

Herald



The Board and Staff Newsletter ~ December, 2020

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CHRISTIAN

Mr. Brian Kuiper, Administrator

“And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”

Acts 11:26

C current events in the world have led me to pick up Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan and spend a bit of time reading that book again. For those who have not read the book, perhaps now is a good time for you to read it as it portrays our lives as Christians when we walk the pilgrimage we are called to walk. Daily we encounter struggles and joys, mockers and supporters, lows and highs. These struggles are always meant to produce a stronger faith and praise. I Peter 4:16 states, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf". In suffering, look up and see Him because our experiences are intended to prepare us for a life of service to Him during our earthly walk.

My reading and studies also led me to the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 32. "But why art thou called a Christian?" That question and answer is an even better read than the book referenced. The answer is profound and led me to self-reflect on my life as a Christian in good times and in times of difficulty.

Taking all of Acts 11 in context, you will remember that this is the chapter that records the vision of Peter calling him to preach to the Gentiles. Following that vision, dispersed Jews began to teach others about the gospel, and Saul and Barnabas labored in Antioch for a year. The Lord blessed their work and many believed. The church was growing and new believers were being added, and they needed a name. The name given referred to "followers of Christ" or "anointed ones" and thus the name Christian was derived from the Greek words used. The Catechism refers to this when it suggests that we are members of Christ BY faith and partakers in His anointing.

We are then called to at least 3 important means of showing that we are Christians while we are on this earth.

1 - A Christian *confesses* His name. Confession is an activity. My words tell others about Christ. That is what confession is. Do we begin the day telling others of the wonderful works that He has done in us and for us? It is clear by our confession that we desire to be named with His followers? Does my confession testify loudly that "I belong to Jesus. I am not my own"?

2 - A Christian *presents* himself a living sacrifice. Romans 12 further explains this when it teaches that a living sacrifice is demonstrated by not being conformed to the world but by living a changed or transformed life. Our lives are not ours, and thus we give them to the Lord. And, He does with them what He pleases.

3 - A Christian *fight*s against sin and Satan. What a battle that is! When we fight against sin and Satan, we must exert all of our efforts to that cause. We fight as a united army that has been trained for the battle. We stand with brothers and sisters in the fight encouraging and supporting. We rely upon the Commander who protect us in the battle.

We do so because the prize that awaits is sure and steadfast. It's the Kingdom where we will reign with Him. It's the land we travel to every day.

So, continue to train, to live, to fight. Continue to ask yourselves as you do this, "How am I showing others today that I am a Christian"?

SEEING CLEARLY IN 2020 – Mr. Matt VanOverloop, Board President

"Hindsight is 20/20". 20/20 vision is considered a more complete or perfect vision. Providentially, this is the year of our Lord 2020. We would have thought this year had anything but a perfect vision. It's been a turbulent year; so much change, so much unrest, so much unknown. We could not see clearly. Still, the school calendar continues to change with postponements and cancellations, and we continue to adjust. Our God reminds us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," (Is 55:8).

Our Father is using 2020 to give us a better vision... of Himself. He has used the stormy and foggy year of 2020 to remind us to look to Him, to trust Him, to wait on Him. While driving through the dense fog and darkness, our high beams are useless. The heaviness of the fog renders our low beams less than optimal. Rather, we shift to fog lights, illuminating the immediate road ahead. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps 119:105). When we find ourselves driving in such a condition, wisdom dictates we slow down as our visibility is severely limited. So, too, our faithful Father reminds us He leads us step by step. We are learning, again, it is by the Lord's will that we live and move. We are taught to "...look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4:18).

As we face the remainder of this school year in 2021 may we not lose the perfect vision He gave us in 2020. With the spectacles of Scripture, we have seen His goodness and providential care throughout this past year. He has granted health, sickness, life, and death. He upheld and governed all creatures, including SARS-CoV-2. He was sovereign over presidents, governors, health

departments, and schools. He provided in-class instruction and quarantined instruction at home. He continued to be Lord of the great. He, too, was Lord of the small. He was faithful to His own. In the valley, He comforted. In adversity, He anointed our heads. His goodness and mercy followed.

On behalf of the Board, we thank God for you. We thank Him that you have diligently prepared your children to do their work, whether in quarantine or in class. Continue to display to your children patience in adversity. God is with them in difficult circumstances. We are learning, again, what it is to be content.

Thank our Father for the children He has given you. For the gift of HCS which assists in the education of your children and the fulfillment of your baptismal vows. For the staff who instructs your children each day.

Thank Him for His Word which gives us perspective and vision. In light of this year's events, Psalm 145 instructs us, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. The Lord preserveth all them that love him".

Clearly, in 2020 we have seen our Father.

FOUNDATION COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Tomm Heyboer, Board Representative

"Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children" Deuteronomy 4:10

This text holds special meaning this year especially. It was then a reminder to the people of Israel of all that God had done to guide and teach them on their way to the promised land. Let it serve us now as a reminder of the blessing of having our children taught in the light of His word. As we view the landscape of the world around us, we value the times that we are able to have our precious children gather and be taught at Heritage Christian School. Let us not only think of our children here as only the children that live in our home with us, but also grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and all of God's children with whom we are joined in the body of Christ. Let's give thanks together for this blessing, not

only for today, but hope in HIM that God's children will be blessed with a covenant education for generations.

It is with these generations in mind that the Foundation works to support Heritage Christian School. The foundation continues by God's providence to provide support to Heritage with annual donations. The foundation has, since it began, donated \$863,500 to Heritage.

We were blessed this year to be able to have yet another successful fundraiser with the golf outing. Each year the outing seems to be yet more profitable than the last! Thanks to all of those who participated, those that serve on the fundraising committee, as well as those who continue to put in the hard work to organize the outing year after year!

For the past several years, we have also been blessed with An Evening of Praise. Sadly, the current gathering restrictions have

led the Foundation to cancel this fundraising event in 2020. While this is disappointing, we continue to be thankful for the gift of praise in song, and work with hope that it pleases God to allow us to organize this event in 2021.

The Evening of Praise has always been an enjoyable and profitable fundraiser for the Foundation. Even in the absence of this event, we'd like to ask that you continue to keep the cause of the Foundation in your mind as you plan your giving this year and in the future. Please watch for additional communications from the Foundation Board regarding fundraising efforts this year in lieu of the Evening of Praise

We'd also like to remind you that the Foundation has membership with the Barnabas Foundation. This is an organization equipped

with tools and resources designed to help understand ways to financially support the Foundation through estate planning, IRA's, and other means. If you would like more information on various ways to give, we encourage you to speak to a member of the foundation board, or visit the Barnabas Foundation website at www.barnabasfoundation.com, or call (888)448-3040.

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. It is a wonderful way to give as we have been blessed and to support Christian education for many years to come.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Kent Deemter, Committee Chairman

It has been an unusual year for the HCS technology committee and God has been abundantly gracious to us in our time of need. The work started this summer by developing technology "use cases". Questions which flowed out of these use cases included:

What technology do we need to support...

- extended student absences?
- extended teacher absences due to quarantine?
- classroom teaching with masks on?

Throughout the summer, this planning turned into action and technology upgrades were rolled out throughout the school!

Technology for Supporting Extended Student Absences:

- *Web-cameras* - Teachers have been equipped with a web-camera for recording lectures.
- *Google Classroom* - Google Classroom dashboards have been set up by each teacher for distribution of recordings and classroom work. Materials are sorted by date or subject to simplify and organize distribution. This system provides continuity across all grades and provides a communication platform for questions and updates.

Technology for Supporting Teacher Absences Due to Quarantine:

- *Teacher Laptops* - Teachers have been equipped with laptops so they can live stream teach from home.
- *Classroom Audio / Video* - Each classroom projector has been outfitted with speakers. This allows teachers to be live streamed from home into the classroom. Teacher aides assist with classroom management.

Technology for Supporting Teaching with Masks On:

- *Wireless microphones* - Teachers have been equipped with wireless microphones to amplify their voices in the classroom.
- *Wall mounted speakers* - The wireless microphones have been integrated with the classroom audio / video system allowing for high quality audio amplification.

These technology upgrades were made possible by the generous support of our constituents. The "fund-the-need" auction came at just the right time. These technology upgrades will serve us into the future well beyond the current unique circumstances.

Our prayer as a technology committee is that these upgrades will serve as useful tools for our teachers as they go about the day-to-day work of educating our covenant seed.

FEDERATION COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Jon Drnek

The annual fall Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools meeting was held on October 29, 2020, at Adams Christian School. The purpose of the Federation is to deal with those matters pertaining to Protestant Reformed School Societies in common.

It was also virtually attended by members from schools across the country. Notably, representatives from the newly formed Association for Protestant Reformed Education in Sioux Falls were in attendance for their first meeting as members of the federation.

The teacher mentoring program is going well and is going to be expanding. A third tier was added to the program which will focus on teachers in their second and third year. This program has been well received by both mentors and new teachers alike.

Plans were made to publish a "Federation Issue" in the Perspectives journal as a means to communicate the work of the Federation. This issue will be sent to all PR households. Not only will this give more visibility to the work of the federation, but it will make more people aware of the Perspectives magazine. The

federation has been called by some the best-kept secret in the denomination. Hopefully work like this can make the federation more visible.

Kyle Bruinooge was voted in for a 3-year term as Executive Director of the Federation. He is replacing Rick Mingerink who capably served as the executive director for the last 6 years.

The Federation filed for and received Federal non-profit status. This will allow the Federation to pursue outside donations more effectively.

A restructuring proposal was also presented. The goal is to allow decisions to be made in a more timely manner and to give the committees better opportunity to do their work.

Finally, the teacher shortages were briefly discussed. It was pointed out that the number of students graduating with a desire to teach has not really been decreasing. However, the demand for teachers has been growing steadily. We can be thankful for the new and growing schools. Let us remember to be constant in prayer asking the Lord that He will provide and equip teachers for us.

ABC'S OF TEACHING FOR ETERNITY – Miss Joyce Holstege

When a 5 or 6 year old enters school for the first time, he already has an academic, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual background. It doesn't take long to see the roots of development in a child. He comes with various degrees of growth in knowledge, wisdom, and spirituality. My work at school is to nurture him and help him to continue to develop and grow in those areas. My work is to go beyond the ABCs and 123s of his education and to teach to the heart of the child.

As part of a mentoring program in the PR schools, I have been reading some material written by Prof. D. Engelsma and T. VanDerKooy on "teaching children to keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19) and teaching children for eternity. Based in part on this reading I have developed the following ABCs of Teaching for Eternity, written for both teachers, parents, and the church family.

- A-** Author. God is the author of our life. He has written every aspect of our lives from the beginning through eternity.
- B-** Blessed. We are blessed to be tasked with the job of raising/teaching God's children. This blessing must be evident in our teaching and interactions with God's children.
- C-** Covenant. The children that we raise and teach are covenantal children; therefore we must teach them as children whose names are written in God's book of Life.
- D-** Doctrine. We must be well versed in and teach the doctrine, the truths, of Scripture.
- E-** Eternity. Our teaching must be with an eye fixed on eternity and our eternal life with God.
- F-** Foundation. The foundation of all education, math, history, English, social studies, must be God, His word, and how we will use the knowledge gained in these areas to serve God.
- G-** Gifts. The intellectual gifts that we have been given whether great or small must be directed toward glorifying God.
- H-** Home. This earth is not our home. We are being made ready for our Heavenly Home. While we are here, however, we must work to honor God in the way that we live in and amongst others on this earth.
- I-** Instruction. The instruction that we give must be both for the head and the heart, teaching both academics and spiritual principles.
- J-** Journey. Our earthly life is a journey toward our destination of heaven. We cannot hurry the journey or prolong the journey. It is all laid out for us, but we can and will find joy even in this earthly journey if we walk with the Lord

- K-** Kingdom. The children in our care are of the kingdom of God. We must teach them to treat each other as princes and princesses of the kingdom of God.
- L-** Love. Our love for one another must be displayed as a demonstration of the love that God has for us.
- M-** Minister. We must teach children that as God ministers to us, we must minister to the needs of others: loving one another as He has loved us. (John 13:34)
- N-** Necessary. The instruction to live a godly life is necessary both at home and at school. It is not enough to just teach life skills, academics, and social skills. It is necessary to teach these children that our living must be according to God's commands and to glorify God.
- O-** Obedience. We must teach children to live in obedience to God. Not because it will make life easier for them, us, and all others; but because it is what God commands and it is right.
- P-** Posterity. We must teach both for the children now and for posterity. The children we teach **are** the Kingdom of God; but they are also the future leaders, ministers, office bearers, parents, and teachers of the church in years to come. It is never too early to train them for these important callings.
- Q-** Quench. Thankfully, the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of these children cannot be quenched even by our weaknesses and shortcomings as teachers and parents.
- R-** Responsibility. The responsibility of the raising of covenant children for eternity is an awesome responsibility, one that is daunting and impossible if we look only to ourselves for the strength and wisdom to do carrying out the task.
- S-** Supply. We can continue knowing that God has chosen and redeemed these children for Himself. He will supply our needs so that we can walk beside them, leading and guiding.
- T-** Temporary. The things of this earth are temporary. We must teach them not to be consumed by the things of the earth. The material things and issues (political, societal, cultural issues) of this world are after all earthly and will pass away.
- U-** Unitedly. We must unitedly, teachers and parents, point these children toward our heavenly destination. Our home that will not pass away.

- V- Vessels. We are weak vessels, sinners teaching sinners, but we know that God uses weak vessels to fulfill His will.
- W- Wisdom. We must pray for wisdom for teachers and parents as they carry out this calling.
- X- Example. The example that we, teachers and parents, set is seen and imitated by the children in our care.
- Y- Youth. The youth that we teach **are** the church. Our calling is to train them for eternity.
- Z- Zealously. Pray zealously and earnestly for our schools, teachers, and parents.

EXAMINING OUR OWN LEGACY – Mr. Josh Moelker

1 and 2 Kings tell the story of God’s faithfulness to His people despite their constant failures to keep His covenant and engage in true worship of Him. Each king whose reign is described in these two books is judged on how well they kept God’s covenant. Jeroboam is one of those kings.

Jeroboam, a former servant of Solomon in charge of coordinating labor from the tribes of Ephraim and Manassah, is the first king of the northern tribes of Israel. Despite having support of the people behind him, Jeroboam fears he may soon lose the support of his subjects to the house of David if they continue to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to sacrifice in the worship of Jehovah. To keep the people in his kingdom content and away from the capital of Judah, Jeroboam reinstates the worship of the golden calves in the cities of Dan and Bethel. In his attempt to promote unity in his kingdom, Jeroboam leads Israel into the sin of idolatry.

Jeroboam’s plan to establish his dynasty and unity in his kingdom has the opposite effect. God, through the prophet Ahijah, tells Jeroboam that he has “done evil above all that were before thee” (1 Kings 14:9) and that his line will be destroyed because of it. Jeroboam’s legacy is that “he made Israel to sin” (1 Kings 14:16).

This story should make each of us stop for a moment to consider the legacy that we leave behind. While we may not have the power of a king, we too can lead others to sin as Jeroboam did. Teachers, when we refuse to correct the sinful behavior of students, we cause others to sin. Parents, when you do not set a godly example for your children in your home, you cause others to sin. Junior high and high school students, you can cause others to sin with the clothes that you wear. Live so that your legacy is that you were a godly influence, not that you lead others to sin.

ENDURING BLESSINGS – Mrs. Beth VanBaren

The year 2020 started out much like any other year. In fact, it seemed to be going along very well, not a snow day in sight—much to the dismay of many a student and possibly, a teacher or two. However, God in His wisdom had many things in store for us. When March rolled around everything made a very abrupt change. Suddenly we couldn’t go to school to teach or learn. We couldn’t attend church to worship together. We couldn’t get together with our grandparents or parents and visit. God had sent a virus, and things in our world had changed, seemingly overnight. Our world seemed shaken to its very foundation. There were many things to be learned last spring. There were many questions to be answered. Many that are still unanswered even now.

Our first response might be to fall into worry and anxiety, especially when our routines are disrupted. What a blessing it is to know that our God is in control of all things. Even in uncertain times we know, and are assured, that He has everything in His hands. In Jeremiah 29:11 we read: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” God is in control. We do not need to fear.

God gave many gifts to help us last spring. For myself, the gift of colleagues to make online education work was a wonderful experience. The time to spend around the dinner table each night with my whole family was a treasured gift—something to be relished as children grow and begin to take up their callings outside of the home. Family worship on those Sundays we could not gather as a church was also a blessed experience. The time to take a nightly walk and see God’s hand around me in creation as spring was beginning to bloom and the deer were beginning to move, this too was a gift. The Lord is so good to us. We can say with the

Psalmist: “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” Psalm 100:4-5.

I thought I would ask my fourth graders how God had blessed them during their time at home last spring. This is what some of them had to say:

- *It was hard times when Covid 19 was around, but my God shall supply all of my needs according to his will. Even when times are hard, He is with you every day of your life. You don't have to worry. God is on your side.* Abigail Kalsbeek
- *God blessed me because He was always there with me. He kept me safe at home. It was hard because I didn't get to see my friends or cousins. I thought no one I knew would get Covid, but yet a ton of people that I knew did! God was with them! So I am ok and they are too because I know God and believe in Him and so do they. How did I know I didn't have to worry? I knew I didn't have to worry because God is always with his people.* Kyla Kalsbeek
- *During this year of Covid I was very unsure about the things to come. Were we going to go back to school?, Were we going to see our friends soon? Covid made me have lots of questions. But in Proverbs 19:21 God says: “There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord shall stand.” This passage teaches us that God, in every circumstance, is on our side and has a plan for us. Let us hope in the Lord and dwell in Him only.* Lucas Noorman

- *I was blessed because I got to spend more time with my family. When Covid started we did not have as much time. Normally I am at school and doing homework when we get home, then Mom goes shopping. Then when my Dad gets home around seven o'clock, he goes hunting and he does his workout too. When Covid hit we had the whole day almost, to play. Now my family plays matching for fun and board games. Sometimes Annabell can't roughhouse, but we can still all have fun together. James 1:17-18 "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and*

cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." Lucy Crossen

- *I knew I didn't have to worry during the Covid shutdown last spring because God is always with me. Also, because in John 14:27 it tells me that God gives us peace and comfort even through hard times. And in Psalms 55:22 it says that God shall always sustain me. When I was sent home from school almost every night I thought, "That was a hard day." But then I thought, "God is always with me." I know never to be afraid! Don't be afraid. God is with you!* Josie Deemter

AND THE SURVEY SAYS... – Mrs. Sarah Decker

I recently asked my students to fill out a survey which asked them to compare in-school learning (face-to-face) with long-distance learning at home. All experienced long-distance learning last spring when Covid caused a shut-down of our school; some of the students also experienced long-distance learning this year when they faced quarantine for 10 -14 days.

In what environment is there less structure or routine? That was one question on the survey. As expected, all of the students chose long-distance learning. One hundred percent of the students reported that they face more distractions with doing their homework in the long-distance learning environment. Students were asked, "If given 30 minutes in each environment, where do you find you complete **more** homework?" Thirty-three percent answered at home with long-distance learning, while 67% preferred the in-school environment. On a related question, 100% of the students said that they complete homework **with the best quality** when at school. During the Covid shutdown, a majority of students were able to sleep in to a later time, and 67% of the students skipped school on a day to do other things last spring. A high majority of students (83%) feel they are more productive and get more done with the in-school learning environment. Thus, the structure of a school day in a school building with routines is conducive to learning for most students.

Not only does a physical building with routines promote learning, but the people in the building promote learning and a sense of community. One hundred percent of the students enjoy more social interaction with classmates when in school. And 83% enjoy

more social interaction with teachers when in school. It is the day-to-day conversations, formal and in-formal, that I think are critically lost in a long-distance learning environment. Many teachers assess understanding more effectively with face-to-face contact in order to read body language and facial expressions in addition to verbal responses. More importantly, the number of spiritual and Biblical conversations and discussions between teachers and students increases when the doors of the school are open. Questions or comments that arise from devotions help students to learn spiritually from each other.

There are some things that students like about long-distance learning: you get to stay home, you can start when you want, you get to sleep in, there is more time with your homework, you can do school work on a computer, and you can go on Instagram and YouTube and Netflix while teachers are talking during a meet.

However, students are able to pinpoint the key essentials of learning when they gave responses of what they like about in-school learning: less distraction, seeing more people and a schedule with routine, face-to-face contact, the explaining of our work, being with other people, you can see your friends and you get more help in school. For these reasons and more, I am one teacher who desires to see the doors of the school stay open, even if that means sanitizing, wearing masks, wiping down computer keyboards, and washing desks!

LESSONS FROM TEACHING VIRTUALLY – Mrs. Mary VanOverloop

Nothing prepared me for the jump to virtual teaching last spring. Yet, I have to admit, I learned much from teaching virtually that helped me be a better teacher and gave me a renewed appreciation for students, parents, our administrator and the school board. God had a plan in all of it. The following are ten lessons I learned through the virtual teaching.

First, teaching to technology is pretty boring. One of the best parts of teaching is working with students. No matter how tired I am in the morning, the second the kids come in the door the energy comes and the day flies by! Not a dull moment! Last spring, I realized how much I relied on the energy from the students to give me the energy to teach. Facing a camera and watching myself

was quickly a monotonous job. Eventually, I found a giant stuffed bear in my house and made pictures of my students, and I started "teaching" them. Anything to help me lose the one-sided feeling of talking to technology!

Second, singing is a special time of the day! I was surprised how much I missed playing the piano and singing with the kids. There is something to be said about teaching the kids songs and then being amazed at how quickly they pick up the words. Watching their enthusiasm with simply picking songs and singing their favorite songs is irreplaceable. What other job do you get the privilege to spend time singing praises to God with kids who sing from the heart!

Third, interactive devotions are important learning opportunities missed in virtual teaching. Interacting with the kids about things spiritual and prayer can easily be taken for granted. Dealing with behaviors (sometimes problem behaviors) are wonderful learning opportunities to teach proper Christian behavior one to another. Without interaction with classmates, many of these lessons are missed. In addition, the Christian bond found in a classroom is grown throughout the year and teaching virtually loses this opportunity. Being a part of one body working, playing alongside one another and developing social skills with peers of like faith are a priceless benefit missed in teaching remotely.

Fourth, teaching from the viewpoint of Scripture is one of the foundations of our school. Often this is naturally brought up as lessons progress, especially if it is lessons from "Scholastic News" or other magazines. Much of the time these errors are subtle to the children's young minds, and guidance is of utmost importance. Assigning lessons to be completed on the computer means very little chance to discuss evolution, worldly or doctrinal errors viewpoints.

Fifth, the idea of sending home stacks of worksheets gives the impression that school is just filling in worksheets. Making videos to teach each lesson showed how important it is to teach first and then practice. Any student who filled in the worksheets and thought the work was complete missed the point of the lesson which is not just filling in the blanks. Thanks to all the students (and parents) who sat through some videos that were probably unclear or confusing, but took the extra time to learn and not just complete the worksheet.

Sixth, so many small activities go into lessons that can't be conveyed or completed through a screen. There is a reason a classroom is full of "stuff". Children learn best by participating and doing activities far beyond just listening and writing. Games and group activities teach as much or even more than worksheets. Experimenting and discovery are what makes learning exciting, and much of this is lost during virtual teaching.

Seventh, I can honestly say I learned the importance of gym which I can assure you is not always my favorite subject. That said, it is an important class for several reasons. It teaches cooperation and working together while having fun playing games. Warm up exercises are opportunities to teach math counting skills with physical activity. These same exercises can be used to work on developing skills needed for attention (core exercises), handwriting

(crossing the midline), and more. All missed opportunities which are difficult or impossible to teach virtually.

Eighth, I have learned new appreciation for the men on our school board and our administrator. The pandemic has put stress on every aspect of our lives. It has added work to our school board with decisions that have never faced our school in the time of its existence. In a time when leadership is needed and decisions made are not always popular, the board has clearly stated its objectives for our school: Love God and love the neighbor and do what is necessary to keep the doors open.

Ninth, our parents are wonderful! Stepping in and teaching from home was not on anyone's mind even a week before the shutdown. But, when it did happen, our parents showed a commitment to the covenant education of their children. I am sure it took hours of sitting next to students, coaching, reteaching and more to complete the lesson sent home. Any lesson plans or videos sent home would have been a waste of time if parents had not taken the ball and run with it. Thankfully, we had moms (and dads) able and willing to patiently work through the challenges we teachers faced as we struggled to find new ways to teach through technology.

Tenth, Romans 8:28 states, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Yes, this is a lesson that I am still learning every day. When my days and weeks seemed to be sailing along smoothly, this was perhaps an easy verse to read. A pandemic blocked my "normal" life, and I suddenly struggled not to say this verse with clenched teeth. Read on to Romans 8:29 and 30. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." God has predestined from the beginning to bring us through the present hardships so that we can be in glory with Him! It means every life experience is molding and preparing us for our permanent home in glory. He is in control; not government, not the pandemic, not the health department. This is the basis of the most important lesson of all: look to the end goal of glory instead of focusing on the circumstances that make this earthly life uncomfortable. All things do work together for good to them that love God.

GRATITUDE – Miss Becca Gritters

With Thanksgiving approaching, we have been talking a lot about gratitude in second grade. Listing and discussing the ways that our Heavenly Father provides for us, cares for us, upholds us, and blesses us, helps us to see the covenantal faithfulness of our God. When students are asked to make a list of what they are thankful for, the most common responses include food, clothes, houses, parents, ministers, teachers, and grandparents. We then talk about how we can show our gratitude and thankfulness to our loved ones and God for what we have been given.

Usually around this time of year we welcome our grandparents into the school and our classrooms on Grandparent's Day. This is a day in which we can show our grandparents and loved ones what we

do in school, but it also is a time to thank them for all the time, love, and effort they have put into the school and in the raising of their grandchildren. We were unable to do that this year, so instead, my students wrote letters to their Grandparents to tell them a little bit about second grade and to share our love with them.

Dear Grandparents,

I am sad we can't have Grandparent's Day. We are studying about the Solar System, Psalms, and math. There are 23 people in our classroom. My teacher is Miss Becca Gritters. School is fun because I get to see my friends. We have a library in our classroom. Thank you for being my grandparents. I love you.

Love, Liam D.

Dear Grandparents,

I wish we could have Grandparent's Day. We've been studying the Solar System and insects. In math, we have been learning about Math Mountains and equations. I lost a tooth!

Love, Kiley R.

Dear Grandpa and Grandma,

I miss you! In our class we have a lot of books in our library. We have 23 people in our class! In science, we are learning about the Solar System. School is FUN!! We write letters to Mr. Kuiper. Just so you know, Mr. Kuiper is the other 2nd grade teacher. Thanks for paying for the school so that I can be here!

Love, Wyatt L.

Dear Grandpa and Grandma,

I am sad that you cannot come to school for Grandparent's Day. We have a lot of books in our library. We are learning about the Solar System and continents. We write letters to Mr. Kuiper's class. We have 23 kids in our class. I like to play with Leah.

Love, Rylie M.

Dear Grandparents,

It's too bad you can't come for Grandparent's Day. We're learning about Psalms in Bible. We write to someone in our family every Friday. In Science we are learning about the Solar System. We are learning about word problems in Math. We are also learning about the Reformation in writing. I am reading about Babe Ruth.

Love, Cole B.

Dear Grandparents,

I wish you could come for Grandparent's Day. But the COVID 19. At school for science we are learning about the Solar System. We are writing letters to Mr. Kuiper. We are learning about insects for science. We have 23 people in our classroom. Thank you for all your work.

Love, Bentley V.O.

Dear Grandpa and Grandma,

Grandparent's Day is really fun, but we can't do it this year. How about a note instead about class at HCS? In Bible, we are talking about the Psalms. We write letters to Mr. Kuiper's class. How is spending your day at home? Or at work? Thank you for helping us when we need it.

Love, Brady N.

Dear Grandparents,

I wish you could come to school. I love you! Our class is learning about the Solar System, math, and we sometimes read. If you were not born, then I would not be born.

Love Blake S.

Dear Grandpa and Grandma,

I am sorry that we can't have Grandparent's Day. I am learning about math, VoWac, and writing. We are doing computers on Tuesday and Thursday.

Love, Abbie P.

Dear Grandpa and Grandma,

I am sorry but we can't have Grandparent's Day. If you did not know, I won all of my soccer games! I am happy, but we did not get any medals. That was the sad thing. We are studying the Solar System in school. Our class has a lot of books in our library. I like that you are my Grandpa and Grandma.

Love, Anabelle D.

Dear Grandpa and Grandma,

You are the best! We are learning about the Solar System plus the planets. 2nd grade is the best! I am sorry we can't have Grandparent's Day. We are learning about the seven continents. I memorized them all. We right to Mr. Kuiper all the time. We are also learning about the Psalms in the Bible. Recess is also fun! Playing football with Devin is the most fun! I hope next year we can do Grandparent's Day. Miss Gritters has a ton of good books. Right now I'm reading the puppy place. It's really good.

Love, Grant B.

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF CHILDREN – Mr. Brad Gritters

And Jesus saith unto them, **“Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise?”** (Matthew 21:16) While Jesus was healing in the temple, the children began calling out to Jesus saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” The chief priests and scribes were offended by this and wanted Jesus to stop the singing and praise of the children. Jesus responded to this evil request by quoting Psalm 8:2. Jesus' answer, as quoted above, was beautiful. Here we see the leaders of the church being humbled by Christ. The example Jesus pointed the chief priests and scribes to were the children who were shouting hosannas and praising Christ!

We often think of the elderly, ministers, teachers, and parents as examples of the Christian walk. We are not so quick to think of children as examples to us! By God's grace our children do not have the same worries and concerns that an adult experiences. They do not think about where their next meal will come from or whether they will even have a meal. They do not worry about whether they will have clothes to put on each morning. The future

is not usually a scary thought for our children. Everything is provided for them each day. They trust their earthly parents to provide their needs. God calls us to follow this example of children. We must trust that God will supply our every need, whether it be the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the cars we drive, or even our jobs. The cares and concerns of this life should be laid before our God, who cares for us and for our children. Notice the language of Isaiah 41:13, “For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee.” It is the language of a father talking to his child. Our children trust their fathers to protect them, and yet they are placing their trust in us as sinful parents and teachers. How much greater should our comfort be when we place our trust in the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Father who controls and directs all things that happen in our lives? God, the Father that we trust, calms us with two simple words, “Fear not.”

Jesus lays out another way we must follow the examples of children. Children shout out the praises of God in singing without

feeling any shame. At school, we begin each day with devotions and singing. Could there be a better way to start your day? Hearing the children's voices singing out songs of praise to our God each morning is an amazing thing to hear. Even while wearing masks, the children do not hold back, but sing aloud God's praises. Even though we do not have chapel together at a school, it is not hard to remember the times when the kindergarteners would shout out loud Psalter 400, which would bring a smile to everyone's face! What an example to us of how we ought to praise our God! We too, are called to shout forth the praises of God without holding back.

We are living during uncertain times. Our nation is divided on many different issues involving race, religion, elections, economy, and many other social issues. The threat of a virus is also constantly looming over our heads. Students and teachers live every day with

the uncertainty of whether or not we will have school the next day or next week. In all of these uncertainties, we need to raise our voices in praise of our God like our children do in school! We praise the God who holds the election in his hands, who holds the Coronavirus in his hands, and who holds our schools in his hands. The words of Isaiah 41:13 must ring true for us. God leads us by His hand, therefore we have nothing to fear. Just as children look to their parents for assurance and protection, so we too look to our Father for comfort. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (Psalm 27:1 and 14)

A GODLY EXAMPLE – Mr. Matt Elzinga

Wednesday, May 20. We had planned this night to be a grand finale celebrating Mr. Andy Kamper. All of the schools would perform one last combined concert with Mr. Kamper leading them.

By God's perfect plan, that night was not meant to be, and Mr. Kamper's teaching career came to an abrupt end with the onset of a pandemic. Lord willing, we will still get a night to show our appreciation for all that Mr. Kamper has done for us.

Mr. Kamper has taught music faithfully in our schools for 44 years. That's long enough to have taught three different generations of band families! In that time, he has shared his love of music with thousands of children and shown them how to use this gift to glorify their heavenly Father.

I've been privileged to learn from Mr. Kamper for 15 years, beginning in fifth grade (where he let me try the drums against his

better judgment), then in junior high and high school band, but finally and especially when he agreed to mentor a new band director who had no experience or training. I've grown to know Mr. Kamper both as a teacher and a colleague. He has shown me what it means to care for God's children, to set a godly, loving example, and to trust in God when facing uncertainty and adversity.

I cannot begin to express the gratitude that I have for Mr. Kamper and his dedication throughout the years. I look forward to carrying on the legacy of music he has established in our schools. This year will certainly have unique challenges, but I believe that the people and circumstances God has placed in my life have been preparing me for this moment. May God bless Mr. Kamper as he begins the next chapter in his life.

REARING COVENANT CHILDREN – TEACHING AND MODELING AUTHORITY – Mr. Jason Holstege

On a drive through mid-Michigan with my wife this summer, we were a bit surprised to see, amongst the verdant fields and flowering pastureland, various signs and placards disdainfully voicing disgust with certain of our state leaders. These were not signs expressing principled, well-reasoned arguments against certain actions taken by government officials. Rather, these were direct attacks on the supposed mental capabilities of the leaders of our state. While one can understand where the anger and frustration were coming from, it was not encouraging to see that, once again, civic discourse and respect for authority were reaching new lows.

Which begs the question, how is this looking among us? Part of why I ask that is because with this recent election cycle, some more vocal dissent with national politicians has popped up in my 8th grade history class discussions, dissent that was also tinted with a lack of respect for them. Because I realize it is not always easy to show respect for authority figures with whom we disagree, I make it a point to especially deal with this aspect of communication in history class. During our unit on the election of 1800, we are given the opportunity to look at political ads of this interesting event

and see that there is nothing new under the sun: personal attack ads which disrespect authority figures have been around for a while. The assignment given to the students, then, was to write a positive political advertisement for each of the candidates that showed their knowledge of the issues of that day, but that also made sure to "honor the king" or other position of authority (1 Peter 2:17), even - and especially - when we disagreed with them.

As we train our children to follow Christ, we are called to show them His perfect obedience in this area of life also - submitting oneself to authority. We are also reminded that parents and teachers are to be examples of this, teaching and modeling authority in our own lives too. Paul Tripp, in his book, *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family*, reminds us that authority is "one of the foundational heart issues in the life of every child." In fact, he argues that if we don't consider how to teach and model living under authority, "all the good things [we] seek to accomplish as God's tool in the life of our children will not work."

Rather, Tripp argues, we need to help our children to see that to reject authority - whether parental, political, or ecclesiastical - is really to reject God, the authority over all authority. This is demonstrated vividly by the Heidelberg Catechism's (Lord's Day 39) answer to the question (104) of what God requires in the fifth commandment - that we "show all honor, love and fidelity to...all in authority" over us, and that we "patiently bear with their weaknesses...since it pleases God to govern us by their hand."

This all means then that our parenting must be done with careful consideration of the attitude we project about our authority over our children and about those in authority over us. The tone of voice or choice of words we use to command our children or to talk about

the "higher powers" over us must indicate that God is our authority. Our exercise of or obedience to authority will not be dictated by the mood we are in or the (in)convenience of the moment, but rather by our loyalty to our King, whose we are and whom we serve and obey in all areas of life.

May God bless our HCS families as we instruct children and prepare them for their calling in this world to live in a godly manner under authority in these unusual and difficult times, and may we be thankful for the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, who "died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (II Cor. 5:15)

SOME THINGS HAVE CHANGED; MUCH REMAINS THE SAME – Mrs. Katie Baatenburg

As we embarked upon the 2020-2021 school year, we as teachers knew that Covid-19 would change many things. It wasn't until we got into the school year, that we fully comprehended what these changes would look like. As supporters, I feel the urgent need to remind you that much remains the same here at Heritage Christian School. I also ask that one doesn't lose sight of this truth and keep it in the forefront of one's mind. Believe what I write; it's what I behold with my eyes each time I enter the building.

In the midst of the changes brought by Covid, the fundamentals of being a Reformed teacher remain the same. There is still that daily prayer brought before our Heavenly Father that we as teachers would be faithful in our vocation. As educators we are still heeding the calling to daily "cast (our) bread upon the waters." This daily casting is done in the full confidence that God will and is blessing our labors regardless of Covid 19 or a mask. With or without Covid 19, the reformed teacher doesn't grow discouraged. At times that blessing and reward for teaching is not imminent, but rather delayed to some future point down the road. Regardless, the teacher still sees their role in a student's life not as the whole puzzle, but rather as a solitary piece in a moment in time. Dear readers, do you see how Covid 19 hasn't changed our vocation?

Covid 19 has not changed that afflictions on the good must fall, even on students. Some students still must travel through the sea for a time, tried and true. This is hard to see; a teacher's limited earthly perspective comes to the forefront, and one starts to question, to wonder what good can come from these things. At times, it seems as if the affliction is going to overwhelm the student's very being. Then one is gently, yet firmly, reminded that this child belongs to God, and He loves them more than any father, mother, or teacher ever could. He fashioned the student, how

much more will He be a faithful, heavenly Father unto him like none other can? God will bring them safely through all. The teacher can come to no other conclusion but to beseech that God would lead that student to the Rock that is higher than he. Covid 19 has not changed that prayer that is daily offered by teachers.

Covid 19 has not changed the urgent message that teachers bring to their students. This urgent message reminds students not to let earthly things get in the way of making friendships. The earthly differences that can separate students are fleeting, fading and lack any eternal element. Most importantly these students have a Savior who has bridged all earthly gaps. Thus being children of God these students have EVERYTHING in common. Covid 19 has not changed our love for these students. We as teachers and parents must wrestle with God on their behalf till they see the need for each child of God in their lives. That their world is bigger, brighter and more beautiful because God placed that student on their paths. This is what life in the church is all about; we would be doing our students a strong disservice if we didn't prepare them for this beautiful truth. Covid 19 hasn't changed that God's children are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

Grandparents and parents, do you see that much remains the same at Heritage Christian School? Covid 19 has not changed the fact that this school is a precious gift from God. A gift that brothers and sisters in Christ who live in far away places only wish they had. If these saints ever saw this gift, the school, they would have the Queen of Sheba's response, "The half was not told to me." Covid 19 has not changed that the work at this school is a good work; we as teachers need and crave your support. Because "two is better than one" (Ecclesiastes 4:9), let us strive to work together for such a time as this.

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE – Miss Kennedy Kaptein

Earlier this year, Mrs. Sandy Glashower led us in chapel by having Rev. Haak speak for us. What he spoke about had an impact on not only myself, but also my students. Every chapel, my students write down two things that they learned from chapel after we have discussed it as a class. My students took away from this chapel speech that their words can have a major effect on people. Words also have to go through the four different guards before they come out of one's mouth.

The students and myself have really been impacted by that this year. It has taught me that the words that are spoken in the classroom are to be God-honoring and glorifying. It has shown me that the words that you say are ones that need to be encouraging and uplifting. They need to be honest and true. My students learned this too, and this is demonstrated in the words that they speak every day in class. Here are some of their takeaways.

Tyce Feenstra - "What I learned in chapel is that the tongue can be both good and bad, and that there are four guards that guard your mouth."

Hudson Koole - "What I learned in chapel is that when David's guards fell asleep, the prisoners got out, and it is the same thing with our words."

Isaac Deemter - "What I learned in chapel is to speak his word good, and not to speak bad words."

Myla Butler - "What I learned in chapel is that God guards us from evil, and that we should not speak bad words."

Andrea Visser - "What I learned in chapel is to use your tongue wisely. I also learned the names of the guards of the tongue."

Bristol Hassevoort - "What I learned in chapel is the names of the four guards for our tongue: love, necessity, true, and wise."

Samantha Horvat - "What I learned in chapel is if you don't brush your teeth, your breath will smell bad. If you use bad words, you are going to have bad breath. When you are saying mean words, it is like fire."

READ NATURALLY LIVE! – Mr. Mike Noorman

One of the programs that has really taken off this year is the Read Naturally Live program. When school was forced to shut down, our teachers were limited in their ability to see students reading progress. The first grade Read Naturally program was cut short in March, as well as students from other grades that were using Read Live. This caused some question marks for a larger number of students that may not have been reading at grade level by the end of the year.

Before the year began, we decided to purchase enough licenses of Read Naturally Live to be able to continue working with and monitoring the progress of these students during this school year.

Read Live is the computer version of Read Naturally. Instead of using stories that are printed on paper, Read Live uses leveled texts along with recorded readings of these texts that serve as the guided readings. The steps of Read Live are the same as the paper version, but each step is guided along by the "narrator" of the program as the student moves through each step.

These steps of Read Naturally are as follows: 1. Select a Story, 2. Key Words, 3. Prediction, 4. Cold Read (Cold Timing), 5. Read Along with the computer, 6. Practice (reading to meet your goal), 7. Answer Quiz questions 8. Retell the story 9. Pass/Hot Read (Hot Timing)

During the Cold Read and the Hot Read, the border of the student's screen will change from blue to red. This is an indicator that the student needs the teacher to monitor these readings in order to validate their timing and accuracy and move them on to the next step. If the teacher is working with another student at that time, the student will be able to play "Wordtastic", which is an exercise that challenges the student in their understanding of word meaning and relationships, such as finding antonyms or synonyms of words.

Read Live is more efficient than the paper version because it allows one teacher to monitor multiple students at a time. If you would come into the teacher's lounge in the beginning moments of the school day, you would find students from multiple classes and grades spread out around the room with a computer. A few staff members and a recently added volunteer will be found bouncing from student to student in the physically distant groups that can be up to 17 students at a time.

The additional cleaning regiment, the spacing of students, and other measures taken during the COVID times of school have not hampered our work with the students reading goals. We have

found this program to be a very effective tool for providing reading practice at a student's reading level as well as give our teachers and staff another data point that we need to determine a student's reading fluency and comprehension.

When a student begins in the Read Live program, they begin by reading a few leveled texts that lead us to an appropriate starting point. After a few weeks, those levels are reassessed for fit by factoring in the number of words they can read per minute at their level, their comprehension of the story from the quiz results, and our knowledge of the student.

The more practice with appropriately leveled texts that each child does, the more fluent they will become at reading. We don't want the reading passages to be too difficult or too simple, but we want to move each child towards grade-level reading fluency.

The Hasbrouck and Tindal Oral Reading Fluency chart, which can be found at www.readnaturally.com, gives us standardized norms to compare the student's words correct per minute in their reading level. The chart also provides a table to set long-term fluency goals for struggling readers.

Not all of the students make progress in their fluency and accuracy at the same pace. Read Live's repeated reading practice reveals students who are struggling with word attack, decoding, recall, and comprehension skills. Read Live provides data in various types of reports which show us the trends that each child has.

Some students needed more of a challenge while others have met their grade-level goals. Other students will need more time, and a few others will need additional support. The Read Live program gives teachers and parents information about their child's reading skills over a longer period of time while giving leveled reading practice.

I am very excited about the potential for this program and for some of the different options that Read Live has to offer. One such opportunity for students working on their decoding and spelling skills that was recently released is called Word Warm-ups Live. This program builds phonics and decoding skills with structured phonics instruction. Students work independently through word lists and story exercises that give practice with decoding skills.

If you would like to know more or have any questions about the Read Live or Word Warm-ups Live programs, you can look them up at www.readnaturally.com/go-read-live.

REMAINING 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

December 24, 2020 – January 1, 2021 - Christmas Break

January 18-22, 2021 – MAP Testing (grades 3-8)

**** February 3-4, 2021 – PT Conferences**

February 19, 2021 - Mid-winter Break

**** February 25, 2021 – 5th-8th Band and Choir Concert**

April 2-9, 2021 - Spring Break

**** April 16, 2021 – All School Program**

**** April 27, 2021 – Science Curriculum Night**

May 17-21, 2021 – MAP Testing (grades 3-8)

**** May 20, 2021 – 5th-8th Band and Choir Concert**

May 31, 2021 - Memorial Day Break

June 3, 2021 – Graduation, last day of school

**** Extra-curricular events on the calendar are subject to change in accordance with the parameters for group gatherings at any particular time**

PARITAL 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

August 30, 2021 - School begins

September 3 & 6, 2021 - Labor Day Break

October 21 & 22, 2021 - Teachers' Convention

November 25 & 26, 2021 - Thanksgiving Break

December 23 - January 2, 2022 - Christmas Break

February 18, 2022 - Mid-Winter Break

April 1 - 8, 2022 - Spring Break

June 1, 2022 - Graduation