

# Herald



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### TEACHERS AS GUIDES

Mr. Brian Kuiper, Administrator

The teachers gathered for the convention this year in Randolph, Wisconsin. The theme of the convention was “Teachers as Guides” based on Psalm 25. Rev. S. Regnerus gave the keynote address. In his introduction he told in comical and very graphic fashion of times when he and his siblings had to herd a calf into the trailer. The description of him “sweating from every pore” in his body using a wooden pallet to make himself appear bigger to the calf will be remembered by all. While the following article is not a complete summary of what he spoke about, it is a good reminder for us to think about what we are doing as Christians in our school. The teachers were encouraged to reflect on this Word, and parents can do so as well.

As parents and teachers, we must remember that we teach sinners who are opposed to the truth of God, to righteousness, and to authority (v8). This is a sobering reality! Since they are sinners, they present obstacles to education. These obstacles include that students are not usually receptive to education or discipline, they are not generally meek, they struggle with guilt of sin (v7) and the devastating effects of sins against them (v17), and they oftentimes feel trapped by temptations and sins (v15). As a result, teachers and parents labor to educate in a difficult context - a broken earth, a crooked world - and as sinners, we may become bitter or disengaged.

This has very practical implications for teachers and parents. We must be observant of the students. We may not ignore sins - especially those that are of a repeated nature. We must discipline in love. We must discipline in cooperation with each other. And we must teach when we discipline. In this way, students will grow in their realization of their sins and of the need for prayer, forgiveness, and in so doing, they must find their forgiveness only in His work on the cross.

We have a clear example of a teacher. God is *the* teacher. He teaches sinners (v8), guides in judgment (v9), and shows us His covenant (v14). The word teach or guide is used in this chapter in several ways. In verses 8 and 12, the word teach is used in the context of shooting an arrow. In verse 9, it is used to refer to an athletic coach who comes alongside his players as he teaches them. In verses 5 and 9, it is used like a sergeant who leads into battle. Always then God leads and guides in *His* way. This way is a good and upright way. In His way, He leads in mercy and truth.

We must see applications to this in our teaching and parenting. Does our work with students help them to see God in us? Does it lead them to see Him

as their teacher and guide? Is all of our instruction and discipline rooted and grounded in the truth of His word? In fact, does it all lead them to His Word?

Rev. Regnerus ended with some words of encouragement to teachers. God COULD teach His children in any way. He could have chosen to use angels or some other means. But

He chose parents and teachers to instruct His seed. Thus, we must live out mercy and truth to our students. As we labor in the glory of His name, hear also His command to decrease so He can increase. This leads to humility. Pray for His blessing!

### **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Ben Rau**

It is reasonable to compare the technology behind an organization like HCS to a transportation system in a city. Traffic flows everywhere with different types of vehicles sharing the road. There can be occasional traffic tie-ups and even fender benders here or there. Careful planning for traffic volumes and destinations is needed, and proper maintenance is needed to avoid potholes forming.

We are thankful to report that the HCS technology “highway system” is operating fairly smoothly, thanks to changes made over the last handful of years to set up for scale, along with regular maintenance and upgrades. Our school continues to evolve in our use of technology, with intentional changes year after year to stay current and improve wherever possible.

Here are some highlights from tech projects that have occurred at Heritage this year:

- With funding help from the Fundraisers for which the Board is thankful, an additional cart of Chromebooks has been added to provide additional classroom capacity. By bringing our total to 7 carts, a cart can be dedicated to each grade level and shared within the class sections, adding efficiency for teachers!
- In addition to the added cart, aging Chromebooks in the student carts are being replaced with current models, some of which were still from the first rounds of Chromebooks purchased in 2016. The Tech Committee has been impressed by the durability of the Chromebooks even with heavy daily student usage.
- Teacher Chromebooks are being upgraded where required to remain current and supported as well.

- The Tech Committee renegotiated our contract with GoGuardian, the protection software that monitors our Chromebooks and prevents improper web usage, to ensure continued coverage with reasonable levels of cost.
- An upgraded AV setup has been put in place in the elementary gym, thanks again to the support of Fundraisers and the expertise of KVO Communications.
- The elementary conference room has been outfitted with a Chromecast and TV to support teacher use in presentations.
- Upgrades are occurring to the PCs used in the elementary and junior high offices to replace aging hardware and address performance issues.
- An additional security camera has been added to the elementary building entryway to ensure no gaps in video coverage.

While much of the daily support for teachers tech needs is handled by our contract with IT Systems (Greg and Xzavier), the Tech Committee is grateful for opportunities to help with planning, advising on, and setting direction for technology use at school, and jumping in to help teachers on occasion directly as well. We keep focused on the fact that this committee is here to *enable* our educational efforts, not implement technology for technology’s sake. May the Lord give us wisdom to do this for the good of our children and the glory of His name.

### **FEDERATION COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Keith Feenstra**

The annual meeting for the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools was held on October 5, 2023 at Covenant Christian High School. The purpose of the Federation is to deal with those matters pertaining to Protestant Reformed School Societies in common. The Federation includes 17 member schools who together

educate 2,210 students. The annual Federation meeting is attended in person by delegates from the school boards of Heritage and other West Michigan schools, and delegates from other schools across the country also join in via video conference (think of this as similar to an annual school society meeting). The majority of the work of the Federation

is conducted by an eight-person Board comprised of elected delegates from the member school boards, as well as an Executive Director, Teacher Training Director, Technology Director and a teacher representative.

Normal business of the Federation was conducted at the annual meeting which included:

1. Reappointment of Mr. Kyle Bruinooge to a three-year term as executive director of the Federation.
2. Election of Joel Van Egdome (NW Iowa, Doon) and Ross Zuverink (Heritage) to the Federation Board for a three-year term.
3. Approval of a 2023-2024 Federation budget of \$57,297.
4. Discussion around additional things the Federation could do to support the schools.

A large portion of the Federation budget goes towards paying mentors who are veteran teachers who meet with and mentor junior teachers as part of the Teacher Training Program which has the goal of providing formal training of teachers in all aspects of Reformed education. The Federation has established Second Tier and Third Tier mentoring programs for teachers in their first few years of

teaching. Heritage currently has five mentor-mentee pairs ongoing as part of the Teacher Training Program. The Federation is also working on a First Tier mentoring program designed to help prospective teachers who are still in college.

The Federation is also developing material for a Doctrines Applied to Education course which applies the doctrines of sovereignty, creation, covenant, revelation and scriptural authority, antithesis, and the image of God to various grade levels and subject areas as comprehensively as possible. Once complete, this will be offered regularly similar to the History and Principles course which Prof. Dykstra taught last year.

This past year the Federation also gathered policies from member schools regarding sexual harassment and child safety. These were provided to the various school boards to assist in their review and updating of policies as necessary.

Continue to keep not only Heritage Christian School in your prayers, but all of our Christian schools and parents across the globe. May the Lord bless this work to train up our children in the way they should go.

### **FOUNDATION COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Mitch VanOverloop**

Incorporated in 1993, the Heritage Foundation exists to receive and administer funds for the education of students at Heritage Christian School. Annual grants from the Foundation over the years are determined by the investment return from the funds collected by fundraising activities and other donations.

The primary fundraising activities include an annual golf outing, typically held in late July, and the Evening of Praise, which is traditionally held the Saturday evening following Thanksgiving. Proceeds from the fundraisers are invested and managed by an Investment Manager, who has met with the Foundation Board multiple times this past year to review and update an Investment policy established by the Foundation's Board of Directors. A special thanks to all who participated and donated to the fundraising for the golf outing this past July – with the auctions and additional sponsors, it was the most successful golf outing to date.

This year, due to calendar restrictions at the Grandville Auditorium, the Foundation Board decided to forego celebrating the Evening of Praise. The fundraising, however, is still being undertaken and the foundation board has received a generous offer to match donations to the foundation dollar for dollar. Please consider supporting the

foundation's work so that it can continue to use funds to help keep tuition affordable for families, provide updates to facilities, and continue to help enhance academic programs.

The Foundation was also established to collect donations from supporters of Heritage Christian School aside from the fundraisers. A reminder to all that there still is an opportunity for additional donations through planned giving and estate planning. We know from events like Grandparents Day that there is much love for the covenant Protestant Reformed principled education at Heritage Christian School. To assist with the often difficult task of planned giving and estate planning, the Foundation Board has partnered with the Barnabas Foundation to provide these services at no cost to you. The Barnabas Foundation was established to advance God's kingdom by providing quality Planned Giving and Estate Planning services to Christian organizations. The Board will continue to look for more ways to promote and educate on this important opportunity to support Heritage Christian School.

The Foundation Board thanks all sponsors and those who are willing to consider Heritage Christian Foundation in their estate planning. Please contact a Foundation Board member if you have any questions.

# *Heritage Christian School*

## *~ Foundation ~*

*6340 Autumn Drive, Hudsonville, MI 49426*



Dear Heritage Christian School Supporters,

Heritage Christian School Foundation was founded for the purpose of providing financial support to Heritage Christian School through annual grants as a way of keeping the cost of Christian education affordable. The Foundation has existed for over 30 years and during that time has provided grants to the School totaling nearly \$1,150,000.

With the continuing increase in the costs of Christian education, the Foundation has strived to provide grants annually that will maintain a steady proportionate level of support for the School. For that continued commitment to be achieved, the Foundation needs to generate more earnings through its fund-raising activities or investment income. To date the Foundation has primarily relied upon two fund-raising activities, which have provided between \$40,000 and \$50,000, for the major portion of the annual grants given to the School. However, looking forward the Foundation will need to grow its asset base significantly as a means of generating greater levels of investment earnings for the additional support needed by the School.

We are excited to announce that we have received a generous matching donation from a couple of anonymous donors. This means that any donation made to our Foundation during this Gift Campaign will be matched dollar-

for-dollar, up to at least \$100,000. This is an incredible opportunity to double our impact by providing greater support for both today and the future which will make a greater difference in the lives of the children who attend Heritage Christian School.

We are very grateful to these generous donors for their support. Now we are asking for supporters of Heritage Christian School to provide their financial support which will help us to secure the matching donations and to ensure that the cause of Christian education will carry through to future generations. As the Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). We believe that a Christian education is the best way to prepare children for a life of service in God's Kingdom and living a godly life.

Thank you for your consideration and generosity! Please feel free to contact Don Offringa (616-813-0066 or dco4653@att.net) with any questions. If you are able to help in this worthy endeavor, please send your check payable to "Heritage Christian School Foundation" to the address noted in the letterhead above.

In Christ's Service,  
The Foundation Board

### **LIFETIME LEARNERS – Mrs. Beth VanBaren**

To be a lifelong learner, someone always seeking to learn new things, should be the goal of every educator and parent for our children or students. As God's children, we desire to know Him. God reveals Himself to us in His Word. He also reveals Himself in Math, Science, Language, History, and all creation. How do we foster curiosity and interest in the glorious works of God in our children?

One way to do this is to encourage them to ask questions. When you read something or visit a new place, talk about it. When your child asks you a question, don't just give a rote answer. Ask them another in return and get a discussion going. Get them thinking.

Another way is to encourage collaboration. Teachers can do this easily in the classroom by having the children work together in partners or groups. Children sometimes understand an explanation better from a peer than from an

adult. At home, encourage your children to work on a project together. Let them figure things out and learn together.

The most impactful is if Dad and Mom are interested in learning. Share your interests with your children. Let them see how much you enjoy learning about the Civil War and your family history, how to make a quilt or the perfect chocolate cake. Let them see you get lost in a book. Whatever your interest is, share it with your children. The example of parents who love to learn is the best way to help our children have a love of learning. More importantly, let them see you soaking in your Heavenly Father. Teach them to love Bible study and personal devotions. Teach them to love discussions about God's word. As Proverbs 9:10 teaches us, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Let's be lifetime learners!

## **GOD-ORIENTED GOALS – Mr. Jason Holstege**

Every year, one of my back-to-school rituals in September is to work my way through at least a portion of Professor Engelsma's book, *Reformed Education*. I have found it helpful to set goals for myself for the year to improve or gain knowledge in some area, and any chapter of the book is able to provide ideas for me. Some of these ideas have included finding more ways to use the Scriptures in my classes, or understanding ways in which a Reformed worldview properly interacts with culture.

As I read through the book this fall, one of the chapters that really stood out to me concerned the goal of Reformed education. One of Professor Engelsma's points in the chapter was to develop the goal as regards the covenant child who is educated. After describing a few false goals for children's educational development, he set forth the goals given by Scripture for them - to love the Lord their God with all their heart (Deut.6), to set their hope in Him (Ps.78), and to become a mature man of God, prepared to do every good work (II Tim.3).

This goal, then, has two aspects: one that points to the child's life in eternity, praising God forever, and the other that exhorts him to live godly in his life here below. Professor Engelsma warns that the one, great danger that hinders our pursuit of this goal is that of earthmindedness, where the pursuit of materialism edges out the teaching of morality in covenant homes. The goal, then, is no longer the preparation for eternity, but rather the acquisition of mammon.

This idea of "shifting goals" in the raising of children was expanded upon by Paul Tripp in his book, *Age of Opportunity*. His concern is that in today's world, parents are more driven by emotions as they interact with their children, especially with respect to their child's character flaws. As a result, they parent reactively, where, instead of foreseeing a problem and developing a positive goal to work on a child's

specific deficiency, they too often drift along from crisis to crisis, too busy in pursuit of their materialistic goals to properly deal with the real need of their child. Thus, the email from the teacher or the call from a fellow parent comes as yet another unwelcome but not altogether unexpected surprise in a long string of dealing with a child's particular sin.

Tripp argues that parents should be more goal-oriented in their parenting, pastoring the hearts of their children by helping them look at themselves in the accurate mirror of God's Word. Parents must anticipate problem areas for a particular child by understanding many passages from the first 8 chapters of Proverbs in which Solomon exhorts his son to listen to his good instruction on a variety of applicable topics. This means parents will attempt to draw out the true motives of their child's heart by asking questions such as, "Why was that important to you?" "What were you trying to accomplish when you did that?" or "What made you fearful in that situation?"

Our parenting efforts therefore should focus on a set of goals for our children that focus not so much on reactively managing particular outward behaviors, but rather on proactively understanding fundamental themes in which to instruct our children. Tripp includes goals such as: 1) teaching children to focus more on the spiritual struggle (war!) in which they must engage, which is behind many of their physical concerns; 2) developing a wise heart in them that engages with their world from internalized biblical convictions; and finally, 3) developing in them a heart for God and for the things that are eternal. And this brings us back to the goals for Christian education which we considered above from *Reformed Education*, goals which the staff at Heritage continue to pursue as we work with the parents to strengthen each other's hand in God (I Sam.23:16) in this great work of instructing covenant youth.

## **PRAYER AND THE BRAIN – Mrs. Mary VanOverloop**

Praying to God is a necessity for Christians of all ages. Praying to our majestic God is intimidating. Praying publicly to God before peers or family members adds to the intimidation. At the same time we are called as Christians to pray as part of our life of thankfulness, and this is true for adults and children. Young children learn to recite different prayers, which is profitable, but how does one help them create their own prayers? Before addressing how to help children pray independently, a quick understanding of how to help children memorize would be beneficial.

In a former article of the *Herald*, I went through the steps I use in my classroom to involve the students in our prayers and aid them in forming their own prayers. This time I would like to first get into the whys of what I do with my first graders. The first why would be understanding that the brain

memorizes larger amounts of information best when the material is learned in chunks. The second why would be that the brain does better retaining and retrieving information that is understood. A solid understanding of the material makes it easier to add information to the chunks that were memorized.

So how can this be applied to praying to our God? Similar to the acronym ACTS (adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication), we take the prayer in chunks. First we begin our prayer with why we pray to God or God's attributes. This means we take a memorized introduction chunk: "**Dear Father in heaven we pray to Thee because Thou art the---**". This blank can be filled in by all the attributes of God. Learning about the attributes of God will make the introduction endless in its options. Children love to learn the words to go along with the attributes of God. He is Almighty.

He is the one, true God. He is the Creator. He is omnipresent. He is omniscient. Along with understanding God's attributes we can use our writing program's method by using clauses to expand our thoughts. Each attribute could be expanded upon depending on the maturity of the individual child. Some examples are: "Thou art the Creator who made all things in only six days." "Thou art Almighty over even the rulers of the world."

The next memorized chunk is **"We pray for others. We pray for \_\_\_\_\_"**. Again, talking about who we need to pray for; whether it is the need for more ministers, the sick, the grandparents or specific situations or people is the beginning. After that knowledge of each situation will help the child expand on each person. "We pray for ministers who teach us about God's Truth." "We pray for (name) who has been hurt in an accident."

The third chunk to memorize is **"We give thanks for \_\_\_\_\_"**. Again, this brings up a discussion of what we are thankful for. A reason for each item would make a follow-up expanded clause possible. For example, "We give thanks for our parents who help us learn our catechism." "We give thanks for our food which is given to us by Thee."

The fourth chunk to memorize is **"Forgive our sin of \_\_\_\_\_"**. This again can be expanded along with making it specific to a sin that the child is dealing with at the time of the prayer. "Forgive our sin of unkindness when we use hurtful words when talking to our classmates." "Forgive our sin of

selfishness when we push to make sure we are always first in line."

The fifth and final memorized chunk is the turning from sin to living a godly life of thanksgiving. **"Help me to be \_\_\_\_\_"**. So many words can fill in this blank with a follow up clause. For example, "Help me to be kind to show God's love in my heart." "Help me to have self control by thinking of others first."

This ends the memorized chunks with the expanded thoughts for each portion of the prayer. Completing the prayer still needs to be directly taught. The words "For Jesus' sake" have deep meaning. It may be taught on Reformation Day when we discuss how all prayer must be directed to the one, true God rather than saints, or when we have the Bible story about Jacob's dream of the ladder reaching to heaven which represents Jesus making a way for us to go before our God in heaven.

Prayer is the wonderful method God gives us to communicate with Him. The design of our brain and how it works can help us use prayer in a thoughtful meaningful context without being intimidating. Every year it is always my prayer that I can guide my students to think more deeply about God and what He means to them personally. What better way is there to impress God's greatness and His fatherly kindness than communication through prayer with our one, true God.

### ***"COME LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY!" – Mr. Greg Holstege***

Fake news. Illegal executive orders. Crooked politicians. Uprisings across the land with people dissatisfied with the government. Riots and demonstrations are found in our cities. Homelessness and large scale blatant thievery are filling our news reports. Drug abuse and deaths by fentanyl due mainly to the illegal border crossings by millions. Most of the dangers associated with Covid have come and gone for the most part. These are and many other headlines have been blaring across the news media and on our television sets the last couple of years during our current administration. One would think the country is falling apart when watching the media portray what is happening in Washington and across the country. "Chaos" can be found in the great USA because of the President's policies that he is trying to put in place. Never mind the fact that most of these policies are policies that are being put back in place where former Presidents had put aside with little to no fanfare. Despite what all is going on in our country today, should we as Christians be so surprised at this?

What is going on today is exactly what our Lord Jesus Christ foretold would happen in Matthew 24. In verses six through twelve we read, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must

come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

Jesus was speaking to his disciples when He gave them the signs of the end times. These words of Jesus were given shortly before His crucifixion and resurrection to help enforce His words concerning the parable of the wise and foolish virgins who were not only to be looking for the coming bridegroom but were to be prepared for his coming as well. The signs Jesus gives us in Matthew 24 certainly have been seen throughout history since then but are more prevalent today than ever before.

One only needs to look around us in 2023 and see the wars in Ukraine/Russia and Israel with the Hamas terrorists around us with the terror attacks that have been found around the world leaving death and carnage. The news is

filled with the plight of other third world nations where people are starving or other nations who have been devastated by natural disasters with earthquakes or other natural disasters of great magnitudes. Chicago and other cities are dripping with the blood of hundreds dying from gang violence in areas that resemble war zones. Christians in this land and in others that hold to the sanctity of marriage as defined by Scripture are mocked and reviled by the homosexual movement. The Supreme Court has vindicated lawful marriages of the same sex which denies the God-ordained institution of marriage of one man and woman.

One wonders what will be next for our generation to see as our Saviour time to return draws closer. Can man's hatred towards his fellow man get any worse? Look at the vitriol being spewed at Jews all across the world by the followers of Hamas and the Palestinians. We can be sure that it will in ways that may be unfathomable. Man's wickedness will only grow more intense as time marches on to its end. Sexual identity and transgenderism is flaunted by many in the nation and by our media to be the norm instead of the vile wickedness it has become. Even as many of Christ's followers are being persecuted today across the world, that, too, will change as many more in places where Christianity is tolerated will face the wrath of the "dragon of Satan" during the days of Antichrist. Families will have loved ones betray their Christian brethren to the authorities during the fiercest of persecution.

I now propose this question. "Are you looking for our Savior's return?" We now live in a period of prosperity, where we have freedom to have our churches and worship on Sunday. We can send our children to a school where we know our children are being taught the truths of God in their classroom. We have excellent homes to shelter our families in. Food overflows our pantries along with our refrigerators and freezers. God has given us gifts far more than what we are deserving of. God has indeed been gracious to us. But are we prepared for these things to be taken from us? Are we ready to endure hardships, are we ready to "bear our crosses" for Christ's sake?

We must prepare ourselves for that day to truly fight the battle of faith. Pray for strength to follow Christ in all things. Grow in our knowledge of His Word through Bible studies and attending the pure preaching of the Word each Sabbath day and not forsake it and follow the "false prophets" that will arise in these last days. Continue to support our Christian schools so that our children can be prepared for those days as well by the teachers who love the truth. Be vigilant with your children in discussing the signs of Christ's coming, keeping them aware of what is happening around them. It is then we will be as the wise virgins were in the parable, with our lamps trimmed and burning, awaiting the return of our King. Oh, what a glorious day that will be!

### ***Disconnected: A BOOK REVIEW – Mrs. Erin VanRijs***

"If we put hidden cameras in some home to get a glimpse at the new American family, it would look something like this: moms, dads, and kids are all disconnected from each other and connected to a computer screen, tablet, smartphone, or video game console" (117). This quote, from Thomas Kersting's book *Disconnected*, is concerning though perhaps recognizable. Society has made it incredibly easy to be connected to a screen, but are screens disconnecting us from each other? In his book, Thomas Kersting, a psychotherapist and former school psychologist, examines the impacts that technology is having on children and their families.

Technology is defining the next generation like never before. I grew up in a very technology-literate household, and even I did not grow up as completely immersed in technology as children today. When I saw *Disconnected* on the public library shelf, I picked it up out of curiosity. Are there real, measurable impacts of technology in children today? As a teacher, I thought it would be valuable to know. After reading the book, I would encourage parents also to read it, and I wanted to share some of the main takeaways that I had.

In the first chapter, Kersting talks about how technology physically changes the brain, particularly children's brains.

Children's brains are exceptionally neuroplastic. In other words, children's brains are exceptionally good at reorganizing and forming new neural connections. This is why children are generally quicker learners than adults. Although more research needs to be done, there is some research that indicates that children who use screens for more than two hours a day are rewiring their brains to think differently. For example, children that communicate primarily through Snapchat or text are creating strong neural pathways for that kind of communication. However, by not communicating face-to-face, they can actually lose those neural pathways. I have heard a lot of complaints from adults that kids cannot talk to them anymore. Some research indicates that technology overuse could be to blame.

Additionally, overuse of technology can decrease attention span. Perhaps you have seen this scenario in your home - your child is trying to do homework, but a TV is on. You have to constantly remind them to focus on their homework. An older student might be continually distracted by texts, Snapchats, or other notifications on a phone or tablet. "Quick checking" or "quick responding" actually makes homework take significantly longer. Our brains are much worse at multitasking than what we want to think. Kersting cites a

study indicating that multitasking (trying to think about or do multiple things at once) uses a different part of the brain for problem solving than just trying to do one thing at a time. Again, technology can make children's brains develop differently - if used excessively.

Kersting ends each chapter with some very practical parenting tips. Because technology is a great gift from God, we have to be careful to be good stewards of it. This is especially true with regards to our children. Raising children in the fear of the Lord requires a careful evaluation of everything we put in their lives. I have heard a lot of conversation about the importance of monitoring what children are seeing on technology; this is also incredibly important. However, are we also carefully evaluating the impact of the technology itself?

Although I felt that parts of the book bordered on conspiracy theory (e.g. 5G causing cancer), I thought Kersting had many

good points to take into consideration when creating boundaries with technology for our children. As a teacher, it made me consider when to use technology in the classroom: How often is it truly necessary? What technological skills should be emphasized? What is better taught in other ways? It also made me question some of my own behaviors with technology.

It is beneficial for all of us to evaluate the use of technology in our lives. Is it having negative impacts? Do we see negative impacts in our children? I would encourage parents to read *Disconnected*; I thought Kersting had strong anecdotes and practical advice about technology. In an increasingly disconnected society, our Christian homes need to be beautiful examples of the covenant.

Works Cited:

Kersting, Thomas. *Disconnected*. BakerBooks, 2020.

### **GRANDPARENT'S DAY – Mr. Josh Moelker**

Grandparent's day is looked forward to by many, both young and old alike. Even before grandparents arrive at school you can tell that the day is a day like no other. Students are eager to show off projects that they've been working on, perform songs that they've been practicing, demonstrate what they've learned, or work on something alongside their grandparents. The excitement and energy in the school is tangible and lasts long after the grandparents have left the building.

However, grandparent's day can be difficult for many students. Many students have grandparents who cannot be present on grandparent's day and this can be a painful reminder for them about the death of grandparents, distance between them and grandparents, and even division in their

family. Even on a day designed to celebrate God's faithfulness to our generations, the effects of man's fall into sin are present.

One thing that stood out to me from grandparent's day was that the body of Christ and the unity within it spans generations and genes. I observed several instances of a grandparent noticing that a student near their grandchild had no grandparent with them and taking that opportunity to introduce themselves and interact with them. I watched students talk to the grandparents of their classmates like they were their own grandparents. What a blessing it is that God has joined us not only to Himself, but also to those who are members of His body!

### **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT – Mrs. Janet Doezema**

You've heard the phrase "Practice makes perfect", and maybe it's rolled off your tongue without much thought. Down in the junior high art room, we know from experience that is not the case! We make many attempts, some better than others. We are on a journey, not at a destination here in Junior High Art. Art students could quote me as often saying, "Practice makes progress", or "I am seeing some amazing progress today!" Those are satisfying days when it can be observed not only by myself, but by these Artists in training, that they are making steady progress and improvement in their artistic abilities and skill. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;" (Col. 3:23).

Among early teens, drawing realistically is a skill that is admired and sought after. It is also the point in life that if those skills have not been achieved, or in the very near future, those efforts might be laid aside to pursue other interests, thinking that they just aren't good at it.\* I take a hard line on negative comments from students to peers about their artwork. Lunch hours have been earned by discouraging words. But what effect an encouraging word can have! "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Pro 15:23).

Drawing is a skill that can be taught and learned. Like any subject, some are more adept, but all can improve. Drawing true to life involves seeing, but seeing from the visual, spatial, perceptual part of the brain. Admittedly, that is the



part of the brain most of us do not regularly access. Why, you might ask? When we are thinking/speaking verbally, the drawing, really seeing area of our brain isn't as accessible. It takes quiet, focus, and concentration to better draw accurately what one sees. When one is in verbal mode, drawing realistically is frustratingly more difficult. Maintaining a balance leaning more toward quiet and focus to gain the most from Art class will lend to our students' achievement and increased confidence in artistic ability.\*

And so, we are learning, practicing and producing some very cool art work. While we haven't reached perfection, we are seeing, with effort, increasing confidence in skill, and more satisfying outcomes. In a word, Progress. Practice makes progress.

Edwards, Betty. "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain." Penguin Putnam, 1979, 1989, 1999, 2012

### **OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES – Mrs. Carli Engelsma**

I wrote an entire *Herald* article and as I was proofreading it I just decided that I didn't like it. It just didn't sound right. So I asked a student, "Have you ever had this feeling before? You finish writing a paper and you just don't like how it sounds? What do you do when you're frustrated?" He replied, "I think you should pray to God about it. That's what I would do. It's good to pray when you're frustrated and God will help you." His answer impressed me, but mostly humbled me. I have to confess, I hadn't even considered praying about such a trivial matter. Immediately, Psalm 8:2 rang in my head. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

Earlier this fall, I was at Covenant coaching a high school volleyball game. I asked my team to come with suggestions for how we can bring more energy to games. I was thinking they would bring a new pregame routine or a cheer to get them pumped up. I was wrong. A player came to me and said, "Coach, I think it would be a good idea to do team devotions before each game." Well, this is not exactly what I had in mind. Once again, I was impressed and humbled by thought process and answer given to me from a child of God. The verse that came to mind in this moment was Philippians

4:6, "Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

This happens so often. When we come across trials in our lives that are monumental, when we have to make a big decision, when we get a discouraging diagnosis, or when the storms of life are raging, we pray. How often do we pray to God for the little things? How often do we talk amongst ourselves, thinking we can determine what needs to be done on our own. Maybe we go to a parent or a friend and ask for advice. When friends or family come to us for guidance, is our first response to bring it to God in prayer?

In the last few weeks, students have led me to God. These are just two concrete examples, but it happens so often. This is a testimony to God working in the hearts of children. It is also a beautiful sign that they are being instructed in the fear of the Lord. I asked the same student who told me to pray about writing this article how he got so wise. He told me, "From the Word of God, my parents, and my teachers." May this be an encouragement to you as parents and teachers, I know it has been to me. Next time you need advice, don't be afraid to ask a child.

### **GLORY IN TRIALS – Mr. Brad Gritters**

"But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5).

In fifth grade, we follow the life of David in our Bible studies. Anybody who studies David's life can't help but notice that it was one that was characterized by trials and difficulty. These trials began at a very young age for David. Soon after David's victory over Goliath, Saul becomes very jealous of him and his popularity. Eventually, Saul will make it his entire

life's mission to kill David, forcing David to live out much of his early life fleeing and hiding in caves. Through all this, David refuses to retaliate and does not allow any of his men to raise their hand against "the Lord's Anointed" (a favorite nickname David has for Saul).

The trials do not end here for David, but rather they increase as he takes the throne over all of Israel. Some further trials he faces include: David's fall into sin with Bathsheba, David's family having no peace when his son Absalom murders elder brother Amnon, David's own son Absalom revolting against him, David's best friend Ahithophel betraying him to join his

enemy, David's son Adonijah attempting to take the throne from Solomon, and the list of trials could go on and on for David. David's life was a life filled with trials and tribulations.

Just like David, our lives are filled with trials. They are an unavoidable part of our pilgrimage here on earth. We experience disappointment, grief, anxiety, persecution, doubt, temptations, and more. The Bible makes quite clear the fact that, as disciples of Christ, we are not immune to difficulty or despair.

As we study different trials in fifth grade there are many applications and lessons that can be learned. I would like to summarize and share some of these applications/lessons that we discuss in class with you.

1. **God sends trials to expose our heart.** God sends trials to show us areas in our lives where we might need growth. Trials can be like a mirror that reflects to us our weakness or even areas in our lives where we sin.
2. **God uses trials to strengthen our faith in Him.** God uses times of despair or uncertainty to teach us to look to him for our guidance, strength, and comfort. This helps a child of God grow as a believer and become more Christlike in our walk. As the child of God goes through a trial, our confession should be that His ways are higher than our ways.
3. **God sends trials to strengthen Christ's body, the church.** We are constantly hearing about trials that our fellow church members are experiencing. Trials encourage us to go to church members with words of encouragement, acts of kindness, and feelings of compassion. If you are someone with relatively no trials in your life, how are you helping out those who have many trials?
4. **God sends trials to make us thankful and point us to Christ.** Ephesians 5:20 says, "Giving thanks

always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;". Thanks be to God that we have trials that remind us that we live in a sinful and fallen world. Thanks be to God that we have trials that remind us of our need for Christ, because it is through His strength that we are able to endure. Have you ever been thankful for the trials that God sends your way?

Throughout all the hardships that God sends, David does not allow these trials to control his life. Rather he seeks that which is right and acceptable in the eyes of the Lord. How do you act when God sends you difficulties or hard times in your life? David was not perfect in his responses to trials, but he was a type of Christ. Christ is the perfect example that we can follow on how we ought to respond to adversity. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12). Christ perfectly endured every trial he faced on the earth. He was the perfect example for how we should shape our lives.

That God's ways are higher than our ways should be our confession in the midst of trials. We have the comfort that God works all things for our good as we walk through this valley of the shadow of death. This idea might be difficult to see and understand as one goes through a trial, but we always should hold this truth in our heart, that the trials we face are for our good and for the good of His church. What a comfort we have in that! May we embrace the trials we face as an opportunity to grow closer to our God.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:2-4

### **THANKFUL DELIGHT IN THE LORD – Mrs. Brenda Pastoor**

Kindergarten is such an exciting time of learning! We learn to associate letters with the sounds they represent and then how to put those sounds together to make words. Before you know it, we can READ words! To encourage the children in their new-found skill we write class books that use repetition on every page. When the book is assembled we take turns bringing it home to practice "reading" it to our families. Once everyone has had an opportunity to take our class book home we add it to our classroom library, where it becomes a favorite for quiet reading time!

In anticipation of Thanksgiving Day we recently wrote a book entitled, We Give Thanks. In it, each Kindergarten illustrated a page to coordinate with their writing. This book

provided the following stimulus on each page: "I thank God for \_\_\_\_\_." Following are the writings of the Kindergarten Blue Bird Class. I wish I could have included all of the illustrations as well, but you'll just have to imagine the artistic representations that accompanied each page.

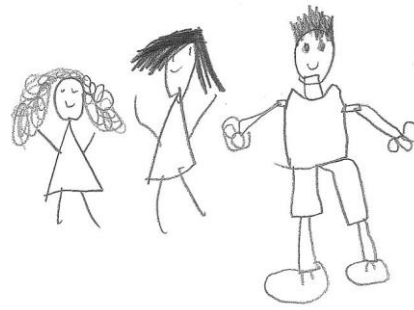
- "I thank God for animals." Cade
- "I thank God for God." Porter
- "I thank God for the Bible." Micaiah
- "I thank God for (my baby sister) Molly Jean." Jeremiah
- "I thank God for Jesus." Taylor
- "I thank God for the cross." Adeline
- "I thank God for my Grandma, Mom and Dad." Lennon
- "I thank God for Jesus." Jaxon

- "I thank God for rainbows." Colt
- "I thank God for the Church." Emma
- "I thank God for Jesus." Beckett
- "I thank God for Heaven." Easton
- "I thank God for Church." Maddox
- "I thank God for the world." Crew
- "I thank God for the Bible." Mekenna
- "I thank God for the moon and stars." Jaylee
- "I thank God for God." Benji

Although I didn't include my own page in our class book, I would like to share with you some things I am thankful for. I thank God for the good Christian parents that fully support the Christian education of their children. This support is evident not only in the sacrifices made to send their children to this Christian school, but also in many other ways. I thank God for your help both in the classroom and at home as you send your children to school prepared for the day: program songs practiced and memorized, journal pictures picked out, show and tell ready to be presented, and reading our class take-home books! Your kind words of encouragement and constant prayers of support are greatly appreciated! Finally, I thank God for the wonderful blessing of Heritage Christian School and the opportunity to work with you in the rearing of these precious children.

I thank God for

Grandma Monday



LEMON

I thank God for

Bible



MICAH

I thank God for

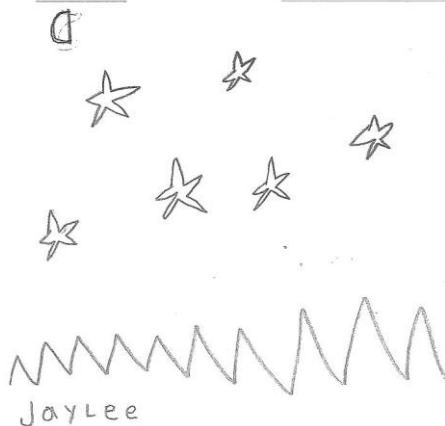
NO RAINBOW



COLT

I thank God for

The moon and stars



## **REMAINING 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**

**November 23 and 24, 2023 - Thanksgiving Break**

**December 25, 2023 – January 2, 2024 - Christmas Break**

**January 22-26, 2024 – MAP testing**

**January 31 and February 1, 2024 – PT Conferences**

**February 9, 2024 – Fearfully & Wonderfully Made day**

**February 16, 2024 – Mid Winter Break**

**February 29, 2024 – Band & Choir Concert**

**March 29 – April 5, 2024 – Spring Break**

**April 26, 2024 – Kindergarten Program**

**May 8, 2024 – Elementary Program (in the afternoon)**

**May 13-17, 2024 – MAP Testing**

**May 16, 2024 – Band & Choir Concert**

**May 20, 2024 – All Schools Band Concert**

**May 27, 2024 – Memorial Day (no school)**

**May 30, 2024 – Last day of school (1/2 day)**

**May 30, 2024 - Graduation**

The 2024-2025 school year calendar will be approved by the Board soon, Lord willing.  
We will email it out once it has been approved.