

# Herald



## The Board and Staff Newsletter ~ November, 2024

2024-25 Board Members: Jason Butler, Jared Dykstra, Troy Karsemeyer - Secretary, Brian Koole, John Pipe, Jim VanBaren, Travis VanderKolk, Brandon VanOverloop - Vice President, Kevin VanOverloop - President, Mitch VanOverloop, Blake Wieringa - Treasurer, Ross Zuverink

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### PLANTED BY THE RIVERS OF WATER

(Rev. Smidstra's speech to the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute)  
Summary by Mr. Brian Kuiper, Administrator

*“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” Jeremiah 17:7-8*

On October 17, nearly 180 teachers from across the US gathered for the annual convention hosted by the PRTI. The convention is always a good event because it allows for time of sharing ideas and encouragement for our teachers. Also, the room is filled with so many gifted individuals of varied ages and diverse teaching styles. Our schools are truly blessed by God to have such teachers. Rev. Smidstra gave the keynote address to those who attended, but anyone interested in covenantal, christian education will benefit from the truths that he shared.

The passage in Jeremiah is referring to a time when the church was departing from the truth. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, speaks a stern word of judgment and calls the people to repentance. In this chapter, he is addressing especially the sin of idolatry and their misplaced trust. Those who trust idols are like a “heath in the desert” (v5-6) and those who follow God and trust in Him are those who are called “trees planted by the river” (v7-8).

The essential question of the passage is Whom are we to trust? Trust involves putting our confidence in something. In this world, everyone trusts either man or God. Trust is a human characteristic due to the way we were created. Those who trust in man believe that man must always be there and supply for all their needs. This is folly because in so doing, man looks to fallen man for his needs. All atheists and humanists, as well as those who believe works righteousness trust in man. The result of this is a wicked and deceitful heart (v9). On the other hand, those who trust in God know Him as Redeemer, Creator, and Father by grace only. He is the only One who can bear the full weight of our trust and provide all we need. It is important to notice that in verse 7 that the Spirit draws for us a connection between hope

and trust. Trusting Him must impact ALL facets of life including all of our salvation, our understanding of politics and economics, and our views on all other areas of the Christian life. The impact of this on our life is as Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee". When we trust in Him, we have hope and peace.

Applying this to teaching means teachers must trust God. This understanding of Whom we trust impacts what and Whom we teach. And, it calls us to teach our students to trust the Lord alone. Great care should be taken in all classrooms to be sure that when we understand His creation better, we trust Him more.

The passage highlights contrasting forms of life. The heath in the desert refers to a bush that is scraggly and rooted shallowly. It is hardly living and is miserable. Because of where it grows, it does not receive nourishment, and its fruit is misery, ruin, and death. But, a tree planted by the waters is sturdy, well rooted, and beautiful. This is because it is

purposefully planted by water. Yet, it grows in a world of sin. The fruit of this tree is that it is alive, vibrant, and full of sap (Psalm 104:16). This tree receives God's blessing by grace, and He provides it with the "water of life".

Applying this to teaching means our first and proper aim must be to teach students to be spiritual sons and daughters. The Word of God is what they need to be fed and nourished. That Word is a part of all of their learning and must be integrated into each classroom often and intentionally.

Finally, the passage brings some encouragement. This is who we are by grace. We must keep drinking of the river of the water of life. We need to trust Him and teach our students to trust Him. When we and they do so, they will know the peace that comes from trusting in the only One who is to be trusted.

## ***HCS TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE UPDATE, FALL 2024 – Mr. Troy Karsemeyer***

As technology continues to evolve, our society and school remain committed to creating an environment that integrates these advancements to support our students and educators alike. Over the past year, several notable updates have improved our classroom experience, boosted security, and reaffirmed our commitment to safe and effective technology use in education.

### **Expanding Chromebook Access for Learning**

One of the most exciting updates this year is our progress with the Chromebook cart program, a valuable resource in today's learning environment. As of now, we're working in our 2<sup>nd</sup> year with a seventh cart, allowing each of the older grades to have a dedicated cart, while younger grades have shared carts when needed. This expansion is part of an ongoing cycle we've established to replace and replenish these carts, ensuring students have consistent access to reliable devices for their work.

With Chromebooks now a daily tool in our classrooms, students are not only better able to participate in digital learning activities, but they are also gaining essential skills to be more equipped for a digital world. By interacting with technology regularly, students are building confidence and fluency in digital environments, preparing them for future academic and career challenges in an increasingly tech-driven society.

### **Continuing Partnership with Greg Johnson and IT Systems**

Since 2016, Greg Johnson from IT Systems has been a trusted partner in our technological progress, and we are

pleased to announce the renewal of our contract with him. Greg has been instrumental in keeping our systems secure and functional, helping us troubleshoot and innovate as our tech needs grow. His support allows our technology committee and staff to maintain a seamless digital experience, contributing greatly to our overall mission.

### **GoGuardian Renewal for Internet Safety**

In today's digital age, student safety online is paramount, and GoGuardian has been an invaluable resource in maintaining it. We've recently renewed our contract with GoGuardian for three more years. This service allows teachers to monitor students' activity from their desks, providing oversight and support as students work independently. After thorough research into potential alternatives, we decided to continue with GoGuardian, which not only provided familiarity and effectiveness but also offered financial savings by choosing a multi-year contract. We feel confident that this solution will continue to safeguard our students digital experience.

### **The Growing Influence of AI in Education**

Technology in education is advancing quickly, and artificial intelligence (AI) is now at the forefront of that change. AI has the potential to enhance personalized learning, support students with different learning needs, and provide teachers with insights into student progress. However, it is crucial to recognize that AI can be a double-edged sword. While AI can greatly assist in research, learning, and creative applications, it also brings ethical concerns. Some students may use AI for dishonest purposes, such as completing assignments without fully engaging in the learning process.

Our role as educators and a technology committee is to stay ahead of these developments, setting policies that encourage responsible AI use while discouraging misuse. By fostering an environment where students understand both the potential and the responsibility of AI, we can ensure that technology serves as a positive force in their education.

In a fitting example of AI's role in today's world, this article itself was generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence. The use of AI in crafting content like this demonstrates how technology can support us in sharing important updates quickly and efficiently. AI tools are becoming increasingly capable, and their influence is evident not only in education but in everyday tasks across all professions.

Our choice to use AI here reflects our commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancement, as we prepare students for a world where AI could shape the ways we work, communicate, and learn.

## Looking Ahead

The past year has been one of growth, and we are excited about the future. With continued investments in our technology infrastructure, strategic partnerships, and vigilance regarding new advancements, we're well-prepared to support our students in an increasingly digital world. Technology will continue to be a vital component of their education, and we are committed to ensuring it is both accessible and safe.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to keeping you updated on further developments.

## **FEDERATION COMMITTEE REPORT – Mr. Ross Zuverink**

Our annual meeting for the Federation of Protestant Reformed Schools was held on October 3. We approved the Federation's appointments and welcome Ben Laning as our new teacher representative and Randy Kuiper as our new TTC managing director. We also elected Matt Regnerus (Faith Christian-Randolph, WI) to the board, and say farewell to Dan Pastoor as his three-year term has ended. We thank Dan for his work on the board, especially as chairman this past year.

We also take special opportunity to thank Rick Noorman for his service as the TTC manager for the past 7 years. Rick led the committee through developing purpose, mission, and prioritizing of projects in the early years of the TTC. This led to the development and implementation of multi-faceted mentoring programs that have served the Protestant Reformed schools for the past 5 years.

Derek VanOverloop completed his second year as technology director and has been working diligently on managing the Third Tier platform on Google Classroom, updating the website, and working to get the past Perspectives issues searchable online.

Teacher training continues to be the main work of the Federation. The Second Tier and Third Tier Mentoring programs have been running smoothly since they launched in 2018. This past year, 7 first year teachers were mentored in the Second Tier, and 12 teachers were involved in the Third Tier program. This coming year, 10 new teachers will begin the Second Tier with an assigned mentor, four mentor/mentee pairs will begin the Third Tier, and eight

mentor/mentee pairs will continue their work in the Third Tier. We continue to be thankful for this means to provide spiritual, professional development for both mentors and mentees in our schools.

The First Tier of the mentoring program, designed to help prospective teachers, had its beginnings of implementation this past year. Because this program is designed for busy college students, the intent is to create a more informal program and setting where mentors can be involved with multiple prospective teachers. The title of this tier is "Developing a Worldview Filter," and the desire of the Federation is that experienced teachers can help prospective teachers make sense of what they are learning in college, private or public, and be prepared to move in teaching in the Protestant Reformed Schools.

A group of writers continue to develop material for a Doctrines Applied to Education course. Six writers have developed doctrines on sovereignty, creation covenant, revelation and scriptural authority, antithesis, and the image of God. The intent with this material is three-fold: create a written manuscript of each of the chapters on specific doctrines, offer a summer workshop on the material produced, and regularly offer a course on Doctrines Applied to Education, similar to the History & Principles course.

May the Lord bless the ongoing work of the Federation and use it for the good of our schools.

## **FOUNDATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Heritage Christian School Foundation (the “Foundation”) was created in 1993 for the sole purpose of providing additional financial support to Heritage Christian School through the awarding of grants which are intended to lower the cost of tuition borne by parents. The Foundation’s revenue sources are from individual donations, bequests, fund-raising activities, and investment income. Annually, the Foundation board determines the grant amount based on an average investment return realized on its invested assets.

This year’s fundraising activity included our annual golf outing, held in late July. A special thanks to all who participated and donated to the golf outing fund-raiser – with the auctions and additional sponsors, it was the most successful golf outing to date. We recently made a tough decision to cancel the 2024 Evening of Praise event. For this reason, we ask that you please prayerfully consider contributing funds to the Foundation. All donations support our purpose to increase the total asset base of the Foundation, generating increased grants for the future.

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 School Foundation in their estate planning. Please contact a Foundation Board member if you have any questions.

Humbly in Christ,  
Don Offringa, Foundation Board President  
Mitchell Van Overloop, HCS Board liaison to the Foundation

## **WE PRAY FOR YOU – Mrs. Erika Aalsma**

One of the most encouraging times of the school year is parent-teacher conferences. Nothing quite matches the blessing of sitting down together and discussing our work toward a common goal. Almost all parents that come for conferences express one of these sentiments to their child’s teacher: “Thank you for all of your work.” “We pray for you.”

Parents, we are thankful for you and we pray for you too. The beauty of being part of the body of Christ is especially evident at these meetings. Especially as we pray for each other do we experience the communion of the saints. But, while it is really quite simple to say “I am praying for you”, actually following through can be difficult. It is difficult for me to consistently remember to consciously pray for those that I have promised to pray for. In preparing to write this article I emailed a few moms from our school family. “How can we pray for you?” I was humbled. The responses were beautiful, and I wish I had space to include them all word for word.

### **What do we pray for the parents in our school family?**

- Prayers for love and strength of the marriages of our families. Pray for peace and unity in the students’ homes and our families so that we may be able to disagree with each other, and still show love to one another.

- Prayers for the strength, love, and spiritual health of our mothers.
- Prayers for parents who have children in academic support and special education.
- Prayers for mothers/parents who can often feel unequipped or that they have failed in their calling if their children need extra attention at school.
- Prayers to reassure parents that the teachers at Heritage love their children as if they were their own.
- Prayers that children are shown love and nurturing, considering that students may come to school bearing heavy burdens.
- Prayers for single parents and families in unique circumstances.
- Prayers that our homes would be Godly, a place of spiritual learning and growth.
- Prayers that parents would be involved in their children’s learning.
- Prayers for unity between the teachers and parents, that families are speaking positively about the teachers with their children.
- Prayers that God would equip the parents to be Godly examples of Christlike love, respect, and

servanthood to their children as they guide them through the school year and the work that is before them. Ask God to help us live in a way that shows our children who He is, allowing them to see His love and character through our daily actions.

- Prayers that as parents we will keep Christ the center of our home. That we will speak words of love, of kindness, of correction.
- Prayers that we will model love and forgiveness.
- Prayers that the love of Christ dwells in us and be reflected to others.
- Prayers that there is joy, love and laughter in our homes.
- Prayers to help our children grow in discernment and wisdom.
- Prayers that our children will have freedom from needing others' approval and from comparison.
- Prayers that our children learn where to run when they are fearful, anxious, or overwhelmed.
- Pray that we cherish our children as covenant blessings. May we deeply value and love our children, recognizing them as precious gifts from our Heavenly Father.

The teachers also need the prayers of the parents. The calling that they have taken up is weighty. They strive to faithfully fulfill the call to instruct God's children. As we pray with our families for our teachers, let's consider these things.

### **What do we pray for the teachers in our school family?**

- Prayers for strength and motivation to be energetic and enthusiastic in our teaching.
- Prayers for wisdom in dealing with difficult behavior situations.
- Prayers for knowledge in understanding each student's brain, unique learning style and educational needs.
- Prayers for the ability to recognize and adapt to the unique needs of each child in the classroom.
- Prayers for a spirit of unity and collaboration among the staff.
- Prayers for the ability to incorporate Christ into all aspects of our teaching.
- Prayers for the ability to balance home and school life.
- Prayers that the teachers understand that they are an extension of the home and seek the safety, success, and spiritual growth of each individual child.
- Prayers for a sense of togetherness between teachers and parents as we work together in the joint effort to educate these covenant children.

It is a beautiful thing to be able to pray for each other. We are working together for a kingdom cause. Let's come on bended knee, with petitions specific to the needs of our school community.

### ***LITTLE LEARNERS WITH GREAT GRATITUDE – Miss Alaina Baas***

I remember it clearly. I sat in the corner of the colorful third grade classroom at Bauerwood Elementary. I was concluding my student teaching placement and observing one of the third grade teachers. The students came in quietly and began immediately writing in a small purple notebook. The teacher informed me that the students were writing in their gratitude journals. This was something they did every morning. I knew right away that this was something I wanted to implement into my own classroom one day.

Fast forward about 129 days, and it's my first day of teaching first grade. After we discussed the days and weather, I decided to pose the highly anticipated question. How curious I was to see how this group would respond. Perhaps they were thankful for their new Hot Wheels toy, a trampoline at home, or the donut their mom packed in their lunch.

"Boys and girls, what are you thankful for?" I asked.

Many excited students shot their small hands into the air. I called on the first student who raised her hand. She smiled. "I am thankful for the Church," she said confidently.

"Why are you thankful for the Church?" I asked.

"Because it teaches us the Word of God, so that we can praise Him," she responded.

I was astonished. This exceeded my expectations. I called on another student.

"I am thankful for Jesus because He helps me to be a light."

I couldn't help but call on more students. Many had similar answers. Such young minds, yet so much truth and gratitude. Around the holidays, it can often seem cliché to ask the question "What are you thankful for?" Yet, ultimately, there is always a reason to give thanks. The first graders and I have been challenging each other to find reasons to be thankful each day. Gratitude is important in the classroom, as it reminds the students of the goal of our work—glory to God! The first graders have allowed me to publish their very first

gratitude journal entry. I hope the gratitude in these little learners will inspire you to find great gratitude even in the small moments in your life.

- I uan [am] thanful fur [for] God becuz He savd us. **Hope Butler**
- I am thankful for my family because thae [they] love me. **Marcy Feenstra**
- I am thankful for Jeesus beecus he died on the kros. **Ilianna Kooienga**
- I'm thankful for the Bible! Because it helps us lrne [learn] abwt [about] God. **Kiptyn Kuiper**
- I am thankful for God bcus uv [of] the merikls [miracles]. **Mekenna Leatherman**
- I am thankful for Jesus kus [because] he wsht [washed] uwa [away] ard [our] sins. **Beckett Noorman**
- I am thankful for my baby sistr [sister] Drew becus she is qute [cute]. **Wesley Peterson**
- I am thankful for mi grapu [grandpa] and gradmu [grandma] becus I love them. **Cade Uittenboogard**
- I am thankful for mi [my] mom becus she lus [loves] me. **Oliver VanBaren**

- I am thankful for Chrch [church] so we all haf [have] a plas [place] to lisisin [listen] to the Wrd [Word] uv God. **Kendall VanOverloop**
- I am thankful for mou [my] dog namd [named] Copr [Copper] beks [because] I luyk [like] to play wif [with] him. **Max VanOverloop**
- I am fakfel [thankful] for the trcc [church] and for God becas [because] He loves me and I love it. **Alexa VanOverloop**
- I am thankful for God bekus we r [are] His chiljlin [children]. **Porter VanSingel**
- I am thankful for my God an my chrch [church] becse [because] I love God an the chrch and that we can reed the Bibl [Bible] an sig [sing] God prasis [praises]. **Jaylee VanTil**
- I am thacful [thankful] for my teacher beucoss [because] she is the beast [best] teacher! **Lawson Veldman**
- I am thankful for a sate [state] that we can srve [serve] God. Because I love to srve God. **Carson Wesorick**

### **A PRICELESS GIFT: READING TO OUR CHILDREN – Mrs. Katie VanOverloop**

With nostalgia, I remember my parents reading to my siblings and me in the evening. These warm memories are etched in my mind. Pictures also remind me of these wonderful times. Kids draped all over my mom, on the couch, and the floor below. *Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes, Big Bad Bruce, Blueberries for Sal, The Hobbit, The Chronicles of Narnia, The Family Under the Bridge, The Pearl, Gertrude Hoekesma's Come, Ye Children*, and so many more! Enthralled with the *Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, I ached with Lucy when Edmund was so cruel, I feared the White Witch's anger, and I fell in love with Aslan, who was so safe. All these books ignited in me a love of good stories.

With eight children and many needs, nightly reading had to be prioritized. My parents were teachers; they loved learning and were determined to plant that seed in their children. Great effort on my parent's part was used to carry this out. From time to time, my dad even sang portions of *The Hobbit*, rather than read it, just to keep himself awake.

Now as a parent, I have repeated the journey with my own children. *I'll Love You Forever, Caps for Sale, Strega Nona, Old Yeller, Roll of Thunder; Hear My Cry, Where the Red Fern Grows, An Elephant in the Garden*, and so many more.

And like my dad, I have slipped in and out of consciousness as I try to wrap up a chapter.

There are many compelling reasons to read to your children. However, I will list just a few at the top of my list.

One reason would be to develop a love of good stories in your children. (*What Good Books Can Do*) Gladys Hunt, the author of *Honey for a Child's Heart* rightly argues, "Every child has to learn how to tell what is best, just as you do. My theory is that if you expose a child to the best, that child will begin to understand what 'best' is and choose it."

Another compelling reason for parents to read to their children is that good literature develops character. A few years ago I took an online literature course from Hillsdale, taught by Dr. Dan Coupland. In this course, he emphasized that "good stories do not *preach* at children, but rather illustrate the beauty of courage, justice, and eschewing evil." Children develop empathy as they rejoice or grieve with the protagonist, and as they feel anger at wickedness or hurt perpetrated against others. To be human is to feel the excitement of the coon hunt and then later cry (possibly sob) at the end of the book, *Where the Red Fern Grows*. (I won't give it away.) Thinking back to *The Lion, the Witch, and the*

*Wardrobe*, the selfishness of Edmund is repulsive, whereas the kindness of Lucy and the courage of Peter are desirable.

Yet another reason to read to your children is to help them cognitively. They are capable of processing more complex stories than what they can decode. This is important, especially if your child is a struggling reader. Children who are read to and read proficiently build up a large knowledge base and when they learn new things in class, they have a foundation to which they can attach the *new* facts they are learning (in the educational world, this is called scaffolding.) New facts are remembered better if they have a memory/story, a knowledge base, to which they can attach themselves.

Aside from the research, there is a final benefit that is personal to me. Although I'm sure I couldn't have articulated it at the time, our time reading together created a bond. I knew my parents were busy, but they always MADE time to sit and read with us. They prioritized us in their life and shared with us what they loved. They shared with us a wonderful treasure: a whole new world outside of our own limited experiences.

As both a teacher and a parent, if I could offer one piece of advice to younger parents, it would be this: *read to your children*. Start with Bible stories, and then weave in nursery rhymes, picture books, and chapter books as they grow. If you are a parent looking for ideas, here are a few suggestions from our very own Heritage teachers. Grade-level recommendations are mentioned for several books, but remember that all kids are different. These are recommendations for the grade in which they are capable of *listening*, not necessarily reading themselves. Also, there are several duplicates, so those are "doubly" recommended!

### Kindergarten

- Joyce Holstege: *A Toad for Tuesday* by Russell E. Erickson
- Brenda Pastoor: *Star Eye* by Willaim Schmidt (5th grade and up), *Scaredy Squirrel* books by Melanie Watt, *Wordy Bird* books by Tammi Sauer, *Dragons Love Tacos* by Adam Rubin, *Biscuit* books by Alyssa Capucilli (kindergarten)

### 1st Grade

- Alaina Baas: *Chrysanthemum* books by Kevin Henkes and *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowery
- Mary VanOverloop: *The Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
- Annika Brands: Anything by Kevin Henkes, *Olivia* books, and *Poppleton* books

### 2nd Grade

- Cathie Koole: *The Wild Robot* and sequels, *The Wild Robot Escapes* and *The Wild Robot Protects* by Peter Brown
- Randy Kuiper: *The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner
- Jodee VanOverloop: *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White

### 3rd Grade

- Becca Gritters: *Old Yeller* by Fred Gipson and *Bess' Log Cabin Quilt* by Anne Love
- Rhonda Holstege: *The Incredible Journey* by Sheila Burnford (3rd grade and up)
- Erin VanRijs: *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry

### 4th Grade

- Sandy Glashower: *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Make Way for Ducklings*, *The Indian in the Cupboard*, and *Gentle Ben*
- Beth VanBaren: *Summer of the Monkeys* by Wilson Rawls, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R. Tolkien (4th grade and up)
- Jane Woudenberg: *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

### 5th Grade

- Doug DeBoer: *Star Eye* by William Schmidt (5th grade and up)
- Brad Gritters: *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell, *Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Reid Banks, and *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls
- Rick Gritters: *Into the Woods* by Gary Paulsen

### 6th Grade

- Greg Holstege: Dr. Seuss books
- Katie VanOverloop: *The Hiding Place* by Corrie TenBoom (5th grade and up), *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes (3rd grade and up), and *The Boy in Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne (6th and up) *I Belong* by Joyce Holstege (kindergarten and up)
- Fairy Tales (1st grade and up): *Beauty and the Beast*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Snow Queen*, and *Rapunzel*

### 7th Grade

- DanVanDyke: *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan (*Dangerous Journey* is a good adaptation for kids by Oliver Hunkin) (4th grade and up)
- Cathie Kamps: *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick
- Nikki Westra: *Snow Treasure* by Nancy McSwigan (3rd-4th grade)

### 8th Grade

- Denise Uittenbogaard: *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls
- Jason Holstege: *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis
- Elizabeth VanPutten: *A Place to Hang the Moon* (5th grade and up) and *A Night Divided* by Jennifer Nielsen (6th grade and up)

## Multi-Grade Teachers

- Erika Aalsma: *Snow Treasure* by Nancy McSwigan (3rd-4th grade)
- Sue Bleyenburg: *The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner (1st-3rd grade)
- Deb Altena: *The Cricket in Time Square* by George Selden (4th-5th grade)

- Kelly Ensink: *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle* by Betty MacDonald
- Janet Doezeema: *Summer of the Monkeys* by Wilson Rawls (4th-6th grade)
- Sarah Decker: *A Long Way from Chicago* and its sequel, *A Year Down Yonder* by Richard Peck.

## A GOODLY HERITAGE – Mrs. Jane Woudenberg

The fourth graders at Heritage Christian School have a special writing project in September and October. They interview family members to learn about the life of a grandparent or great-grandparent. Then they write essays based on the interviews. These essays help students gain a deeper understanding of their family history, connect with their heritage, and acquire valuable life lessons and wisdom from a different generation.

Grandparents had much to say about their childhood experiences, and the students learned that their grandparents' childhoods were both fun and busy.

- Addison Boverhof wrote that her grandma, Sharon Kuiper, would slide down big icy hills on cold winter days and play softball on warm days. The Vietnam War was happening during her childhood, and Addison's grandma wrote to a cousin, who was a sailor in Vietnam.
- Jackson Gritters found out that his grandpa, Bruce Vugteveen, enjoyed neighborhood football games, and that he celebrated the Bicentennial celebration of America when he was 13 years old.
- Brielle Griffieon discovered that her grandma, Wanda Bruinsma, grew up enjoying God's creation and spending lots of time with family and friends. She told Brielle, "That's more important than toys and extra things."
- Sadie Joostens' great-grandmother, Phyllis Rau was a busy girl, living in North Dakota. She had to milk the cows before school, bundle grain, and make breakfast for the threshers. She had a pet lamb named Skippy.
- Brinley Koole's great-grandpa, Alvin Rau, was Phyllis Rau's husband. They married in 1950. When he was a child he built his own stilts and learned to walk on them. He was also busy feeding chickens and pigs, milking cows, and collecting eggs.

The students also learned that their grandparents had to make important decisions when they became adults: who to marry, how to bring up their children, what career to choose, and how to make difficult decisions in trying times.

- Peyton VanBaren learned that her grandpa, Barry Warner became a chemical engineer because he liked Science and enjoyed making chemical reactions. He went to the Illinois Institute of Technology.
- Connor VanBaren learned that his grandma, Jane Brower, loved being a mother and she loves children. Jane and Norwin Brower brought up their children in a Godly way by attending church, taking the kids to catechism, and by reading Bible stories to their children.
- Adam Feenstra learned that his great-grandfather, Case Veldman, hid Jews from the German Nazis in the Netherlands during World War II. Great-grandpa Veldman and his helpers found food and hiding places for Jews and others that the Germans wanted to capture. His life was in great danger at that time.
- Morgan Boer learned that her great-grandpa, Peter Boer, lived on a farm and became a farmer because his father was also a farmer. Peter Boer also moved 17 times throughout his lifetime. He lived in Indiana, Illinois, Colorado, and Michigan.

Grandparents shared their favorite Bible passages with their grandchildren, and why that particular passage is important to them.

- Grace Lotterman shared her favorite Bible passage with her grandson, Quenton Lotterman. Isaiah 12:1 says, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation." Quenton learned that this verse reminds Grandma that God is her salvation and we must all trust in Him.
- Greyson Veldman learned that his grandpa, Ronald VanOverloop's favorite Bible verse is Ephesians 1:6, which says, "To the praise of the glory of His grace wherein he hath made us accepted and beloved." This verse comforts Greyson's grandpa



because it shows us that God gives us peace, especially in hard times.

Grandparents have wise advice to share with their grandchildren. The life lessons children learn from their grandparents play a huge role in shaping their future. These grandparents have taught the fourth graders many valuable lessons.

- Garrett Hanemaayer's grandma, Jo Ann Pastoor, advises her grandson to, "Listen to your parents because they have a lot of wisdom to share. Listen and learn in school, in church, and in catechism."
- Ari Dykstra's grandpa, Mark Dykstra, told his grandson, "Always do what is good, obeying all of God's commandments."
- Linda Mowery encouraged her granddaughter, Joelle Mowery by telling her, "Remember that God

is always on your side, so you don't ever have to be afraid."

- Joshua Bleyenbergs grandpa, Richard VanTil, advised his grandson, "Love the Lord most of all, obey your parents, and make happy memories with your family and friends." The VanTils do this by spending time together in Florida.

To all the grandparents out there: Thank you for giving wise advice, godly values, home cooked meals, enthusiastic support, a sense of humor, and unconditional love. I am forever grateful to you.

### **THOUGHTS ON TEACHING THANKFULNESS IN ALL THINGS – Mr. Jason Holstege**

One of the interesting things about being a junior high teacher is observing the "character" of each class as it has developed over the years. Sometimes a class is known for its friendliness, where everyone gets along and the year just sails by - and sometimes the opposite is true. There are quieter classes (rarer these days, for whatever reason), and there are chattier classes. Of course, the fact that a class has such a "character" obviously does not mean that everyone in the class has that kind of character, but there are definitely certain observable traits that differ from class to class.

Our current 8th grade has the honorable distinction of being the most verbally THANKFUL class I have ever had. Last year I was privileged to teach all of them in 3 sections of 7th grade science classes, and I would then see some of these students a few periods later in math class. No matter how brutally difficult were the science or math concepts that we covered that day, "thank you" was the word I heard as they went out the door. This year I have a group of them for 8th grade homeroom devotions in the morning, and when the application of God's Word to their situation is very direct and even comes with correction, then, you guessed it, "thank you" is their response at the end of the period.

Recently I asked my homeroom a few probing questions about why gratitude abounds so much among this class. While there is no doubt that many parents have taught this at home, many of these students mentioned an incident in the lower elementary grades where a couple students holding the doors open for dozens of their fellow students heard only one or two "thanks." Throw in a word fitly spoken to them at that time from an experienced teacher, and these students soon mastered the art of regularly and vocally giving thanks for the daily instruction they receive here at school.

Such a situation begs the question: if this class is so unique in its profusion of thanks, how can we all improve in this area

of our Christian life? After all, gratitude is the third thing we need to know in order to live and die happily according to the Heidelberg Catechism (question #2). This would indicate that gratitude is of the utmost importance in the Christian life.

Nancy Leigh DeMoss suggests in her book, *Choosing Gratitude*, that the attitude of gratitude must be actually cultivated and taught in our homes. Supported by an abundance of convicting Biblical and everyday examples, she provides six reasons for this necessary labor of "growing" gratitude in our homes and, by extension, our schools:

- **Grateful people are humble people** - but ingratitude reveals a proud heart.
- **Grateful hearts are God-centered (Psalm 116:12ff.) and conscious of others (Romans 12:1ff.)** - but ungrateful hearts are self-centered and overly self-conscious.
- **Grateful hearts are full hearts (Phil.4:18)** - but unthankful hearts are emptied easily.
- **Grateful people are easily contented** - but bitterness and discontent characterize ingratitude.
- **Grateful hearts are actively voiced in thankful words** - but murmuring, whining, and complaining are the soundtrack of ungrateful hearts.

All of which leads to DeMoss' sixth reason for being grateful: **grateful people are refreshing witnesses and mirrors of God's life-giving grace to them (Psalm 118:1&17)** - but ungrateful people pull others down into their selfish, demanding, unhappy ways. May the "refreshing witness" of our 8th graders remind us to glorify God each moment by giving thanks "*in every thing... for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*" (1 Thess. 5:18)

## BOOK REVIEW – Mr. Josh Moelker

### *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* by Jonathan Haidt

Jonathan Haidt is a social psychologist and author. In his book *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, Haidt examines the drastic decrease in mental health and increases in mental illnesses among adolescents in the 2010s.

Haidt traces the beginnings of this issue back well before the 2010s to a shift away from a play-based childhood. A play-based childhood is when “kids spend most of their free time playing with friends in the real world” (p. 53). Haidt argues that the most beneficial play for children is free play (which is controlled by the participants) that is physical, outdoors, and involves a small physical risk (p. 52). Such risks fall into six different categories: heights, high speed, dangerous tools, dangerous elements (like fire), rough and tumble, and disappearing (p. 77). By engaging in these activities, children are able to gain competence in managing new risks and confidence as they learn what they are capable of doing.

Haidt’s theory is that children are antifragile, a term coined by one of his colleagues that “describes things that *need* to be knocked over now and then to become strong” (p. 73). Free play, which provides all those little knockdowns that children need, is in decline. Haidt cites an increase in structured and adult supervised activities, fearful parenting, a culture of safetyism which is the idea that “‘safety’ trumps everything else, no matter how unlikely or trivial the potential danger” (p. 89), and smartphones which reduce other beneficial experiences for children. Smartphones have allowed what was once a play-based childhood to become a phone-based childhood which is not beneficial to developing children, but harmful in several ways.

One such harm is social deprivation. Smartphones allow members of Gen Z to be simultaneously connected to countless people around the world, but disconnected from people in their lives (p. 122). Interestingly enough, a graph of daily time spent with friends by age group shows that the decrease in time spent with friends among 15- to 24-year-olds during COVID in 2020 was no greater than the declining trend already occurring due to smartphones (p. 121).

The introduction of smartphones also resulted in sleep deprivation according to both correlational studies and experiments. Children and teenagers need a lot of sleep to be able to function and to develop properly. Many adolescents will sacrifice sleep time for scrolling time, leading to sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation is linked to a decrease in academic performance as well as increases in depression, aggression, and antisocial actions (p. 24-25).

Haidt also links smartphones to attention fragmentation. Notifications (192 alerts per day for the average teenager

according to one study) and the temptation to use phones can prevent anyone from giving their full attention to a task, but this is especially an issue for children and teenagers whose frontal cortices are not fully developed. For more on the relationship between smartphones and attention, see “Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One’s Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity” (Ward). I have heard from many parents about chats interfering with their child’s ability to focus on their schoolwork or play at home. Don’t think that just because your child doesn’t have a phone of their own that their attention isn’t being fragmented!

Finally, smartphones and social media can lead to addiction and overuse. This is not accidental, many of the apps used by teenagers (and you too!) were designed in a way to hook their users. Do you or your child feel “sadness, anxiety, and irritability” (p. 135) when separated from your phone, video game, or social media? If so, you are experiencing signs of withdrawal!

These harms are not exhaustive. Haidt focuses on specific harms to girls and boys. For girls, the social media aspect of smartphones is particularly damaging. This includes girls being more affected by comparing themselves to the lives and (often filtered) bodies of others on different apps (p. 154) as well as being preyed upon by adult strangers (p. 167). Boys are affected especially by addiction to both video games and pornography (which is now available almost anytime, anywhere, and at a limitless supply) (p. 189). Haidt points out that although Gen Z has had many physical “dangers” removed from their physical lives, they were allowed to enter a virtual world with almost no safeguards put in place.

Haidt proposes solutions to these problems. He encourages schools to become phone-free (I cannot even imagine teaching in a school that wasn’t) for the entire day (p. 249) and to improve recess by “giving kids more of it, on better playgrounds, with fewer rules” (p. 256). In his final chapter, he encourages parents of all ages to give their children “more (and better) experiences in the real world” and “less (and better) experience on screens” and offers explanations for what this means for children of different ages.

I would highly recommend reading this book. Not only was it an entertaining and informative book about a very relevant topic, but it made me take a serious look at my own phone usage, especially the example that I set for my children.

- Ward, Adrian F., et al. “Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One’s Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity.” *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2017, p. 15. *University of Chicago Press Journals*, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/691462>. Accessed 18 November 2024.

## **TO BE FORGIVEN – Miss Joyce Holstege**

It began with an unplanned stop in a little town nestled on the edge of the Ozark Mountains in Northwest Arkansas. Driving back to the interstate, we saw a sign: Farmer's Market...cue necessary stop. We walked through a little alley to a tucked away parking lot and grassy lawn filled with the typical booths loaded with fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, and baked goods.

But wait, payoff! There was a long, white church table filled with books. After making a beeline to the table, I started to sort through the books. The table was loaded with Christian books, mostly adult devotionals, but also, a few children's books. The people manning the booth welcomed us warmly and started a conversation about where we were from and what brought us to the area. After a short chat, they said, "Well, we hope you enjoy the books. Help yourself. Take as many as you like."

What? They were giving these books away? If you know anything about my sister and me, this was an invitation for celebration. We each picked one, but they encouraged us to take as many as we'd like. After verifying that the children's books were included in the offer, I chose one and handed one to my sister along with a look that said, 'this one is for me too'. These books were set aside for a few months before I realized what a gem they really were.

Each week, for devotions, I try to focus on one "classroom rule" for Godly living. We have already done Be Kind, Be Helpful, Be Gracious, Be a Servant, and others. About the first week of November, we started Be Forgiving. Being sorry and being forgiving is extremely hard for kindergartners (well, everyone for that matter). We started the week talking about Ephesians 4:32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Throughout the week we talked about forgiving one another and about how God has forgiven us. We talked about God's sacrifice of Jesus to pay for our sins and how we are so thankful to be forgiven. We even talked about how Jesus tells us to forgive 70 times 7 times. Yes, one student even knew that meant 490 times and I was excited to hear another little boy pipe up to say, "Hey, we read that in the Bible last night!"

At the end of the week, I pulled out one of the books from my little summer excursion. The book, *Eric Says Sorry* by Dai Hankey, is about a boy named Eric who kicks a soccer ball over a hedge onto his neighbor's potted pansies. As any child (and adult) can relate to, Eric tried to cover it up with one lie after another. Finally, after being confronted by his father he confesses and shows that he is sorry. His father and he go to the garden center to purchase a new pot and plant. Eric has no money, but his father says, "Don't worry I'll cover it for you." Eric was so thankful because he knew he didn't deserve this and that he should be the one to pay, but his father told him that it's called grace and continued to tell him about how God shows grace to us paying for our sins when we don't deserve it. The book finishes with the happiness and relief we feel when we know we are forgiven.

I am so thankful God led me to find this little treasure of a book and thankful for those who share the joy of their salvation in this way. It really helped to drive home the message of forgiveness and grace to my kindergartners. We'll continue to learn other Godly rules for living throughout the year and we'll often circle back to those rules that we've already learned. Please continue to pray for us as we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever" (II Peter 3:18).

(If you would like to hear this book read by the author you can find it on YouTube.)

## **THE SPACIOUS HEAVENS DECLARE GOD'S GLORY – Mr. Randy Kuiper**

"The spacious heavens declare the glory of our God, The firmament displays His handiwork abroad; Day unto day proclaims His might, and night His wisdom tells to night."

The words of David in Psalm 19, as versified in Psalter 37, have continually run through my mind this year. The spacious heavens that we behold with our eyes do declare God's magnificent glory. His handiwork has often been on display throughout the past months, starting with the solar eclipse last April and continuing with the ongoing peak of the

northern lights and multiple supermoons that have occurred of late. While many of us enjoy a breathtaking sunset on our favorite beach during the late nights of summer, God's handiwork during this current season does not disappoint, even if shorter days are not your preference. I enjoy beginning my day by watching the beautiful sunrise, as the first rays of sunlight paint the sky in hues of tangerine and red right outside my classroom door. Watching the sun descend so the sky is ignited in a palette of purples, pinks,

and golds is another marvel to behold. Staring out a window in the quietness of night to catch sight of the stars twinkling like diamonds, most noticeably the constellation Orion appearing as the darkness spreads over the Earth, is yet another reminder of God's glory.

I encourage you to marvel at the beauty and vastness of the sky that will forever declare the glory of God. Take a moment during your ride to school to truly look at the sunrise and remember that God's mercies are new each day. Use these early nights as an opportunity to head outside with your family and stare into the expansive, vast sky. Maybe you will catch a shooting star (with your eyes of course). Try to spot one of the many constellations or notice the brightness of the nearby planets. If another opportunity arises, head to a dark location to see the movement of the northern lights as they dance across the dark sky.

In Science class, my students have just begun their studies of our Solar System. This unit is quite different from the study of insects which we just completed, because it is hard to truly grasp the greatness of the spacious heavens surrounding us. The fact that the sun and most planets are actually *much* larger than Earth is hard for second graders to comprehend, as well as the realization that our solar system is just a small part of the galaxy in which we are located.

As we began this unit, my students were asked to write about what they already know (or think they know) about our solar system, as well as what they wondered about the solar system. Reading through their responses allowed me to gauge their previous knowledge of this topic, as well as know how I should guide my classroom discussion in upcoming lessons. Please enjoy reading their thoughts!

- I know that Pluto used to be a planet. I wonder what the rarest dwarf planet is. -Andrew Beelen
- I know that Jupiter is the fifth planet from the sun. I wonder why Saturn has a ring. -Tyson Butler
- I know that Jupiter is the biggest planet in space. I wonder what the Milky Way looks like. I wonder why Jupiter has a big red dot. -Logan Doezema
- I know that Uranus is the coldest planet in the solar system. I wonder why you cannot run on Saturn's rings because they are built of rock. I wonder if

comets are different from asteroids. -Marcus Dykstra

- I know that the sun is a star. I wonder why the moon is smaller than Earth. I wonder why Jupiter has a big spot. -Silas Dykstra
- I know we learned that the sun is not close to the Earth. I wonder what the name Mars means. I don't know why Saturn has a circle around it. I wonder why Jupiter is so colorful. I wonder why Uranus is blue. -Tinley Dykstra
- I know Venus is the second planet closest to the sun. I know that the moon is by the Earth. I wonder how big Jupiter is and why Jupiter has a spot. -Owen Gritters
- I know that the sun is the closest star to Earth. I wonder what is on the moon. -Isaac Karsemeyer
- I know that Mercury is the closest planet to the sun and I know that Jupiter is the biggest planet. I wonder how big Jupiter is and I wonder how big the solar system is. -Henry Korenstra
- I know that Jupiter is the biggest planet. I also know that Uranus is the coldest planet. I wonder why the moon is not a planet. I wonder what an asteroid is. -Carly Noorman
- I know that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, Genesis 1:1. I wonder what it is like in space. -Quinton Spriensma
- I know that planets circle the sun. I wonder why the moon is not a planet and I wonder if there are only eight planets in space. -Mila Start
- I know that Pluto is not a planet because it is too small to be a planet. I wonder what the red gases are for on Jupiter, but I know the red dot is the gases. -Nolan VanDyke
- I know that Uranus is the coldest planet in the solar system because of its gases, and I know that Uranus is blue. I know that Mercury is the closest planet to the sun. I wonder which planet is furthest from the sun. I wonder if Jupiter is the heaviest planet or not. -Arya Vermeer

### **THIRD GRADE RESEARCH – Miss Becca Gritters**

The third graders of 3A have been hard at work this fall on their first research project of the year. Every year we begin our research with a discussion of why it is important to learn how to research properly. We talk about research as a synonym for study. We read about our calling in II Timothy

2:15, urging us to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." God has commanded His people to get wisdom and understanding, and we do this by spending time in His Word, making it a priority in our lives. As children of

God, the ability to study the Scriptures is so important because God's Word is the foundation of all our knowledge. It is the inspired, infallible word of God as stated in II Timothy 3:16, 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Learning how to do research then on any topic comes with an understanding that we read all information that we gather in light of Scripture and with the knowledge that God has given us.

After this introduction, the long process of learning how to gather, collect, and organize information begins. This process too comes with instruction and guidelines. Students learn about the importance of finding information that is accurate and true. We talk about how it can be important to look at who the author of the information is, especially as Christians. Knowing that God's Word is always our standard of truth, if we read information that goes against truths we hear in Scripture, we discredit the information, no matter how knowledgeable the world thinks the author is. We talk about how we have so much available information to us and how it can be found in books, websites, videos, and many more places. Because the students are still young, all research they do in my class is with information that I have provided. This is also a good opportunity to talk to them about internet safety. So although we discuss online sources, at this time, all the research we do is gathered and printed by me with the knowledge of the places they will learn to gather information as they get older.

After we learn about information gathering, we move on to the collection and organization of our information. Here students learn about the importance of gathering information that is true, and we discuss how we must not plagiarize and steal the information of others. To help with this, after we decide on our topic, we write questions that we want to find answers to in our research. For this project, our topics were Protestant Reformers. Students used what they know about the reformers and the Reformation to write a list of questions they want to learn about their specific reformer.

To help each other with research, students worked in small groups on the same reformer. We used *Portrait of Faithful Saints* by Herman Hanko and other literature on the Reformation to answer our questions. Students then took their research and used them to write a paragraph about their reformer. The final step of our research was to type up our paragraphs on computers.

Students worked very hard on their first research project, so I am sharing them with you! They will continue to grow in their ability to do research, and our next big research project of the year will be a report on a state that they will share at the annual 3rd Grade State Parade!

- Johannes Gutenberg was born in Mainz on February 3, 1393. He had two siblings. He lived in

Mainz his whole life. He was 47 years old when he started the printing press. The date was 1440. He did not marry anyone. He had no children because he did not get married. We do not know how he died. He printed about 200 books.

*Aleida VanOverloop*

- John Gutenberg was born in Mainz in 1393. He had two siblings. He lived in Mainz. He made a printing press. He was 47 when he made the printing press in 1440. He made about 200 books. He did not get married.

*Skyler Karsemeyer*

- John Gutenberg was born in 1393. He lived in Mainz. John Gutenberg had two siblings. John Gutenberg made a printing press. He was 47 when he made the printing press. He did not marry anyone, so he did not have any children. John Gutenberg made 200 books! One of the books he printed was the Bible.

*Kate VanPutten*

- John Wycliffe was born in 1324 in England. He lived in a village called Ipreswel. His mom and dad were very poor. When he was young, the Roman Catholic church was very strong. When he was about 20, there was a plague called the Black Death in England. A short time later he became a minister. He preached against the Roman Catholic Church. He preached not to worship saints. His greatest work was when he translated the Bible into English. When he was 60, he became paralyzed from his waist down. Soon he died at the age of 60.

*Anderson Rau*

- John Wycliffe was in the country of England. He lived from 1324-1384. Wycliffe was called the Morning Star. He was a minister in his country. On February 19, 1377, two old men came to John's house and brought John some news that there were some false teachings against him. People wanted him in jail. The Roman Catholic Church was angry with John. They wanted him to be put to death. He died of a stroke. 43 years after he died, the church dug up John's bones and burned them.

*Tannor Zwak*

- John Knox was born sometime during the year 1505. He lived in the small town of Gifford of East Lotham. He was a priest for the Romish Church of clergyman, and he also got married. He wrote a book. He was never a monk, but he was a priest. He then died from old age. He was 62 years old when he died. He died from old age.

*Brecken Glass*

- Guido deBres was born in Mons in 1522. Catherine Ramon married Guido in 1559. Sadly their life together would only last 8 years. Edward the sixth was king in Guido's time. He had to go to prison. 8 years after Guido and Catherine got married, Guido was forced to climb a ladder with a rope around his neck. He was pulled off the ladder and died. He

died on May 31 at the age of 47 in 1567. Guido wrote the Belgic Confession. He was a minister.

*Trenton Holstege*

- Thomas Cranmer was born in England. He fought against the pope (or minister) and the Roman Catholic church. He wrote the book of Common Prayer. He was a preacher. Thomas Cranmer had a wife, but she died due to childbirth. He had no family. He had tried to follow God's teachings, and he did serve God. Thomas Cranmer died in 1556. He was 67 years old when he died – that's old! He died because he was burned at the stake.

*Rae Kamminga*

- Caspar Olevianus was born in Trier. On August 10, 1559, he could have preached his first sermon, but he did not. When he was 38, he got married and had one son. He was not a monk. He wrote the Heidelberg Catechism. He decided to write the Heidelberg Catechism so that teachers and ministers could teach it. He died when he was 55. He died from a sickness.

*Allison DeBeor*

- Zacharias Ursinus was born in 1534. He helped write the Heidelberg Catechism. The Heidelberg Catechism came out in 1563. His church life was hard. He died in 1583. He was 49 years old.

*Isaiah Kamps*

- Frederik was born on February 14, 1515, and he had six siblings. He died when he was sixty -one years old in 1576. He wrote the Heidelberg Catechism because he wanted teachers and preachers to teach the Bible better. His job was to write the Heidelberg Catechism with Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevian.

*Easton Noorman*

- William Tyndale was born in 1494. When he was in college, he learned many languages like Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, Italian, English and German. He was not a monk. William went to London in 1523 to seek permission from Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall so that he could translate the Bible into English, but Tunstall did not let him. William went to a London merchant and went to Germany in 1524. He was not very rich and had to run away a lot. In 1525, he moved to Germany and started preaching the New Testament. William was betrayed and he had to run to Worms. William was burned on the stake when he was 42 in 1536.

*Milo Zuverink*

- William Tyndale was born in 1494 and lived to 1536. He lived in England, and then he moved to Germany to go to school. When he went to school he learned many languages like French, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Italian, and Spanish. He went to Germany to write the New Testament in English. The school was called Magdalen Hall. He never got married. He became a Roman Catholic preacher.

He got the people to worship by putting the Old Testament along with the New Testament. They knew he was telling the truth because they knew the Bible was telling the truth. Then later on he went into prison for 500 days. Then he was charged with heresy and was commanded to die on a stake. On the morning of October 6, he died. His last words were, "LORD, open the eyes of England."

*Jessa Hassevoort*

- John Calvin was born on July 10, 1509. He was born in the city of France. He was one of the second of three or four brothers. He wrote the Institutes of the Christian Religion. On his way to Brazel, he got robbed and now he had no money or horse. People hated him so much that they named their dogs Calvin to show how much they hated him. Later, he went to Paris to study at the church. Calvin started preaching from the exact same text where he left off more than three years earlier. He died at the age of 55 in May 1564.

*Maggie Uittenbogaard*

- Once a long time ago there was a man named John Calvin. John Calvin was born on July 10, 1509. He was the second oldest of three or four brothers. He did not write anything in the Bible, but he did write something else. He wrote the Institutes of the Christian Religion. John was not a monk. He is a part of the Reformation because he fought against the lies of the church. John died because he could not breathe well. John got robbed and did not have money or a horse. Some people named their dogs Calvin to despise the Reformers.
- Ulrich Zwingli lived from 1484-1531. He was a pastor and theologian. He lived in Switzerland. He had two sisters and six brothers. He married and had 4 children. Ulrich Zwingli was friends with Martin Luther. He died in battle.
- Martin Luther had a big family. He had six kids and one wife. Martin Luther was a monk. He spoke to the people about Jesus, and said that when they die they will not go to purgatory, a burning pit.

*Molly Kamps*

- Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483. He liked studies. He had seven children. He spoke German. He nailed the 95 Theses. He was a monk. Martin Luther's wife name was Margaritha. He was hit by a strong storm. In 1505 he entered his final course of studies.
- Back in 1438, Martin Luther was born. He was born in the town of Eisleben in Central Germany. Martin Luther had four sisters and one brother. His brother's name was Jacob. Jacob was Martin Luther's favorite. Martin Luther had a lot of friends. These are some of his friends: Philipp, Frederik, the wise, and Lucas Cranach. When he got older, a storm hit. He prayed to the saints that he promised

*Deacon Schut*

to be a monk. Martin Luther began to preach when he was about 38 years old. Martin Luther preached in multiple churches. The two places he mostly preached were Wittenberg and Leipzig. He preached that the Catholic Church was wrong and God was the one and only true God. He spoke Latin and German. He wrote the small and large catechisms, and he wrote the 95 Theses.

*Ainsley Doezema*

- John Hus was born in 1372. He liked to preach. He is not a monk. He died in 1415. He got married. His last words were, "You are going to burn a goose, but in one hundred years you will have a swan which not you can neither roast or boil."

*Evan Brands*

### **SUMMER VACATION TIME! – Mrs. Sue Bleyenburg**

I have the privilege of going into numerous classrooms at Heritage. I see many different teachers and 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in a day. I was able to share what I did during summer break with the students. I also read them a book that I love, "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" by Mark Teague. I gave the students the option to write a fiction or non-fiction story. I'm sharing a few of the students' summer vacation adventures with you.

- Jessalyn Pipe - This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went to Outer Banks in South Carolina with the Heyboers. Every day we would go to the beach and build sandcastles. We swam in the water with little waves and felt the nice water every day. There were lots of shells in the water. We would go body surfing and swim way out in the water. Then we would dry off and go in the back yard and find shells to keep. After Outer Banks we went to Michigan Adventure with our cousins from Colorado. We went to the waterpark at Michigan Adventure and went on a lot of rides. My summer vacation was so fun!
- Kinsley Wassink – I spent some of my summer in the state of Wyoming. We went to Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, and we stayed in Jackson Hole. We went to a gun-off (a rodeo with guns). We also hiked to Jenny Lake. We went to two coffee shops, the Branding Iron and Snake River. We went to restaurants, Gig's Pizza and Side Winders. We went for ice cream at a place which was called MooMoos. We also went to a rodeo and I chased sheep there. That was my summer vacation!!!
- Emily Visser – This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went camping a lot. First I went to Muskegon State Park. It was very fun to go with the DAV group, that is the Dykstras, Aalsmas, Vissers. At Muskegon State Park there's a lot of hidden trails and there is a spot we love to go to at the beach because there's a big sand dune. Then we climb up it and we play up there, and then we run back down. Sometimes we go out to town and see the many shops. Then we sometimes get books from the book box.
- Jonny Horvat – This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went camping at Whiskey Creek Campground. I went on my friend's quad, played football, and snorkeled with the Schippers, VanderKolks, Coles, and Boverhofs. We ate popcorn at our fire and we had an amazing time.
- Jasper VanderKolk – This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went to Washington D.C. and the Outer Banks. I went to Lake Michigan with my cousins. I had a great summer!
- Logan Holstege – This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went camping at Burt Lake State Park, to Hungry House with Grayson, and I went to Cranhill Bible Camp. Then I went to Pentwater and played whiffle ball. I went to my favorite campground at Leelanau State Park where I went fishing and tubing. And I went to Fishtown, MI. It was so fun!
- Keturah Koops – This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went to Colorado and I went swimming. I got to see my cousins, we bought some taffy and got to go out to eat. We went to the park and we went shopping. My cousins have two dogs, Cooper and Cody. We had basketball camp and we had a water fight!
- Ally Crossen – This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went camping up north and we went with our van. We went across the Mackinac Bridge. We went to Gogebic State Park. We bought lots of candy because there was a candy store. The drive was 12 hours long. We also went to see some waterfalls. We swam in one of them. They are the Judson Falls. We went hiking and fishing on our boat and we caught two long strings full of panfish. We jumped off and went tubing with my baby sister. That was my summer.
- Kenzie Kooienga – This is how I spent my summer vacation. I went camping with all my friends and we got to buy candy from the candy store. We also got to go to the U.P. We stayed in a really nice cabin. The nicest cabin I have ever stayed in. We rented a boat and saw Pictured Rocks. We jumped off a cliff at Pictured Rocks. The water there is also very

clear. I also went to California. It was my ten-year trip from my grandpa and grandma. We went to Seaworld and also my great grandmas. We stayed in a very nice hotel. The trip was so fun! It was one of my birthday presents. We also flew there. That is how I spent my summer vacation.

- Lincoln VanderSchaaf – This is how I spent my summer vacation. Our parents took us to the Conference Grounds with our cousins for a week. Then we went to Lake Mitchell with my older sister's boyfriend. Then my parents took the two oldest to Italy and I got to go to my friend's and cousin's house. That is how I spent my summer.
- Sam Kuiper – How I spent my summer vacation. This summer my grandpa and grandma Kuiper took our family boating. We went to Muskegon and went to the sand dunes. We took beach toys, towels, and our lunches and camped out for the day. We swam and played with my brother Jase. It was a beautiful sunny summer day. We built a very cool sandcastle for most of the day. After the beach we went to Docker's for dinner. After dinner we watched the sunset and that was a very great summer day!
- Bentley VanOverloop – This summer was so much fun! I swam in a bunch of pools and stayed up really late, played fortnite, and went to friends' houses.

But most of all, I loved playing baseball. I played the regular season, then playoffs, we did not win though. Then I made the All-Star team. The first game we played Hudsonville and we won 7-3. Then next game we played Byron, the team that made it to state last year, and we beat them 1-0 in the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning. We play 6 innings. The next game we played Southern and lost 7-0. Then we played Byron again and won 5-0. After that we played Southern again and lost 7-3. So we were out. That's my summer!

- Cameron Boverhof – This summer I went to Alaska to start a lumber mill or gold mine so I bought a large piece of land. On it was a river with trees so I panned for gold and found some then bought a chainsaw and cut down some trees. While I was cutting trees, a bear came and chased me so I shot it. It was bear season so I was able to have it stuffed. Then I built a wood mill and started to sell wood and lumber and found some more gold. And that's my summer – so did anybody else find gold?

### ***INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTSMANSHIP – Mr. Doug DeBoer***

Sportsmanship: The qualities and conduct befitting a sportsman.

Wow, I thought, that doesn't tell me a whole bunch. So I looked in the dictionary some more.

Sportsman: One who abides by rules and accepts victory or defeat graciously.

Not a great deal of that exhibited in today's sports world... The professional and college games are often displays of words, gestures, and attitudes by coaches, players, and fans that are anything but sportsmanlike. Throwing garbage and bottles onto the field in disagreement with officials is only one example. Plus, we at Heritage have an additional duty of showing ourselves to be those who belong to Christ. Moreover, there are times when competitive sports tend to reveal character more than build character. Thus the challenge in interscholastic sports to walk as God's children is a difficult one.

I believe that we can divide ourselves into four groups as we consider this challenge: athletic director, coach, player, and spectator. This listing is in alphabetical order, but could also be considered the order of responsibility.

The athletic director must insist that our behavior is paramount. It must not only be realized in theory but also

insisted upon in practice. If it is not ( I know that our current A.D. has not always been insistent enough) then our coaches, players, and fans will run into times that we do not meet the challenge as fully as we should.

The coach indeed has a critical role in this work. One article I read called him, "the standard bearer of sportsmanship". Based on the behavior of the coach, each contest we participate in can either be one which is educational or one that is simply played for the sake of winning. The coach can have tremendous influence on both player and spectator by their actions. A coach, by exhibiting self- control and decorum, signals proper behavior to all; whereas improper actions often incite either player or spectator (or both) to act improperly.

The player to a large extent will simply mirror the coach. Many a player does not need this reflection because they have learned from their home and others that how you play is more important than the score or your athletic performance. Those players who at times, in the throes of competition, fail to act properly can be reminded by an A.D., coach, or parent what is required of him or her as a student at Heritage Christian School. We carry the name of Christ in each and every game regardless of our athletic performance.



What about the spectators? Who and what are they watching? Important to remember that it's our children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews playing a game. A game. Do fans at our games stand up and yell and make negative comments about the reffing, coaching, and playing ability of those involved? Maybe they stay seated and do it, or maybe they do it when they get home. Hopefully we keep our comments positive and encouraging, and also keep in mind what others might see of us if they were watching us at our job.

As athletic director, coaches, players, and spectators, let's be a beacon in the world of athletics. It is sometimes pretty dark out there. In the forty years that our school has existed (did

you know this was our 40<sup>th</sup> year?) I have witnessed our school be a bright light for sportsmanship. The positive examples I could give over that time are many; however, I have also witnessed times when we didn't do as well as we should, or times when we were poor sports and bad examples. Let's renew our effort to show that we are Heritage Christian School in each and every game and in each and every sport. Let us remember and remind our children and one another what name is on our shirts, even if it is in the middle of a game.

## **REMAINING 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**

**November 28 and 29, 2024** - Thanksgiving Break

**December 21, 2024 - January 5, 2025** - Christmas Break

**January 29 and 30, 2025** – Parent/Teacher Conferences

**January 13-16, 2025** – MAP Testing grades 3-8

**January 17, 2025** – Professional Development Day – no school

**January 29-30, 2025** – Parent Teacher Conferences

**February 7, 2025** – Fearfully & Wonderfully Made Day

**February 13, 2025** – Band & Choir Concert (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades)

**February 19, 2025** – Band Festival at CCHS

**February 21, 2025** – Mid Winter Break

**April 4-11, 2025** – Spring Break

**April 25, 2025** – Kindergarten Program

**May 5-9, 2025** – MAP Testing grades 3-8

**May 7, 2025** – Elementary Music Program (in the afternoon with 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grades)

**May 13, 2025** – Band & Choir Concert (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades)

**May 19, 2025** – All Schools Band Concert (6-8<sup>th</sup> grade band)

**May 26, 2025** – Memorial Day (no school)

**May 28, 2025** – Last day of school (1/2 day) and Graduation

## **2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**

**August 25, 2025** - Open house 9:00-12:00

**August 26, 2025** - School begins

**August 29 and September 1, 2025** - Labor Day Break

**October 16 - 17, 2025** - Teachers Convention

**November 27 - 28, 2025** - Thanksgiving Break

**December 24, 2025 - January 4, 2026** - Christmas Break

**February 20, 2026** - Mid-winter break

**April 3-10, 2026** - Spring Break

**May 28, 2026** - Graduation