



HIGHLIGHTS

Spring Issue

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March 2017



"For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

- Isaiah 61:11

FATHER'S PROMISES

Mr. Ron Koole, Principal

The Reformed Free Publishing Association (RFPA) recently published a significant book entitled, *The Reformed Baptism Form – A Commentary*. This book is authored by Bastiaan Wielenga, a prominent Dutch minister. The 1st edition was published in Dutch in 1906 and only recently has been translated into English by Annemie Godbehere, a French woman who was fluent in French, Dutch, and English. She came into contact with the PRC and RFPA through the British Reformed Fellowship. She finished translating this book on her death bed and never saw it come into English print. Prof. D. Engelsma is the editor who added informative footnotes throughout the commentary.

There are critics of the Reformed Churches' use and high estimation of her "forms", including the Three Forms of Unity. They see a "form" as dry, cold, and mechanical (not the gospel they say, and not inspired). Wielenga says about those who bring such criticisms: "The forms are only dry and cold to those who do not see them as the fruit of God guiding His people. They are only cold to those who do not understand their content" (pg. 2).

What about our estimation of the Reformed Churches forms? And what of the Baptism Form? Do we recognize the beauty of the language and truth contained and explained in the Baptism Form? It is often true that the beauty of something can be diminished because it becomes so familiar after we hear or see it so often. Familiarity can dull the senses (physically and spiritually). This is a real danger I confess in my own life and with the Baptism Form too. Wielenga's book has opened, or re-opened, my eyes to the beauty of the language and the deeply biblical nature of the form. The holy scriptures speak so loudly and clearly through the form. In Wielenga's words, "The compilers did not deliberately attempt to make it beautiful, but with a holy zeal endeavored to make scripture speak through them. Therefore, a glow of newness keeps shining, which the centuries cannot dim. Note the references to the profound promises that the triune God seals for the child! It seems as if scripture's most exquisite pearls are read together in one strand. What a climax! How bold this lofty ascent from high to higher: *until we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal.*" (pg. 5-6)

Baptism occupies such an important place in the church because it is one of the two sacraments given by God for the church as a means of grace, and as a sign and seal of the washing away of sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The sacrament of baptism is at the heart and starting point of the churches' visible manifestation. It is a sign of God's covenant with the elect children of God and we as teachers are called to instruct elect children who have been incorporated into God's covenant of grace.

At baptism the church stands on guard. Say what you believe baptism means, and one can tell what you think of Christ, the covenant, and the church. The first part of the baptism form contains an explanation of the doctrines of holy baptism. This part is divided into three articles – misery, deliverance, and gratitude (you recognize that division).

I draw your attention to a subsection of that second part on deliverance. This section lists promises of the triune God and unfolds the blessings of baptism. Because holy baptism witnesses and seals to us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ, therefore we are

baptized in the name of the Father...Let me focus on the three promises that baptism seals in the name of the Father.

First, the Father “makes an eternal covenant of grace with us.” Think of the beauty and wonder of this promise. Every word is important. The promise centers on a covenant. We have had opportunity in our teachers’ meetings to talk about this wonderful relationship of friendship that God makes with those (sinners) who are washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. It is an eternal covenant. God has established this covenant in His eternal counsel with Jesus Christ and all those who are in Him. This connects the covenant to election. Baptism is a fruit of this eternal covenant and a seal of this covenant with believers and their seed. As members of the church (covenant), our children ought to be baptized. It is an eternal covenant of grace. Because this covenant is established in Christ with sinners, the source of this covenant is grace. Salvation is all of grace. God the Father witnesses and seals this covenant by baptism, providing the children of God the highest possible confidence concerning the genuineness of the content.

Secondly, God the Father “adopts us for His children and heirs”. The fruit of this eternal covenant of grace is that we and our children are adopted into the family of God. How amazing is that! Those who were children of wrath and enemies of God are God’s children who receive the rights and blessings of God’s children, out of God’s sovereignly free compassion. Baptism seals that the child is recreated by God and bears the divine image so that he shows the Father’s resemblance. That child may pray “Our (my) Father which art in heaven...” This inheritance is God himself. Psalm 16:5, “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.” Spiritually rich beyond compare now and in the future when the full extent of that inheritance is realized.

Thirdly, the Father declares and seals in baptism that He will “also provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit.” Because we are the adopted children of God, God desires to show us His fatherly love and goodness already in this life. The same God who created all good provides his covenantally adopted children with every good thing. This good is often different than our judgement of good. It is that which the mind of God approves of as good and that which serves the purpose for which it was created. The baptism form is not a theoretical piece of art, but a lively expression of faith by God’s struggling people. Clearly, evils will come. Scriptures give us examples through Jacob’s testimony “few and evil have the years of my life been.” Joseph experienced this at the hands of his brothers, and Paul testified that “all things”, work together for good to them that love God. Evil averted or turned to our profit.

What a wealth of promise and hope for God’s children, and all of this from only a few lines of a rich Baptism Form. And the children we teach have been baptized! They must be piously and religiously educated to the utmost of our power.



SCHOOL BOARD NEWS



EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Dick Kuiper, Chairman
Aaron Cleveland, Jeff Kalsbeek, Joel Langerak

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

At our January Education Committee meeting we interviewed our administrator, Mr. Ron Koole. Ron expressed his appreciation for the relationship he shares with the Board and values the open line of communication. He has been pleased with the performance and demeanor of the staff, their participation at staff meetings, and their interaction with each other and with him, all of which make for an enjoyable work environment. Our committee encouraged Ron in his leadership role here at Hope School and expressed our appreciation for his faithful labors.

On two nights in January we held our annual interviews with our entire teaching staff. Each member of the staff expressed that they strive to apply the truth of God’s Word in each of their courses on a daily basis. They expressed their appreciation for the continued support and cooperation among the staff, administrator, parents, and Board. As a committee we expressed our appreciation for the faithful labors of our teachers with our covenant children.

The Board encourages our teachers to attend educational seminars and workshops for professional development. Mrs. Deb Kuiper and Mrs. Mindy Bleyenbergh plan to attend a music conference on Saturday, April 22. Mr. Matt Elzinga attended the Michigan Music Conference, a two day conference held in January, and Mrs. Sue Grasman recently attended a day long “Math in Action” conference at Grand Valley State University.

Part of the work of our committee is oversight of the school library. We want to express a word of thanks to our librarian, Mrs. Chris VanDenTop, for her continued fine work. Chris reports that, on average, there are about 700 books checked out at any one time. She also reports that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find new books and series that are appropriate for a Christian school library. She welcomes suggestions from parents and supporters of our school for material that would be suitable for use in our library.

We recently approved the purchase of new Geography books to be used by our 7th and 8th grade non-band students. These books are published by Bob Jones University and for the most part we were pleased with their biblical content and creation perspective.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all those who volunteer their time and abilities for our Motor Movement and Reading Together programs, and also want to thank Mrs. Deb Kuiper and Mrs. Jill Reitsma for their work in our Discovery Program. We are thankful for the positive fruit that we see from the early intervention provided for students who experience academic challenges or learning disabilities.

May God continue to bless the cause of covenant, Christian education as it is carried out here at Hope School, and may He continue to use this school as an aid to godly parents in the rearing of their covenant children in the fear of His name. *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.....”* Deuteronomy 6:6,7a

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Dan Boeve, Chairman
Jon Rutgers, Jason Engelsma

We would like to thank all those involved with bus transportation this year. Drivers have safely transported our children every day to school and back, in addition to field trips and special events. Tom Oosterhouse, Philip Rainey, and Jen Kalsbeek have been driving most of the daily routes. Dan Kalsbeek, James Haveman, and Trevor Kalsbeek have been filling in where needed. Our Transportation Supervisor, Dan Kalsbeek, has been doing a great job scheduling drivers and keeping the buses running.

We will be bringing a proposal to the School Board and the Society to purchase a new bus this summer. We will use it to replace bus #13 which was purchased new in 2006. It has around 150,000 miles and is showing its age both on the surface and in maintenance issues. We are proposing a new Blue Bird gasoline powered, 65 passenger bus from Holland Bus Company. This is the same size as the International diesel buses we have purchased in the past. Blue Bird was recommended to us due to their durability and ruggedness. Switching to a gasoline powered bus was recommended because of its reliability and efficiency. We will have enough money in the Bus Depreciation Fund to purchase the bus this summer.

Last year, the School Board adopted a 9 year replacement schedule for our buses. The proposed budget will add enough to the Bus Depreciation Fund that we can purchase a new bus outright every 3 years. Newer buses should improve reliability and reduce maintenance costs. We will continue to operate 3 buses on the same routes to meet the transportation needs of our school.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Steve Lotterman, Chairman
Dan Boeve, Andy Bylsma, Jon Rutgers

The Finance Committee continues to meet every month, counting and recording all of the income that came in over the past month. This issue of the *Highlights* contains a summary of this information in our most recent Financial Statement. This end of February Income Statement is the 8th report out of 12, therefore our goal would be to see that expenses and revenue are about 67% of the annual budget. The bottom line shows our income at 72% of budget, and our expenses at 63% of budget.

We will be starting the spring deficit drive shortly. The drive amount collected through February is \$160,304.00, which is 58% of this budgeted amount, over half of our yearly goal. Over 25% of the school's income comes from the deficit drives and it is important to collect this money in order to maintain a balanced budget.

We would like to remind all tuition-paying families that their last tuition payment should be made in May. All tuition should be paid by June 1. We have emailed tuition statements every month, shortly after our Finance Committee meeting. Please review your statement closely to make sure that you are on track to have your last tuition payment in the office before the 1st of June.

We are very thankful that the financial picture for Hope School remains sound, and we thank God for the means to support our schools.

**HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
INCOME STATEMENT
FEBRUARY 2017**

	YEAR TO DATE	PERCENT TO BUDGET 8/12 - 66%	ANNUAL BUDGET
INCOME			
CHURCH COLLECTIONS	28,643.66	0.61	47,000.00
GIFTS & PLEDGES	160,304.00	0.58	275,000.00
HOPE FOUNDATION	9,000.00	0.50	18,000.00
GYM RENTAL	5,165.00	1.12	4,600.00
SPECIAL ED SOCIETY	5,814.12	0.75	7,750.00
TUITION	555,845.14	0.78	713,580.00
BUS FEES	22,416.60	0.78	28,800.00
MISCELLANEOUS	200.00	-	-
TOTAL INCOME:	787,388.52	0.72	1,094,730.00

GENERAL EXPENSES			
ACCOUNTING FEES	2,340.00	0.66	3,540.00
BAND EXPENSE	2,000.00	1.00	2,000.00
CLASS TRIP FUND	2,500.00	1.00	2,500.00
EDUCATIONAL SUPPLIES AND BOOKS	19,800.00	0.87	22,800.00
BUILDING AND GROUNDS FUND	16,666.64	0.67	25,000.00
ELIM CHRISTIAN SERVICES	320.00	0.24	1,350.00
FEDERATION DUES	1,249.60	1.25	1,000.00
INSURANCE, GENERAL	4,684.50	0.50	9,350.00
INSURANCE, GROUP	58,605.09	0.59	100,115.00
INSURANCE, WORKERS COMP	1,594.00	0.51	3,100.00
INSURANCE, HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT	2,666.64	0.67	4,000.00
JANITORIAL SUPPLIES	2,789.35	0.70	4,000.00
LIBRARY FUND	1,000.00	1.00	1,000.00
MISCELLANEOUS	616.98	0.25	2,500.00
BUILDING MORTGAGE PAYMENT	34,201.10	0.46	75,000.00
LONG RANGE BUILDING FUND	10,970.00	0.67	16,455.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES	802.01	0.67	1,200.00
PAYROLL, ART TEACHER	-	-	2,000.00
PAYROLL, BAND	4,530.19	0.61	7,400.00
PAYROLL, BUILDING MAINTENANCE	1,287.00	0.92	1,400.00
PAYROLL, CHOIR	1,657.37	0.33	4,975.00
PAYROLL, DISCOVERY ROOM	29,041.68	0.64	45,600.00
PAYROLL, JANITOR	19,001.60	0.67	28,500.00
PAYROLL, LAWN MAINTENANCE	1,547.31	0.86	1,800.00
PAYROLL, LIBRARIAN	2,128.51	0.50	4,265.00
PAYROLL, OFFICE	17,661.25	0.68	26,000.00
PAYROLL, SUBSTITUTE TEACHER	190.00	0.10	2,000.00
PAYROLL, TEACHER	307,724.92	0.66	464,100.00
PAYROLL, TEACHER AIDE	7,676.62	0.85	9,000.00
PAYROLL, TECHNOLOGY MAINTENANCE	880.00	0.25	3,500.00
PAYROLL TAXES	28,045.47	0.61	46,000.00
RETIREMENT PLAN	8,548.30	0.56	15,300.00
PHYS ED UNIFORMS	623.25	0.69	900.00
REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	6,688.33	0.74	9,000.00
SNOW REMOVAL	2,384.97	0.79	3,000.00
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT	1,000.00	1.00	1,000.00
TEACHER CLASSROOM FUND	2,800.00	1.00	2,800.00
TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIES	5,000.00	1.00	5,000.00
UTILITIES, ELECTRIC	12,641.59	0.67	19,000.00
UTILITIES, GAS	5,405.39	0.42	13,000.00
UTILITIES, TELEPHONE	1,061.89	0.66	1,600.00
UTILITIES, TRASH	1,290.32	0.76	1,700.00
UTILITIES, WATER & SEWER	782.27	0.52	1,500.00
CONTINGENCY	-	-	5,000.00
TOTAL GENERAL EXPENSES:	632,404.14	0.63	1,000,250.00

BUS EXPENSES			
BUS DEPRECIATION FUND	17,800.00	0.67	26,700.00
BUS DRIVER COST SUBSIDY	615.41	0.41	1,500.00
BUS DRIVER PAYROLL	20,178.00	0.65	31,000.00
BUS DRIVER PAYROLL TAXES	1,510.00	0.65	2,330.00
BUS DRIVER WORKER'S COMP	-	-	1,000.00
BUS INSURANCE	1,472.00	0.49	3,000.00
BUS REPAIR	7,438.59	0.59	12,700.00
GAS AND OIL	6,194.20	0.41	15,000.00
TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR	1,250.00	1.00	1,250.00
TOTAL BUS EXPENSES:	56,458.20	0.60	94,480.00
TOTAL EXPENSES:	688,862.34	0.63	1,094,730.00
GAIN OR (LOSS):	98,526.18		

STAFF & STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS

YOU WANT ME TO READ WHAT?

Mrs. Jill Reitsma, Discovery Center

*'Twas brillig, and the slithy tores
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.*

By the time most of us first read Lewis Carroll's poem, "Jabberwocky" we were fluent readers. However, I am sure you could recall a feeling of uncomfortableness when trying to read the nonsense words in this poem. You were having the same experience that many beginning readers have when they see words for the first time. Phonics instruction supplies learners with strategies for attacking unfamiliar words. Research has shown that using nonsense words in phonics instruction can increase a student's ability to read words with accuracy and automaticity.

How often have you seen a child just stop reading when they come to a word they don't recognize? Students who have had practice decoding words that they clearly know to be nonsense words, transfer the same word attack skills to real words. These skills allow them to use the context of a sentence to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words rather than over-relying on context to decode words.

Another reason for including nonsense words as part of phonics instruction is to make sure that students can decode words that are not in their vocabularies. Beginning and struggling readers need to understand that they do not have to know the meaning of every word they read. They need to be confident that when they encounter an unfamiliar word, they can decode it, even if it has no meaning to them. This also helps them break the habit of guessing at words.

To decode nonsense words accurately, readers must apply an understanding of phonics patterns for letters or letter clusters. That means the reader cannot use meaning or visual memory to read nonsense words. Therefore, reading nonsense words may uncover decoding deficits that are not evident when students read grade-level word lists or other real words. An example: a student who can decode the nonsense words *e*, *las*, and *tic* can read the word *elastic*, even if it is unfamiliar. How about *mul*, *ti*, *pli*, *ca*, and *tion*, this becomes the word multiplication.

When using nonsense words, make sure that you clearly tell students they are not real. Explain that these words do not make sense or have no real meaning. Use nonsense words responsibly. The majority of words used in phonics instruction should be real words. Our Discovery room uses the DIBELS testing in the lower grades. Part of this testing involves nonsense words. The students' first look on their faces when they see this list of words is one of fear, until we tell them these are make-believe words and not real. Then the tension is gone and smiles appear on their faces!

So go ahead, pick up a copy of the poem "Jabberwocky" and try it. Hopefully a smile will appear on your face! I will leave you with a quote from Dr. Seuss (one of my favorites) "I like nonsense- it wakes up the brain cells".

SO, THEN, WRITE ON!

Mrs. Sue Grasman, 1st Grade

Martin Luther once wrote “If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write!” The great reformer, true to his own advice, did indeed pick up his pen, write, and proceed to change the world. Luther recognized the power of the written word and with his pen he communicated priceless ideas about government and church reform. With help and thanks to Gutenberg’s printing press, Luther was able to print the first German New Testament and teach people to read and memorize verses as songs. His beliefs, published with pen and ink, brought out grave errors within the Roman Catholic Church and initiated the great Protestant Reformation of 1517. By the grace of God, despite enduring years of Inquisitions, councils, edicts, threats to his and his follower’s lives, and the banning of his books, Luther kept on using his pen. He truly understood the power of the written word, and always used it for the good of the church.

The pen, once referred to as mightier than the sword, is no less powerful today, and our children must be taught how to write properly and effectively. Classroom writing remains an essential part of educating students of all ages, and providing adequate time for students to write is an essential element of an effective writing instruction program. Students need dedicated instruction time to learn the skills and strategies necessary to become effective writers, as well as time to practice what they have learned. Time for writing practice helps students to gain confidence in their writing abilities, and as teachers observe the way students write, they can identify difficulties that may become apparent and also assist students with learning and applying the writing process.

The following are five reasons why classroom writing is still a must, even in 2017:

1. Writing improves communication skills.

Writing provides a means of expression and communication. No matter the age level, diligent writing practice will boost a student’s skill and comfort level with revealing and relating their own thoughts and feelings.

2. Writing helps students review and remember recently learned material.

It is always easier to remember a household task if we write it down. A brief writing assignment at the end of class, focusing on the day’s lesson is a great way to reinforce the material and support long-term recall as well as helping to build writing skills at the same time.

3. Writing helps the teacher to assess student learning.

Probably the most common use of writing in the classroom is for a student to demonstrate that he or she knows and understands a certain concept. Whether the assignment is in secondary or primary grades, writing helps the teacher see what materials the students have mastered and where there may be gaps.

4. Writing encourages creativity and exploration.

Daily writing encourages creative juices that can help students use their imaginations, explore possibilities, delve into problem solving, and engage in storytelling. In addition to “serious” writing assignments which are graded, it is important to assign “free” or “creative” writing time, so that students can explore vocabulary and writing styles that they might not use in a formal essay.

5. Provide daily time for students to write.

This time should be dedicated to teaching a variety of writing strategies, techniques and skills appropriate to grade level. Students should then apply the skills they have learned with time spent on writing practice. This writing is not limited to “writing class”, and can occur across the curriculum in such subjects as science and history, for example.

Writing is so important, as classroom teachers will find that reading through their students’ writing assignments can give them great insight into each student’s personality, comprehension, and style. When a high value is placed on consistent writing in the classroom, it is a win – win situation for all. So, then, just as Luther did 500 years ago, pick up your pen and write on!

The first graders enjoy writing, and they especially love sharing! We hope that you enjoy what they love about their school!

I love Hope School because I like to play with my friends on the playground. ~ Jace Cammenga

I’m glad that I go to Hope School because I have lots of friends. We like to play in the sandbox. ~ Colton Huizinga

My favorite thing about Hope School is recess because I play with my friends. We play ball tag. ~ Jonathan De Jong

I am glad that I go to Hope School because we can read the Bible and we can pray. ~ Jacob De Boer

My favorite thing about Hope School is art. I love using Model Magic. ~ Daniel Langerak

I love Hope School because we have a nice playground. I love the playground because it is fun to play with my friends. ~ Cambria Rau

Hope School is special because I like to learn about the Word of God. ~ Dani Bylsma

I love Hope School because it is where I have fun playing ball tag with my friends. ~ Caleb Schipper

I love Hope School because it is a Christian school. At school we learn about the Bible. ~ Gwen Overway

I am glad that I go to Hope School because I want to learn how to read. ~ Dean Langerak

Hope School is special because we can read the Bible and learn. ~ Evan Cleveland

My favorite thing about Hope School is art. I love to make things with Model Magic. I made a doll. ~ Miriam Kuiper

I am glad that I do to Hope School because I love my teachers. They teach about God and about the Bible. ~ Ondra Kalsbeek

My favorite thing about Hope School is art. I like art because it is really fun! ~ Jane Duistermars

My favorite thing about Hope School is reading about God and going to chapel. ~ Lucy Schimmel

My favorite thing about Hope School is art. It is so fun! ~ Ruby VanUffelen

I am thankful for Hope School because it is a Christian school. I have Christian friends who help me and I help them. And I can learn to read. ~ Ellery Engelsma

I love Hope School because I can learn about God and Jesus. I learn about the world. I can make new friends and I play with them. ~ Sarah Brunsting

BEHOLDING THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD

Miss Gayle Lotterman, 3rd Grade

Although we are well over halfway through this school year, the start of this year brought a few changes for me – the biggest of all being that I'm teaching Junior High Art. I was and still am very excited for this opportunity and have enjoyed getting to know the seventh and eighth grade students. Having completed one semester of seventh grade art, I thought I'd share a few ideas and themes that are introduced in seventh grade.

The theme verse for seventh grade art was Psalm 27:4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." It is a verse we referred to over and over again this past semester, and one around which we based our study of art. While the entire verse is fitting for our art curriculum, we focused especially on the phrase, "to behold the beauty of the Lord."

Art is a subject where students feel pressure to produce something that looks good, that someone would call beautiful. Even in the younger grades, teachers will witness students drawing and erasing for what seems like the millionth time just to get it right. That learning process is sometimes not very beautiful. Yet, beauty in art must be celebrated in the classroom as we explore the beauty of God and the beauty we have each been given in Christ.

God is completely without sin, perfectly holy, and in this we see His beauty. Man is covered in sin, naturally ugly, and has no hope of beauty without Christ. Therefore, God beautifies us in our salvation. Psalm 149:4 tells us, "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." Beauty then must not be something of outward appearances, but it comes from within. God works in our hearts, and from the heart our inner beauty radiates through all our lives. Through this we can see beauty not only in the people surrounding us, but also in the glory of the creation.

Biblical beauty can be found all over the earth. David sees this beauty in Psalm 8:3-4, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou has ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" The evidence of God's skill as an Artist is all around us, and sometimes a piece of artwork tries to draw attention to His beautiful handiwork. In art class one day, I asked for a list of beautiful things, and many agreed on these: sunsets, flowers, snowflakes, butterflies, stars, etc. Then I asked if any students have seen artworks that have tried to capture those beautiful things, and all the hands went up again. Yet, even the best of drawings could be improved upon, for no one can recreate with their hands the beauty that God alone has created.

Some artworks try to capture a beautiful feeling or moment, others capture the things we see so often that we forget how beautiful they are. So much beauty can be seen in everyday things, even in things we might consider a nuisance. Take the common spider, for example. I know that should I see a spider, screams might commence, and I might also feel an urge to

run as far away as I can. If instead I stop, turn around, and examine the very thing that has made me run, I may notice how perfectly and intricately spiders have been designed. I might be reminded of the complexities of God's creation, even in looking at a small spider or his web.

Yet, isn't this the problem with so many of us? As we think about the busyness of the end of the school year, focusing on our worries, we spend so much time teaching our students and children how to live in this world that we forget to appreciate it. To behold it. To look around at what we have been given and thank God for all of it. To see the unity and harmony of God's design, which tells of the unity and harmony of our Triune God and His church.

That is the beauty of an art class. As students sit down and work on their artwork, they can see how hard it is to create something so perfectly beautiful. They can look around this earth and not just see the wicked world, but be reminded that it once was good. That it now shows us a small, small glimpse of the glory of heaven, and that we each have been made beautiful in Christ. Students know and see the beauty that surrounds us, when they take a moment to look.

So, today, maybe tomorrow, maybe next week, take a minute. Look and see. Behold what wonder surrounds us. As life changes and we once again get caught up in the busyness of a sports season, an ending school year, a summer vacation, don't forget the words of Psalm 27:4. For what beauty is there, except that of our Lord?

Following are a few examples of artwork created this school year by third, seventh, and eighth grade students. In appreciating the splendor of God's creation, many times we find beauty in the variety of animals on earth. These artworks seek to showcase the unique creatures that surround us.



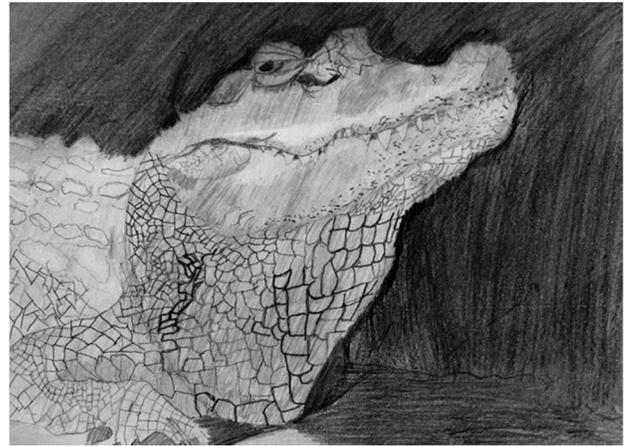
Jeremy Rutgers, 3rd grade
Graphite on Paper



Annika Kamps, 3rd grade
Graphite on Paper



Brooklynn Meulenberg, 3rd grade
Graphite on Paper



Russell VanBaren, 7th grade
Graphite on Paper



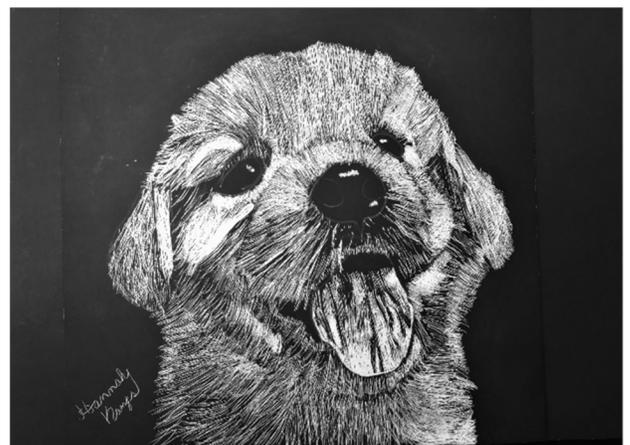
Sally Doezema, 7th grade
Graphite on Paper



Lydia Meulenberg, 7th grade
Graphite on Paper



Harm Molenkamp, 8th grade
Scratchboard



Hannah Kamps, 8th grade
Scratchboard



Leah Hop, 8th grade
Scratchboard



Stephanie Langerak, 8th grade
Scratchboard

LIVING IN A VISUAL SOCIETY III

Mr. Brian Dykstra, 5th Grade

This is the third installment of this series of *Highlights* articles about the effects of “screen time” on our children. I began with a glance at the beginning of sin. Satan often tempts us through our eyes while God uses our ears through the preaching of the word. We also wondered what is happening to our children’s ability to listen attentively for prolonged periods of time to sermons when our visual age allows us to divert our attention quickly and search out other options when we begin to be bored.

Last time I noted that physical therapists have actually begun to see an increase in young patients whose upper spines have developed problems because of bad posture brought about by hours of observing screens. I also related what I had read about children’s ability to develop “emotional intelligence”, the ability to read other’s body language and facial expressions when much of today’s communication takes place through social media.

Having looked at several research papers, Katherine DeWeese’s thesis titled, “Screen Time, How Much is Too Much? The Social and Emotional Costs of Technology on the Adolescent Brain” serves our purposes well. (Her entire paper can be found at the Educational Research Information Center’s website. Enter ED546474 in the search box.)

Personal electronic devices with their portability and internet capabilities have made multitasking a way of life in society. The claim is that working on several projects at a time can increase worker productivity, especially in an office setting. However, adolescent multitasking has a different purpose. While doing school work, an adolescent is likely to remain connected to friends through social media. DeWeese reports that research shows academic performance declines when there are several social demands imposing on academic work.

DeWeese writes, “The brain can multitask but only by separating those tasks in the mind. The ability to do many things at once means the brain is splitting itself. If students engage in

this each day for several hours, their brains will be forming neural pathways in a shortened capacity. It is similar to the difference between muscles used for sprinting and muscles used for long distance. Long and lean muscles need to be active for longer amounts of time and thus are used more. Tight and bulky muscles are used for speed, not endurance. We are training our brain for bursts of energy and not the contemplative long haul of life in a global world."

She adds that, ". . . technology, while enhancing the access to information, is stunting the ability to process information and think critically. Students are losing their ability to reflect, take time to think and ponder about questions to which they do not know the answer. The new generation's solution is to immediately pick up the nearest device and ask Google. What is that teaching the students?"

Most educators are interested in providing their students with the skills needed to solve the world's problems. In the view of many, society's greatest threat is that humanity is soiling its own nest with its reliance on burning fossil fuels. We need new problem solvers in chemical, electrical and mechanical engineering in the interest of developing a green and sustainable economy and society.

We have more pressing concerns. Is there a doctrinal controversy in our denomination's future? It has been quite some time since someone in a position of leadership has taken a hammer, even if the hammer had been used in a very subtle fashion, to our denominational foundation. Today's students would not be able to "google" their way to a determination of truth or falsehood in those circumstances. They would have to be able to contemplate, and invest prolonged thought to analyze what would be said and written by those in opposing camps. We have witnessed what happens in following generations when the generation which experiences the controversy comes to the wrong conclusion about what the Bible teaches. We should not be so proud as to assume that we are immune to what we have seen develop elsewhere.

DeWeese then turns her research to a relative of multitasking, Continuous Partial Attention (CPA). This is a ". . . situation in which the individual does not focus on any one thing in reality while he or she is engaged in and follows everything. While multitasking can be defined as doing many things at once in order to be more productive, CPA is constant fragmented attention that is motivated not by productivity, but by the desire to be connected."

She goes on to relate a study done on digital natives, people who have grown up with technology. Researchers found ". . . that the digital natives switch their attention between media platforms every other minute. Digital natives switch their attention at the first sign of boredom. The frequent switching results in low attention that limits their emotional response. This study strongly suggests a transformation . . . that is rewiring the brains of a generation of Americans like never before. . . . Under this kind of stress, our brains instinctively signal the adrenal gland to secrete cortisol and adrenaline. In the short run, these stress hormones boost energy levels and augment memory, but over time they actually impair cognition, lead to depression, and alter the neural circuitry in the hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex- the brain regions that control mood and thought. Chronic and prolonged techno-brain burnout can even reshape the underlying brain structure."

It has been many years since I took human physiology and embryology in college, so my response to this aspect of DeWeese's research must be limited. However, we are wonderfully fashioned works of the Creator's hand. We have both spiritual and physical aspects

to us. God formed Adam out of the dust of the ground (his physical aspect) while breathing into him the breath of life (his spiritual aspect). These two are tightly bound, intricately intertwined into one creative work. I don't know how one determines cause and effect when considering the relationship between physical and spiritual problems. However, could problems in brain development lead to spiritual issues? Is over-use of modern technology indicative of a lack of vigorous spiritual growth? Maybe these questions are worth some thought.

If the effects on brain development in adolescents cited by DeWeese are true, we had better be careful on how much "screen time" we allow our children to have. Parents must be attentive to their children, not letting them drift along in our actual, physical presence while they waste away hours in the unreality of the ether of social media and the internet. Young minds are growing and developing, and parents must engage in face to face conversation with their children to ensure they are developing a rich spiritual life, not a life in which quality is measured by "likes", Facebook "friends" or the frequency of times a smartphone vibrates, but a life in which they show evidence of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Sample 5th Grade Student Writings:

A Summer Breeze

By: Rylee Moelker

Hey there boys and girls! Have you ever wondered, "Boy I wish I could have a little breeze." Well now you can, and here's how you do it. Just step outside and let the wind take over from there. Sometimes a breeze is kind of a pain, like at a picnic or playing frisbee golf. The wind makes your beach ball or frisbee etc. go off course. Next week check the weather because it might just rain on your fun. This week is going to be a breeze to get a breeze, but don't take it from me. Go outside today and get a little wind in your face.

Wonderful, Beautiful Trees!!

By: Rebecca Brunsting

Hey!! Are you hot? Well, I am not. Guess where I am. I am in my backyard, sitting under some trees. They're great! Trees have all kinds of things. Trees have oxygen, fruit, flowers, shade, beautiful colors and more. There are about 11.4 billion trees in the state of Michigan. There are a lot of fruit trees. There are apple trees, peach trees, cherry trees, orange trees, grapefruit and banana trees. There are other trees too like maple trees, pine trees, weeping willows, white pine, red pine and lots more. So if you are hot, just find a tree and sit under the wonderful thing!

Sunshine

By: Lindsay Minderhoud

Are you sitting in your house playing video games or sitting around being bored? You can go outside and see and feel the wonderful sunshine. Sunshine is free unlike the video games and just sitting around when you could be doing work. So you should go outside! Feel the sunshine! It's free. You could go to the beach, you can play outside, and you can go to your friend's

house to play and take a swim. See all the wonderful things you can do in the sunshine? So get off your video games and stop just sitting inside and go outdoors!

Trees

By: Kodie Klamer

Trees are everywhere, all around. They're free, nice, spectacular and beautiful. You can't stop without seeing one, but not in Iowa. Did you know trees give oxygen? There are about 11.4 billion trees in Michigan. They bear nice and rich fruits apples, cherries, plums, peaches, bananas and walnuts. I know that isn't a fruit, but why not?

Beautiful Creation

By: Brett Cammenga

From the birds in the air to the deer in the forests, we know it's all God's work. The plants and animals are all God's work. Springing up plants, to young being born. The tall trees to small bushes. Every animal built perfectly for their survival. The spring air warm and comforting autumn leaves, bright red, yellow and orange with the cool breeze. Then winter air with that cold breeze. Then spring when you dive in the water, and cool off. All is from God's hand. You yourself are made by God's hand. The mountains, trees and dirt under your feet. All is from God's hand.

Beautifully Fresh Air!

By: Annica Engelsma

Hi there! Are you suffering from cooking heat? Fire places? The grill? Do you need something fresh? Call 123-2429 for nice, clean, fresh air, for Free! The oxygen comes straight from trees. Smell something unpleasant? Garbage? Wet dog? Baby diaper? Step right outside! Maybe even with a child or a pet, and get, (fanfare) AIR! For FREE!!!

Try today at your house. That's 123-2429 for fresh air. Hurry while supplies last. Warning: may include increase of healthiness, less electronics, and cleaner houses.

Snow

By: Amber Koole

Hi! Are you in the hot heat? Well, I have a good idea. You can go to another state and play in the snow! You can get cool in the snow for free. I told you it's a good idea. It falls from the sky. It's really cool to see. It is all white like the clouds. And it's really cold and you get a free cold breeze with it. So it is two in one. It's really the best deal you can get. You can make a snowman and have a snowball fight with your friends. It's really fun! Trust me, I have done it before. So have fun in the snow today. ☺

The Sun

By: Sydnie Schimmel

Hey! Are you tired of having no warmth with no light, or plants? Well then, let me introduce you to the SUN. It's warm and it gives you light and plants. It also gives you vitamin D, and it's absolutely FREE. So get it now. All you have to do is go outside and you will feel so happy. OH! Don't forget to go outside and watch it rise in the morning and set at night. It is just

wonderful, but watch out! There is one problem, clouds! They will hide your sun, but sometimes the clouds are nice and your sun will be with you forever.

Trees

By: Michael DeVries

Trees and plants are all very wonderful!! Trees and plants give us a lot of things. Trees for instance, give us shade and oxygen. Trees are everywhere all around us. They are nice and beautiful. Plants give us even more things like flowers and vegetables, such as strawberries, peppers, raspberries, tomatoes and corn. It is a wonderful thing God gave us, and it is a place for birds to build their nests. It gives us wood to build our churches and other shelters. There are so many different kinds of trees like maple, oak, fir, pine, beech, banana, orange and peach trees. There are a lot of trees that give us food. There are 11.4 billion trees in Michigan and 3 trillion in the world! There are about as many trees in Alaska as in the lower 48 states! It is a wonderful thing God gave us. It is free.

Free Time

By: Isaac Cleveland

Time! It tells you when to eat and when to sleep. It tells you when to go to work. Look at it go! It tells you when the day is done and when it has just begun. Breakfast is the most important meal. What tells you when to eat that meal? TIME! A lot of things work with time. Guess what! It's free! If you want to get it online go to 616-657-647375 or isaac@gmail.com.

SCHOOL OFFICE NEWS

HOPE SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP!

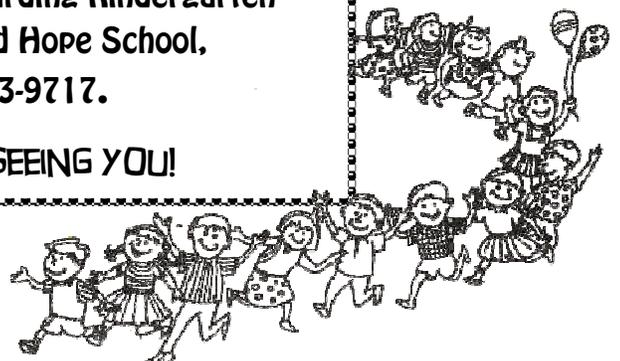
**Kindergarten Round-Up will be held at 9:45 AM on
Thursday, May 11 at Hope School.**

**Parents, please remember to bring your child's
birth certificate to round-up.**

Invitations will be mailed mid - April.

**If you have not been contacted regarding Kindergarten
testing and would like to attend Hope School,
please call us at 616-453-9717.**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!



Kindergarten Program
Hope Protestant Reformed Church
Wednesday, April 26, 2017
7:30 PM

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 3-7	Spring Break
April 26	Kindergarten Program
May 11	Kindergarten Round Up
May 12	Elementary Music Program
May 29	Memorial Day – No School
June 1	Last Day of School – Graduation
June 3	Hope Classic Races



**20th Annual
Hope Classic
Races**

**Saturday,
June 3, 2017**

**5K Run, 5K Walk
&
1 Mile Fun Run/Walk**

**Watch for
registration forms
in mid - April!**



Elementary Music Program
Friday, May 12 at 7:30 PM
Grandville High School
Auditorium

