day at school is Grandparents Day. (See number two above!)

When Mrs. Pastoor challenges us

Wednesday workstations because sometimes my mom comes

Bible stories and recess

My teacher :)

The bus ride!

Handwriting ~ because Mrs. Pastoor makes "bad ones" and we have to say why!

Math

Math stations

Learning about creatures during devotions

Learning new songs and singing

Recess because it starts like "Reese" (my friend's name) and because it's fun. (So true!)

Tracing, singing, Bible stories, math stations

I think recess because I like the park (playground); art, workstations, and math with grandma because it's fun and I like to see grandma! (See! It's hard to narrow down!)

The Vocation of Curriculum Director - Mrs. Sue Looyenga

My arrival at Heritage Christian School just over a year ago brought me into a classroom teaching English, Math, and Geography to 7th graders in the morning and serving as a curriculum coordinator in the afternoons. This was quite a change from being in a high school classroom full-time for 11 years, but it offered me a unique opportunity-both teaching and working with curriculum. Over this first year, several people have approached me with questions about this work of "coordinating curriculum" for Heritage Christian School. Hopefully, this article will help to answer some of those questions about the educational background of a curriculum coordinator, the process of coordinating and developing curriculum, and the present need for this work in our Christian schools.

The normal path to becoming a curriculum coordinator, also sometimes known as a curriculum specialist or developer, is by way of obtaining a bachelor's degree in education, teaching in the classroom, and then pursuing a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. This was the way that I came to be here, having obtained a B.A. in Secondary Education at Trinity Christian College, taught for several years in grades 6-12, and then pursued an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Dordt College. The impetus for pursuing this degree came from a very practical need for curriculum planning knowledge when I was in South Holland, IL. Having voted to establish a new Protestant Reformed Christian High School in that area, the new school board elected by the Association for Protestant Reformed Secondary Education desired that the courses to be taught in that new school be carefully planned and documented with our Reformed, biblical worldview as their underpinning. Prospective teachers were also expected to

become familiar with the Illinois Department of Education Standards for secondary learning and their recommendations for what students should know and be able to do in order to live and work productively in the local, state, and national business and economic climate. The goal was to prepare covenant children to take their places as servants of King Jesus in a secular society, understanding their mission and purpose here on earth and equipped for the vocations to which God had called them.

As I worked toward this degree, I was given many practical assignments designed to make me carefully articulate a Biblical worldview and develop curriculum with other teachers. We did much reading about the history of Christian education and were challenged to provide covenant children with the ability to learn and live out a Reformed worldview in all of their lives. It was arduous work, but also extremely enjoyable to hold lengthy conversations about what should be taught in Christian schools and why.

Over time, God has assured me of the need for this kind of service, as He provided me with opportunities to work with curriculum development at other of our local schools in which I have taught, and in two Western schools which were beginning the addition of a high school curriculum to their grade school curricula. I am happy to hear of other teachers who are pursuing this calling as well, especially at a time when our schools are experiencing unprecedented growth. It is a joy to see the passion of fellow teachers and of our administrators as they plan instruction that is excellent and God-centered, and to witness as well the ardent desire of parents to see their children instructed in the light of God's Word.

On a practical level, the work of a curriculum coordinator is to collaborate with fellow teachers to produce an operating curriculum for the school. For each grade level K-8, lead teachers are appointed for the school year to serve as meeting leaders and liaisons with the curriculum director and administrator for work on the curriculum at that level. Each month these lead teachers hold grade level meetings as needed to discuss curriculum coverage, needs, and concerns about the instruction that is being carried out at their grade level. These gatherings are intended to assure that all students are receiving the same knowledge, skills, and understandings even if a particular teacher's teaching style, sequence of lessons, or materials may differ. Next, the lead teachers, the administrator, the Discovery Center director, and curriculum coordinator meet monthly to discuss information, concerns, and questions that pertain to instruction at all levels.

As teachers are carrying out their lesson plans from day to day, the curriculum coordinator's first need is to map the operating curriculum, or collect information about what is actually being taught in each classroom at the basic level of units and subunits for each subject at each class level. This process is the one with which all teachers are presently involved at HCS. Last year each teacher provided information about the units and subunits taught in their Bible, Social Studies, and Science classes, while this year's mapping includes units in Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Technology. Next year, D.V., Music, Art, and Physical Education will be mapped. By gathering this information into a meaningful form, administrators and teachers are able to see the course of instruction as it proceeds from level to level, so that any gaps or unnecessary repetitions in the basic curriculum can be noticed and corrected. Once this information has been collected, we can make comparisons to state recommendations for knowledge and skills at each level, make certain that a Reformed biblical worldview permeates all of our teaching, and ensure that our instructional goals are being assessed adequately. Obviously, this process results in a large volume of information, which is currently on documents in computer files and collected into binders. In a school the size of HCS, that is not the most efficient

way to access what we have learned. Until recently, the software technology required to collect, interpret, evaluate, and share the results of curriculum mapping was found to be expensive and often unsuitable for the unique needs of a Christian school; however, recent research has led to a very reasonably-priced, cloud-based system available for smaller school systems (i.e. private, charter, parochial schools). Our board has approved the acquisition of this software platform, which we plan to implement in the coming year. This will greatly facilitate the work of curriculum coordination and planning for the entire educational staff at HCS.

Finally, there are good reasons to have documentation of what is and has been taught and assessed in the classrooms at our Christian schools. In order to be true to our mission to provide covenant children sound instruction "in the way they should go," teachers need to be accountable to parents, the Board, and one another. As a Christian community, and as part of the body of Christ, we have a responsibility to one another to encourage, exhort, and assist each other in this weighty calling. Documenting excellent instruction is also important in order to preserve that which has been done well and pass that knowledge to the next generation of teachers. Many teachers, when asked why they became teachers, will speak of the impact that a teacher or several teachers have had upon their lives in their instruction and wisdom. And finally, in an age of increasing animosity toward Christ and His people, resentment toward all that is associated with Christianity is increasing. Providing sound documentation of adherence to state educational mandates, whenever they are appropriate for living in this world and not opposed to our mission, may prove to be helpful as Christ's return nears. Governments change, and in other countries, private schools have been subjected to close examination and even shut down because there is suspicion of anti-government activity within them. It is wise to be prepared for state examination of our schools before that time comes.

Please remember us in your prayers as we seek to work together to provide an excellent and God-centered education for our precious children here at Heritage Christian School.

Teachers Are like Farmers - Miss Emily Gritters

This summer I had the opportunity to spend most of my days at a farm. Being a girl who grew up in northwest Iowa, I had always been surrounded by farms. However, I was a town girl and so my farm knowledge was still limited.

In education, you hear a lot of talk about how students are seeds, how they grow, and how teachers are called to nurture them. I always had understood that reference; it is an easy picture to imagine.

After spending a summer **IN** a field, watching the farmer tending multiple fields, I learned many new things. I saw the ground go from a mess to a neatly tilled area. I watched each seed put down in the soft dirt. I was there as the corn grew tall, and saw the farmer dive head first into each obstacle. I walked the rows and fell in love with each little corn stalk. I even got to help with the harvesting and the tearing down of the stalks so that the field was bare again.

I have a new appreciation for that comparison of farming and teaching, and it is why I chose to write about it. My comparison is

going to be focused on fields, since that is the area that I spent most of my summer.

It starts with a calling.

Farmers are called to what they do. As they have grown, God has gifted them with the abilities necessary to care for the plants. This passion covers the good days, watching the plants flourish, as well as the strength to overcome the overly rainy days, the sick days, and the hot/rainless days.

A teacher teaches with a passion for truth, learning, and life. This is something that can only be done if God has instilled that calling into them. They have a God-given love for their students—even on the busy days, the sick days, the days where the children just don't seem to get it, and the days that the students soak everything up.

There is a plan.

A farmer needs to have a 'big idea' of what he is going to do with his land; where he will plant, what he will plant, and strategies for

how he will do his planting. This is a big task; there are often acres of fields that need to be covered. He has to make sure he has the machinery available and the seeds ready. He is also thinking ahead to the needs of each part of the land, planning what to do if a piece of land gets dry, overly wet, or sick, etc.

A teacher plans ahead. It is one of the very first things they need to do. They have to think about each student, how to be proactive in every situation. There is curriculum mapping, special events, and trying to be prepared for surprises. They need to have the materials, the technology, and the words ready for each day/month.

It takes patience.

Farming is not a fast process. It takes time to prep the ground, raise the crops, and harvest them. There are many obstacles along the way. The farmer plants with an end goal of healthy crops. He spends time going through his fields, getting rid of the weeds, and providing nutrients to the crop. Each crop will grow in its own time and at its own speed. The same can be said for teaching. Speed kills. It is not often that a good lesson can be rushed through. Only with patience can there be lasting results in teaching. Teachers labor day by day, giving the students what they need to continue learning, but also helping the children learn the difference between right and wrong. Teachers seek to plant knowledge into these covenant children, give them the time and the tools necessary to grow, and pray for a lifetime of reaping that knowledge.

“Our students are like seeds we’ve planted. We water them, we give them fertilizer, we make sure they have the right amount of sunlight, but at some point you just have to sit back and watch them grow.” (Anonymous).

***“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
(1 Corinthians 15:58)***

It is a dual effort. The farmer is working with the soil. He plants, waters, and cares for the soil. He is not trying to beat the land, or force it to do things God had not created it to do. The teachers are working with the students. Teachers cannot force their children to learn, but must instead encourage them in their God-given abilities. They are finding what works best for each child and using it to teach students how to implement it in their own lives. Classrooms are not factories; they are places of the birth of knowledge, the growth, and continuation of the knowledge, understanding, and virtue.

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

All of these things are dependent on our reliance on God. The fields are in the hand of God. We see the results of His creation and blessings upon us. The students are God’s children, and He watches over and cares for them. The center of teaching is the work of God’s spirit.

Parables - Mrs. Rhonda Holstege

One of Jesus’ favorite ways of teaching was by telling parables. We are learning about parables in our class. So we first learned what a parable is - a parable is an earthly picture, but with a heavenly meaning. God made His whole creation to be a picture of the new heaven and earth. Jesus had to teach His disciples that the things that happen here on this earth, happen in pictures of the heavenly creation. Jesus is God and could see these pictures, but He had to give us eyes to see these mysteries.

There are many parables that have great lessons for our children. The children are able to see this, too, as we move farther into the many parables. They are able to tell me the meaning of the parables: give up the treasures of this world and look to the treasures in heaven; the seed that is thrown out is the spreading of the Word of God; the leaven was a picture of the Word of the gospel in our hearts, and others.

We discussed that our writing class (IEW) talks about fables that had a special meaning or moral at the end, in relation to a parable. They were to have a beginning, middle and end with the moral. What follows are fables written by our third grade:

Riches

(By: Isaiah, Cole, and Carson)

Once there was a rich man named Mr. Richards. He lived in a mansion. There was a poor man named Kurt and he lived in a little shack. Mr. Richards always boasted about how rich he was and all

his goods. Later they had an argument. Mr. Richards told Kurt he had more money and stuff than Kurt. Kurt then told him that it didn’t matter how much stuff or money you had. Moral: All that was important was that you had Jesus Christ in your heart and you will be rich with God’s grace.

Honesty

(By: Norah, Peyton, Alaina, and Hannah)

Once there were sisters named Lydia and Emma. Emma is older and was at piano lessons. Lydia was jealous of Emma because she had a phone. She played her favorite games on the phone. Lydia dropped the phone from her top bunk bed and the phone broke. So she hid it from Emma. Emma came home, found it and wanted to know what happened. They fought. Then Lydia was honest and told the truth. Moral: Ask before you borrow, and tell the truth and don’t lie.

The Wallet

(By: Jaycob, Hudson, and Nolan)

One day a boy named Louis was taking a walk to the market to meet his friend Bobby. The sun was shining and Louis looked down and the sidewalk and found a wallet. It had \$1000. Louis didn’t want to keep it, but Bobby said it is worth a great price. Louis wanted to find the man who dropped it, because God tells us not to steal. Bobby realized Louis was right. Moral: Trust in God and not money - you can’t choose both.

We Will Serve the Lord - Mr. Rick Gritters

Decisions, decisions, decisions. It seems like all we do is make decisions. What should I wear to work? Dockers and a Polo OR white long sleeve shirt with a tie? What's for breakfast, a quick bowl of oatmeal OR an egg on toast? What shall I eat for lunch, last night's leftovers OR grab some fast food? As you can see from these examples, many of our day to day decisions don't take much thought and are made quickly. There's no right or wrong choice that can be made. Then there are other decisions that are more thought out, and may even involve some discussion with others. Should we go out to eat Friday night OR Saturday night? What restaurant sounds good, Outback or Red Robin? Shall we go with the two of us or ask another couple? What plans shall we make for summer vacation, head up to the UP - we've only been there once, OR hit the road to Florida - it's warm! And once again, which choice we make is not a matter of right or wrong.

It's no different for our children and young people either. They are constantly faced with choices throughout the day. Should I head down to the big gym and watch intramurals OR go outside and play football? Should I work on my math assignment first in study hall because it's due tomorrow OR should I get a start on my book report for the month? Shall I study for catechism before church this evening OR shall I do it before I go to bed, and then review it tomorrow after school? And similar to the decisions we adults make, some of our children's decisions are made spontaneously, while others are made after some consideration, and possibly even with some discussion with friends or parents. Shall I play on the basketball team this year? Should I go to a friend's house overnight? Shall I go to Michigan's Adventure with my grandparents, OR stay home so I don't miss my friend's birthday party? And no matter which option they choose, no one can say that they've made the wrong decision or a bad choice.

However, there is ONE decision that each of us MUST make every day, whether we are young or old, boy or girl, married or single, rich or poor. Every morning when we wake up, and many more times throughout the day as well, we are faced with a choice. This particular, daily choice does involve right and wrong, good and bad. This decision also involves much prayer because we need God's grace and Holy Spirit to not only make it, but to follow through with it as well. The decision I'm thinking of is the decision to serve the Lord in our daily life. Each day we must commit to loving Him and to show this love by obeying Him. It is our duty and obligation to resolve to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

The word resolve means to decide firmly on what to do, to come to a definite and earnest decision. Earnest has the idea of being sincerely zealous. This concept of resolve should be very familiar to us as Protestant Reformed Christians. When a young person confesses his or her faith in Jesus Christ, he "...resolves by the grace of God....to lead a new, Godly life". And when that same young person, along with other members of the church, partakes of the Lord's Supper, he or she "...resolves to walk in true love and peace with his neighbor". The third part of the Doctrine of Baptism teaches us that "...we are obliged unto new obedience".... and also that we "walk in a new and holy life". And the adult christian, when he or she is baptized, promises to "...take a firm resolution always to lead a Christian life". Also, the Heidelberg Catechism, when explaining the 10th commandment, requires that "...with a sincere resolution we begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God".

There are also many examples in scripture where we see God's people make a choice which is pleasing to God, one which is approved by Him because it is according to His will and Word. These saints make a conscious decision to love, obey and follow Him, deciding to do what is right and to turn away from what is wrong. Consider these five examples.

God-fearing King Jehoshaphat, when facing an attack from the Moabites and Ammonites,"set himself to seek the Lord..." in II Chronicles 20:3. The idea here is that Jehoshaphat resolved to pray to God. He made a firm decision to pray for the Lord's guidance and help in the battle, instead of making a hasty decision to simply rush headlong into the war without relying on God.

While living in the ungodly kingdom of Babylon, Daniel, along with his 3 close friends, on a daily basis, chose to continue living the way that they had been raised in Judah, during the reign of Godly King Josiah. Upon arriving in Babylon, we read in Daniel 1:8 that Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself". The word purposed here has the idea of resolved, which means Daniel made a firm decision. So Daniel consciously chose not to eat this food, food which was likely forbidden according to God's law or had already been offered to idols. Daniel made a decision to be faithful to God, to serve God by obeying Him. We can be sure that it was by the grace and Spirit of God that he was able to make this choice.

God, through the prophet Malachi (2:2), warns the priests that if they "will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name....I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings, yea I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart". This phrase, 'laying it to heart', has the idea of taking seriously the need to give glory and honor to God's name; making up one's mind and resolving to give glory to God.

Moses, shortly before his death, and just before Joshua replaces him as leader, tells the people in Deuteronomy 30:11-20 that they must make a choice. And the two options God sets before them are life and good OR death and evil! Of course, Moses commands them to choose life, to love the Lord and walk in His ways, to keep his commandments. Moses tells them that this is their duty before the Lord. In the way of this obedience, Moses says, God will bless them.

Lastly, Joshua's final message to God's people before he dies at 110 years of age is to choose which God they will serve. He reminds the people that the land, and the cities, and the vineyards that belonged to them were nothing that they earned for themselves, but simply what God had given to them. He then tells the Israelites to serve and fear the Lord in sincerity and truth for everything God gave them. In Joshua 24:15 we read, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Ammorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD".

This is what we want our children and young people to do. We want them to choose to serve the Lord every day. We pray that by God's grace they follow the examples set forth in scripture and the truths stated in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Form for Confession of Faith, the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, and

the Form for the Administration of Baptism. It's our calling as parents and teachers to not only pray for this but also to lead them and help them make this choice each and every day. We can do this in two main ways.

First of all, as families, we must be in the Word. We must read the Word regularly with our children in our homes. We must help them learn their memory verse and songs for school. We must help them learn their catechism for church. We must have regular family devotions where the Word is read and discussed. We must sit with them under the preaching twice each Sabbath Day and then discuss it with them at home. In doing all of this, we learn more and more what pleases Him, and what His will is for us. We help them develop in their relationship with their Lord. We help them come to know God more and more so that they can love and serve Him more and more. When we study, memorize and meditate on what God has to say, then we come to know the mind of God and what pleases Him. Knowing what pleases Him, guides us in our daily decisions to serve Him. Secondly, to help our children and young people make conscious, daily choices to serve God, we must teach them to pray, as well as pray with and for them. For it is only by the grace of God and His Holy Spirit that we are able to live lives pleasing to Him. God gives His grace and Spirit only to those who pray. We read of this in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 45: "Why is prayer necessary for Christians? Because....God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them". If we want our behavior to please God, the only way that is possible is by God's grace. So pray with your children each day, "Lord, help me be kind and thoughtful to others. Lord, guide my behavior and

actions today so that I am not proud or mean. Lord, work the Holy Spirit in my heart today so that I use Godly language at recess. Lord, give me grace to be humble in my relationships, and respectful to my parents and teachers."

So, amongst all of the decisions we make every single day, like what to wear, where to go, what to eat, or who to eat with, remember the most important decision that must be made on a daily basis. Take seriously your calling to give glory to God by serving Him. Lay it to your heart and make up your mind every morning to please Him. Resolve, through prayer and by grace, to live a life of love, service, and obedience. When you do, thank Him for making it possible.

PUPIL'S PRAYER

*Dear Lord, make me glad I am chosen of Thee,
Make me see all the blessings I share.
Make me glad to be here to continue to be
Taught my lessons each day in thy fear.
And Lord, give me grace to be humble and meek,
Never boasting of all I can do.
Make me want to obey, though my efforts be weak,
May thy love in my conduct shine through!
Oh Lord, day by day in this school let me give
All my efforts to tasks I'm assigned:
And help me remember as long as I live,
For thy glory my life is designed.
AMEN*

Why Do Kids Play Sports? - Mr. Greg Holstege

We are fortunate here at Heritage to have a high number of students who are active in our sports and intramural programs. We offer for boys in junior high the sports basketball, soccer, and baseball. The boys also get a day of golf and an afternoon of volleyball with fellow league teams. For the girls in junior high there is basketball, volleyball, soccer, and softball. Grades sixth through eighth for both boys and girls have an opportunity to participate in cross-country in the fall and run in track during the spring against other Christian schools in the area.

Our intramural program for the 6th through 8th grades is open to all students for co-ed teams during the noon hour and consists of such activities as wiffleball, dodgeball and 6 base kickball. There is flag football in the fall with boys teams playing each other and girl teams playing each other. Our students have opportunity to sign-up for these events and play on teams that are mixed together with students from all three grades co-ed style.

I have had the opportunity to coach in the high school ranks and for junior high teams and have enjoyed every minute spending time with our young people. The teams I have had a chance to coach have worked hard in practice and played in a Christian manner. In the junior high, the teams I have coached have had large numbers who have turned out to participate to play. This year, as with some years in the past, we have had multiple teams in 7th grade and 8th grade volleyball and basketball teams. We are currently running two 7th grade boys basketball teams and two 8th boys grade basketball teams. We are the only school in the conference to have two 8th grade teams where we divide the boys who come out equally in talent as best we can. This allows us to NOT cut players

but give those boys a chance to play at least one more year together. Many of our students also play on area team sports like Little League baseball/softball or AYSO soccer; others in basketball activities; some are on swimming clubs or horseback riding events.

I'm not here to write about all the pluses and negatives to having our own school teams. What I am trying to get across is that the reason students want to participate in these activities is to just have a chance to play. Surveys across different branches of sports organizations such as the MHSAA and ASYO and Little League have all shown basically the same thing. The #1 reason why kids are playing: TO HAVE FUN! Even college surveys of athletes have shown that to be the #1 reason for their participation.

As coaches and parents of players, that should be a primary focus for us to remember. Winning can be a goal to strive for as a team but at what cost to we try to achieve that goal? Do we only play just a few players to get that victory while the majority of the team sits in the game and only gets to practice? Do we as parents get upset that the coach puts in a player who may not be as good as the other player on the bench who might help get a win? Do we as parents put a lot of pressure on our children to succeed in just one sport at the cost of letting them play a variety of sports for the pure enjoyment of it?

One of the reasons we have these programs is to foster life-long skills which our students may use when they are no longer in school. I have the opportunity to run our PR church league in basketball with the area churches in the Grand Rapids area. We will have approximately twenty teams from the area participating this year. Our local PR women's volleyball league has many

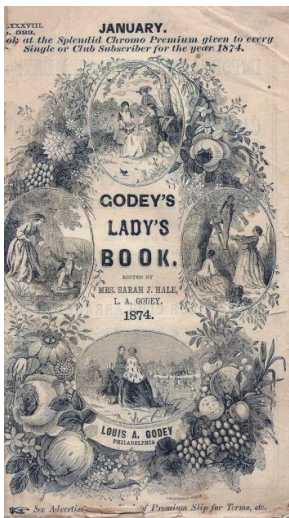
teams from our various churches in the area. Most of these teams in both the church league basketball and volleyball teams have players who may have played in some form or another on junior high and high school teams. There are some that may have never played on specific teams but played on intramural teams and just come out to play to have fun and fellowship with members of the area churches. The Lord willing, many of our sons and daughters will be hopefully be participating as well in the future.

As the winter sports teams begin play and future seasons come about, I ask all parents and coaches who read this to remember that winning was far down the list on the survey about why kids play sports. Having fun, playing with friends, learning the skills to play the sport, being part of a team and many other reasons were above the goal of winning. May we remember that as we raise our children in a day and age where "winning is everything and the only thing." According to our children, that is not the case.

Thanksgiving Day: A Civil War Legacy – Mr. Bill Joostens

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; ... (Timothy 2:1-4)

Can Thanksgiving Day, "Mary Had A Little Lamb", and the Civil War possibly be related? The year was 1863. The place, Philadelphia, the "city of brotherly love." The United States was embroiled in the throes of Civil War for two years by now, and the infamous Battle of Gettysburg had just occurred in the summer of that year. President Abraham Lincoln received an all important letter, but not regarding the pressing issues of the war as one would expect. A woman, **Sarah Josepha Hale**, an accomplished writer and long term editor of the Godey's *Lady's Book* had written a special request to both Lincoln and his Secretary of State, William Seward, that the President establish a National Day of Thanksgiving. The letter followed many long years of her efforts, having written governors, ministers, news papers, and every president using her influence to promote a national day to "offer to God our tribute of joy and gratitude for the blessings of the year."



Although there had been numerous historical events for which a call for national thanksgiving was declared, there had never been a national holiday dedicated to this important duty. President George Washington had made the first declaration that our new nation hold a day of thanksgiving in 1789 to commemorate the ending of the Revolutionary War and the ratification of the young nation's new Constitution. This was exactly 74 years before Sarah's all-important letter which now arrived upon the desk of the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln.

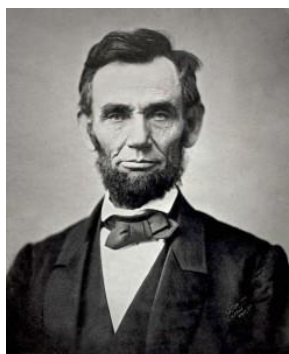
By this time in 1863, it had been 15 years that Sarah Hale had held to her persistent goal of a dedicated national day of thanksgiving. She believed now, like never before, in revival, that such a day would work a healing in her divided nation. Her hope over the condition of the Civil War-torn nation are clear in her words, "We may even hope that for one day war itself will cease by common consent, as was the custom in the Middle Ages during the solemn church Festival known as the "Truce of God;" and it is not impossible that sentiments may then be awakened which will aid in bringing on that return of true union and peace which is so earnestly desired." This is the sentiment Abraham Lincoln absorbed as his eyes followed the words of Sarah's passionate appeal "to entreat President Lincoln to put forth his Proclamation, appointing the last Thursday in November as the National Thanksgiving ...and commending this Union Thanksgiving ...thus, by the noble example and action of the President of the United States, the permanency and unity of our Great American Festival of Thanksgiving would be forever secured."

President Lincoln was moved with compassion for the country at the receipt of this petition and the proclamation was penned, not by himself, but by his dedicated Secretary of State, William Seward which received Lincoln's official approval in these memorialized words:

Washington, D.C.
 October 3, 1863
 By the President of the United States of America.
 A Proclamation.

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been

maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.



In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the Eighty-eighth.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln

In this season, we heed the exhortation to thanksgiving prayer: "that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority." We reap precious benefits from God's benevolent, providential care through the heritage of our nation's past. Our freedoms are great and many. We do well to count our blessings. We, of all people, ought to be most thankful!

Oh yes, as for **Sarah Josepha Hale's** story and "Mary Had A Little Lamb?" Well, Sarah didn't only author the impassioned plea for a national **Day of Thanksgiving**, she also wrote this legendary rhyme for her five children on her knee.

Remaining 2019-2020 School Calendar

December 23 – January 1, 2020 – Christmas Break
 January 20 – January 31, 2020 – MAP Testing (Grades 3-8)
 January 29 - 30, 2020 – Parent Teacher Conferences
 February 13, 2020 – JH Band Festival (during the school day)
 February 14, 2020 – Mid-winter Break
 February 20, 2020 – Band and Choir Concert
 March 7, 2020 – HS Auction
 March 14, 2020 – Spring Clothing & Toy Sale
 March 19, 2020 – Solo & Ensemble Festival
 April 3 - 10, 2020 – Spring Break
 April 15 & 16, 2020 – Hearing and Vision Screenings
 April 28, 2020 – Science Curriculum Night
 April 30, 2020 – Kindergarten Round-up
 May 4-15, 2020 – MAP Testing (Grades 3-8)
 May 7, 2020 – Elementary Music Program (afternoon)

May 14, 2020 – Band and Choir Concert
 May 15, 2020 – Kindergarten Program
 May 20, 2020 – All Schools Band Concert
 May 25, 2020 – Memorial Day break
 May 28, 2020 – Last day of school, ½ day, HCS graduation

Beginning of the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

August 31, 2020 - School starts
 September 4-7, 2020 - Labor Day Break
 October 22-23, 2020 - Teachers' Convention
 November 26-27, 2020 – Thanksgiving Break
 Dec. 24, 2020 – January 1, 2021 - Christmas Break
 February 19, 2021 - Mid-winter Break
 April 2-9, 2021 - Spring Break
 May 31, 2021 - Memorial Day
 June 3, 2021 – Graduation, last day of school

Our construction project has been completed. We are thankful to the Lord for providing a beautiful facility for our staff and students. Construction went well, with no major incidents as it progressed. If you haven't stopped in and seen the completed rooms, you will have a chance to see them at our Science Curriculum Night on Tuesday, April 28, 2020.

The number of people to thank for the work on the construction project is lengthy, and we are certain that there will be individuals or companies unintentionally omitted in the following list of recognition. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to Mark Koole, the General Contractor, and to the Building Committee members, and to the *countless volunteers* who helped along the way. In addition, we heartily thank the following companies who were a part of the project in one way or another:

AB Lock & Safe Inc., Advanced Disposal Services, Inc., All Gutter Systems, Bosveld Inc., Bouwkamp Masonry, Brigade Fire Protection, Cig Jan Products Ltd., Design Forum, Dew-El Corporation, Driesenga & Associates Inc., Dykstra Cement Contractors Inc., Eikenhout, Feenstra & Associates, Fence Solutions , Fisher Door & Hardware Inc., G & K Insulating Inc., Gemmen's Caulking & Waterproofing, Grand Rapids Fire Protection Inc., Grand Valley Automation Inc., Griess Interiors LLC, Heads Up Sprinkling, Innovative Interiors, Jeff Lubbers Flooring LLC, Jeff VanBaren Builder Inc., Johnson Controls, K & H Concrete Cutting Inc., Kalsbeek Plumbing, Kamps Tile & Stone Inc., Kleyn Electric, Kuiper Kustoms LLC, Mark Dykstra Concrete, Mark Koole Carpentry LLC, Meulenberg Painting & Decorating Inc., Oosterheert Bros. Siding Inc., Preferred Machines, Premier Granite, Reliant Construction & Roofing LLC, River City Flooring, Riverside Integrated Systems Inc., Standale Lumber, Store Fronts Inc., Superior Groundcover Inc., Ted Miedema Contractors Inc., The Company Store, VanderKolk Excavating LLC, VanDyken Mechanical Inc.



Beginnings of the work being done



Completed teacher's lounge (We all fit!)



Exterior progress on the JH wing



Exterior walls of the elementary addition