

Herald



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Glad Service

Mr. Brian Kuiper, Administrator

***“Serve the LORD with gladness:
come before His presence with singing.”***

Psalm 100:2

Recently as I read the so familiar Psalm 100, I was struck by the phrase “serve the Lord with gladness” (v 2). I expect I am not the only person who reads something many times and gets a different message each time. As I reflected, I was fed by the Word. I hope this short introduction to this issue of the *Herald* can be for your profit as it was for mine.

Serve - The KJV presents that word as an imperative. In His wisdom, the Spirit knew that we would have trouble serving on certain days or at certain times. There is no wiggle room here for interpretation. There is no condition attached. No matter the circumstances of life, we are called to be servants. Servants look out for the good of those in need. They lift up by words of encouragement and by prayer. Others know the love of God because they are served by those who are His. So, serve.

The Lord - It seems easy for us to serve each other or to serve our families. The command is to serve the Lord. That service is all encompassing and life altering. It requires putting self aside and looking to the needs of His people. It requires a life of serving Him. It means our hearts must turn from the service of the world and the things of the world and to the kingdom of God and His children. Joshua, Samuel, and other leaders of the church throughout history have been tasked with reminding the church of the value of serving the Lord alone. That service looks upward and outward.

With gladness - So far our comfort level with the passage was likely pretty good. However, the gladness thing. Gladness is normally a choice. A familiar quote from Charles Swindoll reminds us of the importance of choosing gladness. While his quote refers to our attitudes, the key phrase is, “I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it.” God gives each of us the grace and the ability to react to the circumstances that come upon us and to serve with gladness. Choosing otherwise shows an incomplete understanding of service to the Lord.

Weekly the faculty of HCS assemble for devotions - in an effort to begin the week in the Word, but also to encourage a service with gladness. May that glad service be the desire of all of us. On behalf of the staff of Heritage Christian School, thank you for serving with us in the high calling of educating His children in the fear of His name.

Long Range Planning Committee Report

It has been a while since the Long Range Planning Committee updated the supporters of Heritage Christian School regarding our long term plans. It is the case that this committee reviews current and upcoming enrollment regularly. Also, in April, 2020, we submitted a plan to the Board that suggests future infrastructure ideas if enrollment grows to a point that change is needed. At this time, our current building can support the needs of more than 600 students and our 5 year projections do not begin to approach that number. Thus, no action was needed in response to the 2020 report.

Therefore, the long range work of the board has shifted a bit to the building committee. Currently they are working to create a plan for the building and grounds that ensures that we are being proactive

on addressing long term needs. The building committee is looking at the roof, the parking lot, the boilers, and other major items to create a plan for maintenance of these items so that we are prepared to address them in a proactive way. To date, no proposals have been brought. Much research is being done. It is good that we have some time to look at these items so that we can plan our approaches before great need arises. This will allow for plans to be made for these needs as well as projecting some costs and funds to be allocated to them.

We are thankful for the blessing of a building that meets the academic, social, and physical needs of the students and staff! May this blessing be something we recognize as a gift from God and bring us often to praise the Lord.

Insurance Committee Report – Mr. Keith Feenstra

God has richly blessed us with a wonderful school building and talented teachers to provide our children with a Christ-centered education. Part of being good stewards of what God has blessed us with is making sure we have adequate insurance to cover unexpected expenses.

Heritage Christian School has insurance policies in place for the school buildings and contents, as well as auto insurance for the buses. We also carry liability coverage, workers compensation, and student accident insurance. Each year coverage levels are reviewed to ensure we have enough replacement coverage, liability coverage, etc.

As a benefit to full-time teachers, HCS provides health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, and disability insurance. HCS pays 75% of the cost of health insurance and dental insurance, and the teachers are responsible for the remaining 25%. In addition, teachers may also elect to purchase vision insurance.

Health insurance is a substantial line item in our budget each year. HCS has been grandfathered into a "Pre-ACA" (Affordable Care Act) plan, which means that the maximum out of pocket is lower, and the premiums have been lower in comparison to other Affordable Care Act compliant plans. This year HCS health insurance premiums increased 6.5% from last year, while other plans increased nearly twice as much.

Insurance agents have done a great job guiding us through the renewal process and clearly showing the cost vs. benefit comparison of different plans. A special thanks is also due to Cori Hop who handles the behind-the-scenes insurance paperwork, agency communication, and renewal process! We are thankful for the many ways in which God has blessed us and that we are able to have insurance policies in place in the event we would ever need them.

Building Committee Report – Mr. Jordan Dykstra

The HCS Building Committee (BC) experiences a lot of excitement throughout the year, sometimes stressful and challenging, sometimes humorous and a bit relaxed, but never a humdrum routine. I will try my best to take you on a brief adventure looking through the goggles of the BC. Let's dive right in.

June, July, and August are months when the building gets a breather from the barrage of backpacks, boots, and bus traffic, but not from bugs and boiler issues! Flying ants seems to have a heart for Heritage, a fight we are battling with the help of the bug guy. Looking back through monthly reports from the BC, there seems to be a common theme. The boiler system and all of its pipes, pumps, and parts continue to prove a painful point, claiming a solid spot on the Major Maintenance item list!

Skimming through a few other action items to give you a taste of the day-to-day excitement:

- Purchased a commercial carpet cleaner and floor scrubber to combat the effects of the daily stampede

- Installed bus loop lighting for the dark Michigan morning Pre-Trip inspections
- Installed new siding and gutters
- Transformed the gym wall logo from Falcons to Heritage Panthers
- Installed fresh stone dust on the ball fields
- Installed dugout safety fencing on the ball field thanks to a class gift
- Installed a 9 Square game system which prompted multiple requests for more
- Blizzard of '22 roof snow removal to prevent ice dams and water damage

Improved building security, ADA-accessible entrances, improved access to playground areas, a new ADA-accessible playground structure, annual carpet replacement, and new bleachers for the elementary gym are under discussion.

Finally, the BC and the Finance Committee are planning and budgeting for "The Big 3," three costly Major Maintenance items: the parking lot, the boiler system, and the roof system. The parking lot will likely need replacement in the next couple of years, with an expected budget of \$370,000. We are currently performing studies on the boiler system to accurately plan what is needed to support our building and when to expect a replacement. Our roofing system should be sufficient for at least 10-15 years, with some flashing maintenance costs along the way.

Thank you to Cori Hop, the new HCS Business Manager who, along with many other tasks, handles paperwork and communications on behalf of the BC!

Also, I would like to close out this edition of the BC Herald report and turn the spotlight on our Facility Manager, Jeremy Lubbers. Jeremy has been instrumental in keeping the HCS building

operating smoothly throughout the year. You will find Jeremy at HCS before, during, and long after regular school hours. Jeremy is hard to catch because he is always on the move! He keeps HCS incredibly clean, but do not let his top-notch janitor hat fool you. He wears many other hats as well. You will often find Jeremy waxing floors, cleaning carpets, replacing toilet valves and faucets, repairing water lines, fixing bearings, replacing motors and pumps, and cleaning up collateral damage left behind by faulty parts. If you shuttle your kids to and from school, you may have seen him removing snow and ice from the roof. This is only the tip of the iceberg. Jeremy is here, there, and everywhere. He always goes above and beyond to help solve problems and is usually in the trenches fixing them himself. Jeremy has proven to be invaluable for the daily facility operations at HCS. Please thank him for all his hard work the next time you see him (if you can catch up with him)!

*Congratulations to Miss Rebecca Gritters (2nd grade)
for attaining an advanced degree
- Masters of Library and Information Science -
from Wayne State University this past December!*

Thankful in All Things – Mrs. Beth VanBaren

This year our class has been talking about what it means to be thankful, not just for things we think are good, but also for things that are difficult or even bad from our perspective. So often we get up, brush our teeth, eat breakfast, have our morning devotions, say goodbye to our spouse and children, drive to work, and begin our day rather mindlessly. How often do we take for granted that everything will go just as we expect it to, and we will arrive as we plan and go about our day? What if we have a flat tire, or a car wreck? Must we worry? No. We can rest in the knowledge that everything is in God's plan for us and in everything God cares for us. He gives sunlight, warmth, shelter, and food to eat. God gives us parents to care for us, and ministers to bring us the Word each Lord's Day. God cares for us not just physically, but spiritually. He is working everything for our good, even when there are difficulties and trials in our lives. Through these trials God works patience, trust, and faith in us. God gives spiritual growth and we can say with the Apostle Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:4-6) I asked my fourth graders to write about what they were thankful for. This is what some of them had to say:

- *I am thankful for churches because churches help us get together with the congregation. When we go to church we are there to learn about God. I am also thankful for*

Ministers, Elders, and Deacons. Ministers teach us about God in what they preach, deacons help the congregation by passing the collection plate, the Elders help the church by doing family visitation and by showing support to the church. I am especially thankful for Jesus Christ because He died on the cross to save me from my many sins. (Paige B.)

- *I am thankful that Jesus died on the cross because He saved us from our sins. I'm thankful for our ministers who preach sermons to us. I'm also thankful for my family because they are kind to me, and for the teacher who teaches me.* (Abbie P.)
- *I am thankful for Jesus because He died to save me from my sins. I am also thankful for my Dad because he taught me what it means when Jesus sits at God's right hand. I am thankful for my mom because she makes food for the family. I am thankful for shelter that protects me from the cold. I am also thankful for ministers, who preach about God and His love for us.* (Wyatt VK)
- *I am thankful for ministers because we can hear God's word every week. I am also thankful for Christian schools because we can learn about God in all of the subjects. I am most thankful for Jesus, who died on the cross to save us from our many sins.* (Calvin VB)

- *I am thankful for ministers because they bring us God's word and they are good examples of things we should and shouldn't do. We should always be thankful for our ministers! I am also thankful for teachers and schools because they also teach us God's word, not only in Bible class and devotions, but in Math and Spelling they make sure everything is God glorifying. Always make sure to be thankful for teachers too! I am thankful for my family also because they love the Lord and they teach me and my siblings to grow up in a godly way. I am thankful also for Jesus dying on the cross because he gave up his life for us. By dying on the cross he washed us clean and saved us from our sins. Be thankful for Jesus the most!*
(Ella DG)
- *I'm really thankful for our family because they help me learn about God. I'm thankful for Psalters and Bibles so we can praise our God. I'm so thankful for the food that God has provided us. But most of all, I'm thankful to be a child of God so I can live with Him in Heaven.* (Blake N.)
- *The things I am thankful for are the teachers and ministers that can teach us in a Christian way. I like them*

because I love to learn about God and how He sent His Only begotten son on the cross to save us from our sins. I'm also thankful for freedom in the USA so we may be allowed to go to church and listen to the word of God. I am also thankful for salvation. That Jesus came down to earth as a man and died for us. Remember, he was a man, so it hurt, it hurt a lot. So again, remember, He died for us, so we could go to heaven and be with God praising and singing unto Him. Be thankful! (Brady N.)

- *I am thankful for my family who take care of me and love me. I am thankful for friends that I can play with. I am thankful for the Bible so we can know God's word and the Psalter so we can sing the songs and praise God. But most of all, I am thankful that God sent Jesus to die on the cross to save us from our sins. Thank you, God!*
(Kaiya B.)

Mentorship Program – Mr. Josh Moelker

So you've completed your student teaching, graduated from a university teacher training program, made it through the interview process, and actually landed your first teaching job. Good-bye assigned readings and writing reflections! That's what I thought, until I was given a packet at my first staff meeting and told that I had been enrolled in the mentorship program. My guess would be that most *Herald* readers are unaware of the existence of the mentorship program that is in place in our schools even though it is a great benefit to them.

The mentorship program is put on by the Teacher Training Committee (TTC) which works under the oversight of the Federation Board. The Federation Board is a part of the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies which is made up of school board representatives from all of the Protestant Reformed schools in the United States and Canada. The mentorship program is a recent development in the long history of the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies and was officially approved by the Federation in 2019. The Federation had two objectives in mind when it began the mentorship program.

The first objective of the mentorship program is to help new teachers apply Reformed principles and ideas to their work in the classroom and what they teach. This is done through the reading of a selection of articles, pamphlets, and chapters of various books, writing reflections on these readings, and discussing them with the

mentor teacher. These readings range from the history of the PRTI, the antithesis in Christian education, discipline in the classroom, teaching devotional skills, and many other topics. Anyone interested in these readings, which often apply just as well to parents as they do to teachers, can access them through the Federation's website (prcs.org).

The second objective of the mentorship program was to pair a first-year teacher with an experienced mentor teacher. While a mentor and mentee may not necessarily teach at the same school, they generally teach similar grade levels or subject areas. Together, the mentor and mentee discuss assigned readings, writings, and whatever else may come up in their shared callings. This aspect of the mentorship program has been the most beneficial for me and the one that I have enjoyed the most. I have appreciated having a veteran teacher working alongside me to help guide me, answer my many questions, and give advice on different things that come up.

After almost three years I have nearly completed the mentorship program. Although it has involved a lot of work, I am grateful to be a part of this new program. I am grateful for the work of the Teacher Training Committee and all of the mentor teachers as they work together to improve the quality of the Reformed education that is currently happening in our schools.

Jehovah, Our Unfailing Protector - Mrs. Katie Baatenburg

Last fall I had the most enjoyable experience at the Reformed Book Outlet. In the past, I have not frequented the outlet as much as I would have liked. I often didn't carry a significant amount of cash on me. Furthermore, my PR family tree isn't that impressive. Usually the worker would ask me what my last name is. Of course

there were no connections to be made when I said, "Baatenburg". Then he or she would go on to ask what my maiden name was. Once they heard it was "Haak", they immediately wanted to know if Rev. Haak was my father. I then informed them that he wasn't, but was indeed my second cousin. Typically a look of disappointment

and non-impressiveness ensued, and I found myself having nothing else to say or give.

However, on my visit this time I was able to use my credit card and the worker just mentioned that I looked like a teacher. Being twenty-two plus twenty-two years old, I embraced that as a compliment. It was at this visit that I came across a CD by the Psalm Choir. I was shocked to see that this CD was only \$5.00. The CD was cheaper than a pound of ground beef or at some places, a dozen eggs. On this CD the choir sang Psalter Number 347. Listening to this number has afforded me a great amount of comfort.

Psalm 84 sets before the child of God the beautiful truth that God is our Protector. A protector is someone who shields a person from harm, injury or even destruction. Perhaps you know someone who wasn't protected as they should have been. This could have been as a small child, a teenager, or even an adult. Perhaps that person is you.

God bestows upon some individuals the opportunity to reflect the love of Christ in their positions of power and authority. However at times they fall gravely short. Instead of reflecting Christ, they inflict a great amount of damage, damage that can come in the form of physical and emotional abuse. Even, and this is the hardest one to rectify, abuse in the form spiritual damage. These individuals create situations where they murder a child of God; yet that child still has a heart that beats, thus forcing the victim to deal with the harmful and lifelong consequences inflicted upon them by another's sin.

Regardless of what one's interaction has been with earthly protectors, Psalm 84 renews our spirits, rekindles our minds and revives our hearts concerning our heavenly Protector. The Psalm reminds us that our heavenly Protector never fails, and the Psalm bestows upon us much needed comfort. Comfort that speaks to how well God knows us. He knew that there would be much in this

life that would cause us to be anxious and at times even despair. Place your name, the name of your child, or grandchild in the blank and be reminded of the faithfulness of your Heavenly Protector and immerse yourself in the consolation of Psalm 84.

_____, you have a Protector who:

- Will not suffer your foot to be moved
- Knows no careless slumber upon His eyelids
- Is evermore at your right hand
- Will not allow the sun by day to smite you
- Preserves your comings and goings

The comfort of Psalm 84 doesn't abruptly conclude there. Psalm 91 tells us that because God is our Protector, our refuge is the highest one. This refuge is just not a sufficient one or a refuge that has made the "Top Ten" list, but the highest one. Plainly and simply put, a better refuge doesn't exist. Thus this refuge, this place of protection and rest, can be compared to none other. This place of safety and protection is ours to dwell in because of our Keeper.

Today at this moment in time, where do you dwell? Do you dwell in the green pastures or struggle through the deepest, darkest valley? Is the burden you carry known to all or just between you and your Heavenly Father? Be assured that everything is going to be okay. It has to be okay because of who your Protector is and everything He has promised to those that place their steadfast trust in Him. Let the beautiful truths of Scripture concerning the identity of your Keeper lighten your burden and the beautiful words of Psalter Number 249 calm your spirit as you go forth in the days and weeks ahead...

*"Because Thy trust is God alone,
Thy refuge is the Highest One
No evil shall upon thee come,
Nor plague approach thy guarded home."*

Confessions of a Grandma/Teacher – Mrs. Mary VanOverloop

I have had a recent experience that has given me a renewed appreciation for nap times, empty floors and full nights of sleep. I also have recently gained an even greater appreciation for hugs, comments like "you're my hero" or "I am so glad to hang out with you" and the sweetness of holding a cuddly, tired child. This is all due to several factors. First, a new granddaughter was recently welcomed into our family. Secondly, my husband and I, with support from other family members, were the caregivers for three days and nights to the young siblings of this new baby. Thirdly, Heritage has a policy which allows teachers to take two personal days each year. And finally, this was all thanks to the substitute teacher who was willing to come into my classroom and capably deal with my students to make this possible.

I also have a confession. I loved having my grandchildren, but I had totally forgotten how intense the busyness of life with small children can be - twenty four hours of the day. It is a crazy, chaotic life, especially when you jump in cold turkey with an 18 month old and a six year old. (This is our first actual toddler grandchild since our first grandchild found his forever family as a 2 ½ years old.) Within the first five minutes one cute outfit had a bleach spot right

on the front! I had forgotten to move the basket with sink cleaner up out of the reach of little hands. On top of that, the candy drawer was discovered which meant another drawer was emptied up high onto the counter, out of reach. (She apparently did not know about that drawer before, but once it was found it became an obsession.) Finally, I realized I needed to put ALL the pantry items from the bottom two shelves on the remaining counters. And so the day continued with games and fun, and the mess just piled up. I have to admit, feeding and cleaning sure take a lot of the day! Then, finally bedtime! But by that point I was too tired to clean up - and what was the point? It would just get messy again! And, really, how many more opportunities will I get to watch such a darling child sleep?

Sleep, however, only lasts so long and the process of the day begins again. This is the endless routine of mothers that it seems I had forgotten. The last morning with the children was the morning when I had to get one grandchild ready for a day of school. That morning really made me, as a teacher, rethink each kiddo that enters my classroom. Each student comes in to class at their own pace. Some early, some later, some seem to meander without

purpose, some have so much to say, some have so many stops to make before getting down to work and others quickly buckle down to the jobs of the morning. But behind each student coming in, there are loving parents who made sure the clothes were clean, the lunches were made, water bottles filled, and folders ready for another day of school.

This is how my morning went preparing for just one child to get on the bus. Mistake number one: I thought it would be easy to get all of us ready for school in one hour. How quickly time flies when there is a deadline! Getting clothes on, feeding, cleaning up (again) and packing everything needed for the day is a challenge. Somehow, food gets in the hair, clothes are missing, hats are missing, and so many things go awry. Hastily I try to get myself ready enough to get out the door when I remember the water bottle needs to be in the backpack. The healthy snack needs to be in the pocket of the backpack per teacher's request. The winter clothes all get put on (minus the snow pants,) which I then discovered are supposed to be worn per teacher's request. I wonder how you keep all those "teacher's requests" straight? Finally we are all ready for the drive to meet the bus, but then strapping each child into the car seats takes another precious five minutes. I am stressed out, but finally one child is climbing into the bus and the other is ready to go back to grandma's house to play or maybe look for the "canny" which she knows is somewhere in the kitchen.

Grandparenting is so sweet: We can have the fun, and then send the children home. Parenting on the other hand is a whole different

level. The responsibilities of raising children are endless. Yes, you have all the physical needs of the children you care for, but in a covenant home that is just the beginning of the work. Training up a child in the way that he should go involves much teaching about God, prayer, church, catechism, memory work, and more. Of course, the disciplining of the children is another part of parenting that grandparents love to avoid. So, wisely, God often gives children while parents are young and grandparents can be there as a support to the family.

As a teacher it is very important to me to know that whatever work I do at school is supported by the parents and grandparents. As a covenant school we have been blessed with a support system to "train up the children in the fear of the Lord". At the beginning of every year, I am faced with the massive amount of learning that needs to happen in the next nine months. It is always very clear to me that this job would not be possible without the support of the home. I can do the teaching, but it takes the parents' effort in finding the time to teach Bible lessons/catechism, review Bible memory work, listen to the children read, practice math facts, and don't forget – making sure all those "teacher requests" are fulfilled for a child to come ready for each day. It makes for a busy home life, especially for those who have children in multiple grades, but as a Christian school teacher I want to remember to always **thank you** for making my students ready to learn each and every day!

Inclusion: One Body, Many Members – Mrs. Carli Engelsma

As a first time *Herald* article writer, I asked a seasoned veteran, "Any suggestions on what I should write about?". They responded, "Words of wisdom." I thought I'd share the wisdom that I gained from a paraeducator bootcamp I attended this summer about inclusion.

What is inclusion? Merriam-Webster gives several definitions. The third definition listed reads as follows: "The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure". It also touches on the aspect of including "students with disabilities and the general student population." This is what we want for all of our students, right? We want all children to come to school and experience a true sense of belonging. Belonging in their classroom, in their grade, in the school as a whole, and especially in the body of believers. What we often forget is that this doesn't happen naturally. We are sinful, selfish creatures who do not often think of others before ourselves. It takes work.

Growing up, I did not realize what it meant to be an inclusive community. After working in Special Education at Heritage Christian School for 5 years, I am still learning what it truly means. I want to share one page of the booklet I received that made me realize we, myself included, need to put more work into helping students recognize everyone's God-given gifts and abilities.

The following article, written by Dan Vander Plaats, "The 5 Stages: Changing Attitudes," lists the thought process of someone in each stage of belonging. As you read, think about what stage you are in. Take this time to evaluate yourself, what you can do better, and how you can talk to your children about this.

Stage 1: Ignorance. "Weaknesses and disabilities are a sign that God either does not care or is not able to fix the situation. In fact, they may be a result of sin or a lack of faith. God is not involved in the life of someone with a disability because He can't use people who are so broken. I do not know people with disabilities, nor do I know anything about disabilities. I have no interest in getting to know them or to know more about their life."

Stage 2: Pity. "I feel sorry for people with disabilities. It's too bad, really. I am blessed by God and I can help others. I am grateful that my children are not disabled. People with weaknesses and disabilities obviously need someone like me to help them and give them meaning, due to their troubles. I don't really see any meaning or purpose to their lives."

Stage 3: Care. "Like me, people with disabilities were created in God's image. By that virtue alone they have value. I hope that someone will take the time to show them God's love and I will happily support such an effort. In fact, I think we need to find ways to help those people. Maybe we should start a special church education class or respite care for the sake of the parents."

Stage 4: Friendship. "I have come to know and spend time with a friend who has a disability. This person has value in God's sight, but also in mind, and I know that my life is better for having known this person, and as much as I have helped her, she has also blessed me. In fact, I now like to initiate relationships with people who have disabilities. God brings many different people into my

church and community, including people with disabilities, and we all benefit as we grow in friendship with each other. “

Stage 5: Co-Laborers. “If God has called each of us to serve and praise Him with every fiber of our being, then He has done the same for our brothers and sisters in Christ with disabilities. I think ministry should not just be to people with disabilities, but with or alongside people who have disabilities. Together, we will encourage and equip each other, with and without disabilities, into every good work to respond to God’s call on our lives. We can all give and we can all receive.”

At Heritage Christian, I witness inclusion daily. I’ve seen us succeed. I’ve seen all the stages described in the article above. Some days, I think children are better at it than adults. As teachers,

we are called to instruct them, but we often underestimate what we could be learning from them. It’s a privilege to work at our Christian schools where I’m able to see the love of Christ being expressed through His sons and daughters, big and small! I pray not only that this continues, but also that it be cultivated in future generations by adults that teach and lead by their example.

I leave you with the highest wisdom, the wisdom found in the word of God in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” Read 1 Corinthians 12 at your next family devotions and take the time to talk with your children about the different gifts each person was given, apply it to their life at school, and encourage them to see all of their peers as co-laborers for Christ.

Learning To Be a Teacher – Mrs. Brenda Pastoor

I was privileged to attend Hope PR School in Walker for the first seven years of my education before Heritage was started. It was a long bus ride, especially for someone prone to motion sickness, but definitely worth the drive! I was in a small class so we were sometimes combined with a few of the students from the grade above or below us. That provided an opportunity to meet and engage with even more classmates, and I learned much from all of them, but today I’d like to focus on what I learned from my teachers, specifically in how I approach being a teacher now myself.

My Kindergarten teacher was Mrs. Marilyn Schipper, the smartest person I had ever met at that time! She knew all of our names, knew all of the stories from her “big book” that would help teach us our letters, she knew all of the Bible stories... she was amazing! I remember loving rest time, recess, singing and so on, but evidently I didn’t love having the last name “Yonker” because it meant I was always called last. My mom told me this story several years ago - I didn’t remember it myself! One day my mom asked about school and I said that even though I loved my teacher, I didn’t think she really liked me, because she always called my name last. Well, Mrs Schipper wasn’t going to let that stand! She immediately started mixing up how she called our names for lining up or dismissing. Sometimes I was first!!! So, now, as a Kindergarten teacher myself, I have several lists that I follow throughout the day when calling out student names. Sometimes we go alphabetically by last name, sometimes reverse alphabetical order by last names, sometimes alphabetically by first name, sometimes by table number/color, or by birthday month, what we’re wearing. The helper of the day is by reverse alphabetical order of first names, so that kids who might have been last any other alphabetical way get to be the very first helper!! In the early days of Kindergarten over the past several years I’ve heard moms try to explain to their child that because of their last name they might be called last or have the locker farthest down the hall, and I am quick to tell them that won’t be the case. And it’s because of my Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Schipper!

My first grade teacher was Mrs. Agnes Schut. I don’t have a lot of specific memories from first grade, and I like to think that is because first grade is an exhausting year!! I still believe that first

grade is a tough year for kids! They are transitioning to school every day, Bible tests and spelling tests to study for, and Catechism. So many new things! But what I do remember about Mrs. Schut is that she was always so perfectly put together and calm and organized! This is the teacher I still want to emulate, but still have so far to go! By the end of the day, my hair is a mess, my clothes are frumpy, I’ve lost my cardigan, my sock is slipping down into my shoe, and I have mascara smeared under at least one eye - I am a hot mess! Today I had one lone piece of glitter stuck to an eyelash; we didn’t even use glitter today! And organization - don’t even get me started. I try; but I’m also a pack rat. Thankfully I’ve been gifted a fabulous classroom aide, and Kelly Van Overloop has been helping me get the clutter under control! Thank you, Kelly! And thank you, Mrs. Schut for your positive influence. I will never stop trying to live up to your personal standards.

My second grade teacher was Mrs. Gladys Koole. Mrs. Koole gifted me the love of proper grammar! I can still visualize the spider web she created on a bulletin board with a big, fat spider hiding in the middle. Each student had a paper fly with his or her name on it and whenever we were caught saying “ain’t” or “Can I” instead of “May I” our fly was moved closer to the spider! I was determined not to get caught! Still today I shudder just a little when I see the improper use of “there/their/they’re” or “your/you’re.” Please don’t think I will judge you or think poorly of you if I see it, though! I will just think to myself, too bad they didn’t get to learn from Mrs. Koole! My Kindergartners look at me like I’ve lost my mind when I try to put their jackets on myself when they ask, “Can you put this on?” And even though I know they are only five and six years old, I know that they are smart and can start to learn proper grammar!

My third grade teacher was Mr. Quenga, my first “boy teacher.” I have many memories from third grade, but for the sake of those classmates involved, I won’t share those! :) I think many of his former students would agree that Mr. Quenga was a strict teacher, but was willing to share with us about his life! I enjoyed hearing stories about Guam and how he met his wife (Mrs. Quenga, our fifth grade teacher!) As a teacher now I like to share about my family and my experiences with my students. They are often shocked to discover that I’m really just an average, normal person. “But Mrs. Pastoor! How can you be a grandma? You’re a teacher!”

And to see me out in public! WOW! But another thing I learned from Mr. Quenga was the importance of being able to laugh at yourself. If you were privileged to know Mr. Quenga, you'll probably remember that he was, well, on the shorter stature side. So, he would often have to stand on a chair or a stool to reach the pull down maps or reach something on an upper shelf. One time he mis-stepped and fell to the floor! I think there was a mixture of gasps and nervous giggles when it happened. But rather than show anger or reprimand us for our reactions or just pretending it hadn't happened, Mr. Quenga laughed out loud at the situation and assured us he was fine! He even made a joke about his stature. Well, if there is one thing I have to do repeatedly throughout the day, it is to have the grace to laugh at myself as I am clumsy and forgetful!

My fourth grade teacher was the beloved Miss Winnie Koole. Miss Koole definitely instilled in me a deep love for words and literature! The first thing I remember from fourth grade is Miss Koole's love for literature and reading to us after noon hour. I remember Stareye, Snow Treasure, and of course the whole Little House on the Prairie series! I am still in awe of the fact that one day, while reading possibly Farmer Boy, there came a knock at the door. Miss Koole left her book on the podium at the front of the room, opened the

door and listened to whatever the messenger had to tell her, closed the door and returned to the podium - without ever stopping in her recitation of the story! And now, if you know me, you know that during any vacations from school, I can be found with a book in my hand! Another thing I remember from fourth grade were the bookworms, Herm and Hermina. Herm and Hermina (fuzzy shoe liners that lived in old tissue boxes I believe) would challenge us to discover the meaning of vocabulary words. I remember learning the meaning of deluge and inundated specifically that year. And now today, I love all of the word games: Wordle, Words with Friends, Wordscapes! So, I try to distill a love for learning, vocabulary, and reading in my Kindergartners as well! I love to read to them and use all of the crazy voices and excitement and suspense. I love to stop and ask what a certain word means and praise them for their guesses, and to ask them to make inferences about the story. I love to see them find books in the classroom that they are intrigued with and to hear them ask to look at and read the book I read yesterday!

And so, I thank these teachers not only for their Godly examples, the knowledge they imparted, and the love of learning they instilled, but also for the way they helped shape me to be the teacher I am today!

Rejoicing in Our Work – Miss Becca Gritters

At Heritage we are able to have chapel frequently. We are thankful that so many speakers take time out of their busy schedules to help us grow in the knowledge of God and His Word. Recently, one of our speakers was Professor Huizenga. He spoke to us about God's angels, and about how we as children of our Heavenly Father must obey Him as "willingly and faithfully as the angels do."

In his speech, Professor Huizenga gave examples of how the students can obey God as willingly and faithfully as the angels do each day when they are at school. One of the points that he made was that we need to have the right attitude when we are doing the work that God has given us. When we do our work or obey begrudgingly or with a complaining spirit, we are not obeying God as the angels did. Instead, we are trying to do the work our own way and on our own terms.

When we have devotions in the classroom, we have been talking about what we learned from the chapel speech and how God has given the children work as students in school. They do not get paid a salary for the work that they complete each day, and yet it is a job that God has called them to. Now that we have been in school for several months, school can become tedious for students. Reading, Math, Science, and other important subjects require students to sit and listen and work hard each and every day. However, we pray to God for His Spirit to work in our hearts joy to complete this work! Not every subject in school has to be our favorite, but we must learn to appreciate the education God has provided for us and to consider how we can use it to honor and glorify His Name. To help us practice intentionally guarding our hearts and tongues from complaining about the work we have, we decided to write these complaints down and then challenge ourselves to think about how we can be thankful for them instead and rejoice in the work God has given us!

- *I do not like writing. It hurts my hands, and it is boring. But I am thankful for writing because it helps me learn, and God gave me my hands, and it helps me get neater. – Lilia Butler*
- *I do not like school water. It's gross and tastes different from home. But I'm thankful for water. It keeps me alive, and Jesus is called living water, and we can take baths. I am glad that oceans are things because stingrays and sharks and dolphins live in them. I am glad puddles were made because you can splash around. I am glad God made ponds for frogs, fish, and alligators. I love rivers because you can swim in them and play. I am really glad you can take showers to clean yourself. – Josie Looyenga*
- *I do not like VoWac (phonics). It is so easy. It is boring and long. But I am thankful for VoWac. It helps us learn. It teaches people. God made VoWac. Sometimes it is fun. – Brendan Karsemeyer*
- *I don't like VoWac (phonics). It's the same thing as spelling. It's boring, long, and too much writing. But I am thankful for VoWac. When I grow up, it will help because I want to be a teacher. So I can read books. – Ivy VanDyke*
- *I do not like writing. My hand goes asleep. But I am thankful for writing. God gave me an arm to write. And made my arm perfect in His sight. My brain needs it to grow and be healthy. – Connor VanBaren*
- *I do not like math. It is confusing, hard, and long. But I am thankful for it so it can help me when I am older. It teaches me so when I might be a mechanic I can use it. I still like it when it is long. – Jonny Horvat.*

- *I do not like math. It is hard and takes a long time. But I am thankful for math because it helps me learn. It is good for my brain, and it can be fun. – Addi Boverhof*
- *I do not like spelling. It's boring and makes me tired. But I am thankful for spelling because it helps you read and sing. It helps you read the Bible, and it helps you read really hard words. –Macy Zuverink*
- *I do not like Backpack books. It takes a long time. But I am thankful for Backpack books. It helps me read. God made it. It helps me say hard words. It helps me read the Bible. – Anna Kalsbeek*
- *I do not like Backpack books. It is long and boring. But I am thankful for Backpack books because it helps us to read the Bible. My mom comes to Backpack books. She gives me candy. There are fun books. – Graham Koole*
- *I do not like writing. It's boring and hard and confusing. But I am thankful for writing. I would not be able to read and write. I would not be able to read the Bible. – Beckham Richards*
- *I do not like reading. If I read too long, I get a headache. It's boring. There are too many words. But I am thankful for reading. It helps me if I want to be an author, and God made it. Plus it helps me learn words. – Jacob Kuiper*
- *I don't like math. It's boring, and it's also long. I am thankful for math because it helps me learn. It makes me smarter. It helps me be a mechanic. God made math. – Ryan denHartog*
- *I do not like math. It is boring and hard and super long. But I'm thankful for math. Math helps us learn. Plus God made it for us. It's for us to get smarter. – Garrett Hanemaayer*
- *I do not like Library because I get the books I don't like. But I am thankful for the library. It helps me read the Bible, and it helps me learn. God helped me to read. – Aspen Lamar*
- *I do not like music because it is confusing, long, and boring. But I am thankful for music because it helps us praise God. It has fun games. We learn fun songs. – Keturah Koops*

Love Is...Understanding Inclusion in a Christian Context – Miss Erin VanBaren

A Bible passage that has been recurring in various areas of my life lately has been I Corinthians 13:4-8. This is a very familiar passage – all about what charity (or love) is. As Christians, love is a central part of our lives. When Jesus summarized the law, His emphasis was on love: love God and love your neighbor. Love seems simple and normal, something that we naturally understand. Yet, as I spend more time thinking about what love is, it gets increasingly profound. As I have been considering my own classroom and how to make it a place of belonging for students of all abilities, love has become an increasingly central theme.

Although I Corinthians 13 has come up previously in other areas of my life, it has come up most recently in my graduate school work. I began classes again at Calvin University this fall, and two of my classes have been focused on inclusion. Inclusion can be a bit of a “buzzword” in society today, especially as Christians are encouraged to overlook sin and “love” everyone. Love is inclusive, though not at the cost of ignoring sin. In the context of my classes (and of a Christian school), inclusion is the idea of including students of all abilities in one classroom. Moreover, it is making sure **all** students **belong** in one general education classroom. Each student, regardless of “ability,” should have a unique, important place and role in the classroom. Without one student, the classroom would be incomplete. For inclusive education, love is necessary.

I Corinthians 13:4 says, “charity suffereth long, and is kind...” This phrase, combined with many other Bible passages, has become a central tenet for my inclusive education practices. Charity, or love, is described with action words. Love is not just a thought or a feeling, but it is an action. Inclusive education, education where all students belong, requires action. In an inclusive classroom, students must be present, welcomed, loved, befriended, and more (Erik W. Carter has some interesting lectures on this if you would like to learn more). Although the whole passage demonstrates how

love is enacted, the first two phrases have been very powerful to me.

“Charity suffereth long...” - Love will endure for a long time. It is patient. I read recently in “Love Came Down at Christmas” (Ferguson) that patience is not evident until it is tested. Anyone can be patient in an easy situation. Patience is truly evident when one is wronged and does not react, even when given the opportunity. Teachers are often praised for having patience, and patience is an important characteristic for any teacher. Teaching, especially teaching that includes students of all ability levels, requires patience. However, a teacher (or parent, friend, sibling, etc.) with patience is not special. They are simply living out their calling from God.

“And is kind...” - Love is kind. It is gentle, courteous, and always ready to do good. Working alongside children requires kindness. The teacher must slow down, take time to get to know their students, and be always ready to serve. Teaching is not a work that aligns well with the values of the world. The world demands efficiency, conformity, timelines, and milestones. While those have a place in teaching, they also grate against who humans are. God created us as diverse, interdependent people. Valuing that diversity requires love. This is also a great value of inclusive education. When each student fully belongs in a classroom, they can learn from each other, including learning about what love is.

In Sinclair Ferguson’s book that I referenced earlier, he recommends reading I Corinthians 13 and filling in your name for every “charity.” I did that – and promptly realized that I am not always love. I am not always patient. I am not always kind. I do not always seek the well-being of other people, especially at the expense of myself. He then recommends re-reading it, filling in “Jesus” for every “charity.” That is the gospel. We are not these things, but He is. That’s the beauty of grace. That’s also the beauty of our communities and schools.

In ensuring that all students belong, there is a reflection of Christ Himself. Inclusive education is vital because we are called to love every member of the body of Christ. Appropriately, given the nature of love in the life of a Christian, inclusive education is both required by love and demonstrates love. In that love, we can build more inclusive education practices, helping each student to be a full

member of the classroom and school community. Continuing to examine our classrooms and schools through the lens of the love of Christ will help us continue to grow. God help us to emulate the patience and kindness of love in our churches, schools, and homes.

Second Chances Opportunities – Mr. Jason Holstege

Recently I read about the story of how the Lord brought the gospel to the Batak tribe of northern Sumatra in Indonesia. Years ago, a missionary couple had come to their village to work among this 100% Muslim tribe. Tribal leaders captured the couple, whom the tribe then murdered and cannibalized.

According to the story, years later, another missionary came to the tribe bringing this same gospel of salvation. The tribal leaders recognized that the story which this missionary brought was the same as what the former couple had shared, so this time they decided to listen to him. Upon hearing, they believed, and soon the whole tribe was converted to Christ. The result of this second opportunity of hearing the gospel is that there are more than three million Christians among the Batak tribe today.

The author's point of relating this story was to raise the question if we would be willing to be that first missionary couple who, in a manner of speaking, "paved the way" for the gospel to be spread in northern Sumatra. However, I took something else from the story - would I be willing to be that second missionary? It would be easy to condemn the tribe as "irredeemable" since it seems that all they are looking for is a meal when someone walks into their village, so why bother giving them a second opportunity of hearing the good news of salvation?

One wonders if this line of thinking affected the prophet Jonah when he was called to "arise, go to Nineveh, and cry against it" (Jonah 1:2). We remember the history - Jonah ran in the opposite direction in disobedience to God's command. And while we realize that most of Jonah's hesitancy at bringing the gospel to the Ninevites was due to the fact that they were not Israelites, some of his reasoning for avoiding them might have been on account of their ruthless nature. Who would want to bring the gospel to such a

godless nation whose kings would cut off the noses of or flay (skin alive) those whom they conquered?

Jonah's unmerciful attitude is exposed by God in the following chapters, but we should be especially drawn to God's merciful attitude which that wonderful first verse of Jonah 3 describes for us in one word: *second*. "And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time..." God pursued His wandering prophet and brought him to repentance, all for the purpose of restoring him for a second opportunity for service in His kingdom. And when we really think about it, that is the attitude we need to have every time our children err. Of course, lest we reap the same results that Eli did, correction (sometimes painful) must occur, but this should also be accompanied by instruction and another opportunity to serve.

This is the perspective Paul Tripp takes in his book, "Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family," where he insists that "[God] has called [parents] to expend the major effort, time, and energy of your life for your children's welfare. He's called you to be his tool of grace again and again and again. Parenting really is a life of holy repetition." Parents and teachers who thoughtfully apply scriptural truths and provide another opportunity for children to serve thus demonstrate the nature of God's love for them in a very powerful way.

Therefore if we have so experienced our Lord's mercy shown to us not only by working repentance in our lives when we did not deserve it, but also by giving us another opportunity for service to Him, then we will not resent or pass by those moments when our Father calls us to show the same merciful attitude to our children. So let us be encouraged to find and use those second opportunities that have been given to our children so that they learn to be faithful in the unique situations of life that our heavenly Father sends to them.

The Beauty of God's Creation – Mr. Brad Gritters

The dictionary definition of beauty is defined as "a combination of qualities that delights the senses, especially sight". God's creation is filled with beauty, and we are given eyes to see this beauty. The radiant colors of the leaves changing in fall, the large, thick flakes of snow that descend from the sky, the blend of purple, orange, and red as the sun sets reflecting over Lake Michigan, and the blooming flowers of spring are just a small taste of the beauty that is God's creation. We have the amazing blessing to live in and experience God's creation every day of our life...and how often do we take this for granted. In the busyness of our lives, we tend to

overlook or forget the importance that the beauty of creation reveals. Do we ever sit and watch the sunrise or sunset and use it as an opportunity to glorify our God? Do we feel we do not have time for such things? We should say with the Psalmist as we see God's beautiful creation that, "This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes".

The purpose of creation is to declare God's glory. It is one of the two ways God uses to reveal himself to man. The first way God reveals himself is through His Word, and the second way is through

His creation. The creation powerfully declares God's glory. So powerful is this declaration that even an ungodly man stands in awe of the beauty of God's creation. This is what Romans 1:20 brings out. It says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse". Ungodly man will spend money to vacation and see the beautiful parts of God's creation, but because of his hard heart refuses to glorify the Creator of this earth. How much more should we, children of God, glorify our God daily for the blessing of His creation. God's word states that when God's eternal power and Godhead are seen in the creation, this leaves all men without excuse. All men know there is a God because they can see Him in the beauty of the earth. And if they are blind, the heavens loudly declare that there is a Creator and thunderously declare the qualities of that Creator. Psalm 19:1 states, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork".

God speaks to us through His creation in both the little and big things. He speaks to us through the small creek that flows, He speaks to us through the breeze that blows in our face, and He speaks to us through the sunlight that peeks through the clouds. God created nature out of love for His people. We can enjoy the beauty of creation every day, so take time out of your day to glorify God for the beauty of His creation.

In science, we have been talking about the biomes of the earth. A biome is a large area of the earth in which plants and animals share a similar environment. A biome might be a desert, a forest, a prairie, or even an ocean. I have been stressing a common theme throughout our unit: we experience the beauty of God's creation no matter where we go. When we look at the tundra biome, we don't look at that biome as a "frozen wasteland", but instead we marvel at the beauty of God that the tundra biome reveals. When we study the desert biome, we recognize what the wilderness pictures in the Bible, but still we can see God there. When we study the mountain biome, we see God's might and power, but never forget to point out the beauty that mountains display. Each biome that we study uniquely shows God in a variety of ways. This is why we take time to look at pictures of the scenery of each biome in class. Hearing the "ooo's" and "aahhh's" from the fifth graders is a great opportunity to point out how amazing the Artist of our creation is, whether it's a savanna biome or a rainforest biome. Each biome reveals the beautiful handiwork of our God. So give thanks and glorify our God each morning for the beautiful creation that our God has made for us out of love. "In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land." Psalm 95:4-5.

Indiana Band Trip – Mr. Matt Elzinga

On Friday, December 9, the junior high band took a brief trip to Dyer, Indiana. It was an enriching experience for all involved. The students had the opportunity to work with the junior high band from PRCS, honing their skills and learning from their peers. This collaboration allowed the students to broaden their musical knowledge and gain valuable experience in working together. It was also a great opportunity for them to enjoy fellowship with the students in Indiana.

One of the highlights of the trip was the clinic with Dr. Jeffrey Doebler from Valparaiso University. Dr. Doebler is a well-respected conductor and educator, and his expertise and guidance helped the students refine their skills and improve their performance. They learned new techniques for playing their instruments and gained a deeper understanding of music theory. Dr. Doebler also provided valuable feedback on their overall performance, encouraging them to continue to work hard and strive for excellence.

At the end of the school day, the bands performed a concert with Dr. Doebler for the student body. Each band performed a few selections of their own, followed by a few combined band numbers. Afterwards, the band students from PRCS and the Heritage students played some mixer games together and got to know each other better. Finally, we packed up the trailer and bus and returned home.

Overall, the school band trip to Dyer was a great success. The students gained valuable experience working with their peers, learning from a respected conductor and educator, and performing in front of a live audience. The students behaved themselves well throughout the trip with kindness and consideration for one another. Their love for God and each other was evident, and it has been a blessing to work with them this year.

Our online grading system – www.gradelink.com – is available for you to monitor your children’s progress throughout the year. Current stats show that only 50% of our 3rd – 8th grade parents have used their Gradelink logon during the 2022-23 school year. Gradelink is a huge communication piece, and communication is invaluable for parents and teachers alike. If you would like help logging on or have any questions at all, please call or email the office (616-669-1773; receptionist@hchr.org). We are here to help and are happy to do so!

REMAINING 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

February 23, 2023 – 5-8th Grade Band and Choir Concert

March 3, 2023 – Fearfully & Wonderfully Made Day

March 4, 2023 – Spring Clothing & Toy Sale

March 31 – April 7, 2023 - Spring Break

May 8-12, 2023 - MAP testing, grades 3-8

May 10, 2023 – Elementary Music Program, grades 1-3

May 12, 2023 – Kindergarten Program

May 16, 2023 – 5-8th Grade Band and Choir Concert

May 22, 2023 – All Schools Band Concert

May 29, 2023 – Memorial Day Break

May 31, 2023 – Last day of school (1/2 day)

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

August 28, 2023 – School begins

September 1-4, 2023 – Labor Day break

October 18-20, 2023 – Teacher’s Convention break

November 23-24, 2023 – Thanksgiving break

December 25, 2023 – January 2, 2024 – Christmas break

February 16, 2024 – Mid Winter break

March 29 – April 5, 2024 – Spring break

May 30, 2024 – Graduation, last day of school