



# HIGHLIGHTS

*~ Thanksgiving Issue 2020 ~*



*"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." / Thessalonians 5:18*

## FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

### GIVING THANKS ALWAYS

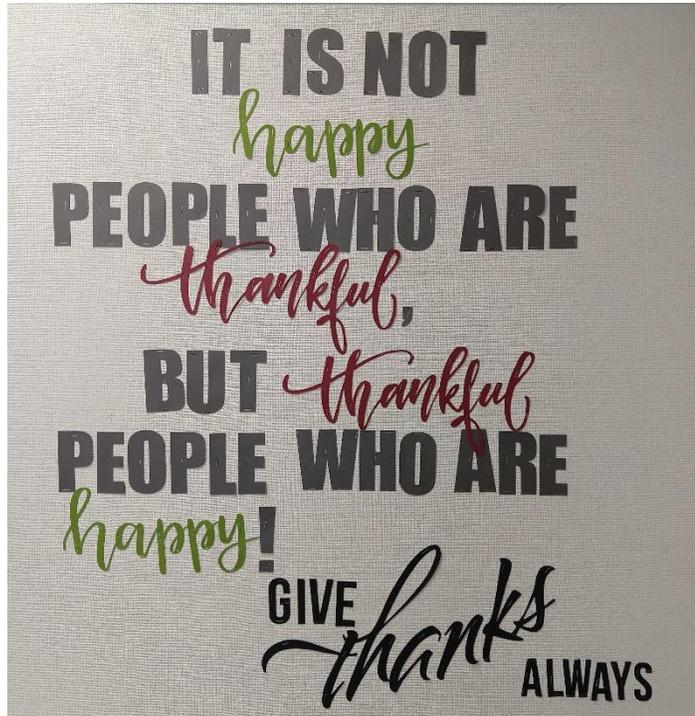
Mr. Ron Koole, Principal

If you visit school in November, you will be “confronted” by the well designed and thought provoking bulletin board you see pictured to the right. Thanks, Laurel, for the message your bulletin board conveys.

Later this month we will all celebrate a day of Thanksgiving. Our celebration of the day will find us gathering in God’s house to worship and thank the Lord who is the giver of ALL things. The bulletin board’s message not only connects our happiness with thanksgiving, but also reminds us when we are to be thankful – “Give thanks ALWAYS.” Always, you say? Even when troubles and afflictions are our lot? Yes, then too. God’s grace is always sufficient and all things are

subservient to our salvation. God averts all evil or turns it to our profit. He is our heavenly Father and He cares for His children. Oh, how we need the assurance of God’s goodness in the midst of affliction, which is the lot of so many of our loved ones recently.

Ephesians 5:20 “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”. This passage of God’s Word has special significance for my family, and I trust will encourage many others into whose lives the Lord has sent burdens and afflictions. This passage served as the center of our family devotions six years ago as the family gathered in a room in Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Center on Thanksgiving Day. It has been a theme the family has not forgotten. I share with you a poem one of my daughters wrote several years ago. (A rather personal section has been removed.) I pray it may lift the spirits of those facing adversity and direct all of our thoughts upward.



### 2020-21 School Calendar

November 26-27	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 24-Jan. 1	Christmas Break
January 20-22	Jr. High Exams
January 22	End of 1st Semester, ½ day
February 11	PTA
February 18-19	Parent/Teacher Conferences
April 5-9	Spring Break
May 31	Memorial Day – No School
May 22	Hope Classic Races
June 2	Graduation

God calls us to be thankful  
We all know that this is true  
But how exactly do we do this  
Each day and all life through  
When seas are calm and peaceful  
This may come with bit more ease  
But when God brings storms upon us  
We may struggle to find such peace  
When the waves come crashing over us

And we find it's hard to swim  
Are we still found by others  
To be giving thanks to Him  
Do we thank Him in our trials  
Can we even do such a thing  
Or does it become so difficult  
We can hardly pray or sing  
Let God's Word call out to us  
We are His Name to praise  
In both the good times and the bad  
Let us be GIVING THANKS ALWAYS

We may as a family now feel  
That God has brought us such a storm  
That He's using what we call affliction  
His never-changing will to perform  
We each have our own callings  
In this burden we now bear  
But let also yet remember  
That it is a burden we do share  
(Section removed began here)

But rather let our focus be  
On walking with the Lord  
Not with our feet but with our hearts  
Doesn't that mean so much more  
But it's when we struggle with THAT walk  
That we may again get scared  
The sins we have of doubts and fears  
We may feel are all but bared  
Do others see us questioning  
Or even wondering WHY  
That in our weaker moments

Sometimes all we do is cry  
For we are only human  
And Satan knows our fears  
He attacks us oh so strongly  
When he sees us wiping tears  
He wants us to cry out  
To give up on all our hope and trust  
To call us out on our conviction  
That GIVING THANKS ALWAYS is a must

But God gives us the wisdom  
To realize his attack  
So too God supplies the grace  
To help us to fight back  
To use His Word as guidance  
Even in our times of sadness  
So too He calls us to "Be Still"  
And to know that He is God alone  
And always to remember that  
His mercies to us are new EVERY morn  
At first it was so hard to see  
And we pro'bly never would have thought  
That not too far down the road  
We would speak of the GOOD this has  
brought  
For we see already joy can come  
For GOD is with us everywhere  
Even if from this point on  
We perform our calling from a wheelchair  
This serves God's purpose too we know  
For we already feel His grace  
To confess with even the youngest ones  
To be GIVING THANKS ALWAYS



## FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

David Langerak, Chairman  
Aaron Cleveland, Ken Engelsma, Scott Moelker

We give thanks to our covenant God who has so ordered and directed all things that our school has been able to have in-person instruction so far this school year. The staff and

216 students from 88 families began the school year on August 31 refreshed and ready to provide and receive a distinctly Protestant Reformed education. While there have been students and teachers that have needed to stay home for a period of time due to testing positive for the virus or coming in contact with someone who had, the challenges to instruction have been manageable.

We report a few changes to the part-time teaching staff. Kara Kamps (Minderhoud) has taken over the elementary music program this year. We thank Deb Kuiper and Melinda Bleyenbergh for their years of service volunteering for this important part of the music curriculum. We also thank Chris VanDenTop for her 15 years of service as head librarian. Chris has recently resigned due to her illness. Lorraine DeVries has been hired for this position. Lorraine has served as a volunteer in the library for several years. Continue to pray for Deb and Chris and their families to our gracious God who has planned all things according to His perfect will.

We were able to hold parent teacher conferences on Thursday and Friday, October 15-16 with a good turnout in spite of COVID-19.

We are happy to report another very healthy band program for this year ably led by Matt Elzinga. There are 15 students in our 5th grade band and 49 students from 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> form the junior high band. Matt continues to provide excellent instruction, and combined with a good foundational music program in the elementary grades, keeps the enthusiasm for music opportunities at a high level.

Reading Together is an assistance program for K-2 students who need a boost in reading. Teachers and the Discovery staff work together to determine which students will benefit from inclusion in this program. Gladys Koole is the chairperson with 8 other volunteers. Three new volunteers, Lorraine De Vries, Floretta Engelsma and Karla Kamps will join Gladys, Phyllis King, Nancy Schipper, Barb Huizinga, Beth Grasman and Linda Kalsbeek this year. This program meets three afternoons a week and began in late September and will continue through April. Carolyn Cleveland, Brenda Engelsma and Barb Feenstra decided not to return as volunteers this year. We thank them for their dedicated work in the past.

Motor Movement is designed to help kindergarteners improve the coordination of both large and small muscles. Sherry Koole will once again be in charge of the kindergarten motor movement program with an increased amount of volunteers due to a double class. These volunteers include for the Monday class: Deb Feenstra, Jill Kregel, Kara Kregel, Cheri VanderVeen, Cassie Van Oostenbrugge, with Candace Meulenberg and Val VanBaren as subs. On Tuesday, volunteers include: Michelle Huizinga, Leigh Kooienga, Chris Overway and Keri Mahtani with Lynn Van Overloop as a sub.

There have been significant changes also in our Discovery Staff due to Deb Kuiper's cancer. Stephanie Daling has very capably assumed the lead teacher position in Discovery with Deb still providing significant assistance and advice from her home. Working as teacher aides and volunteers in our Discovery program are Jen Kalsbeek, Jori Langerak, Shari Bosveld and Larissa Rau. These ladies make a great team to assist students who are challenged in various academic areas.

The Technology Committee, a sub-committee of the Education Committee, has evaluated Hope's existing technology and has decided to move up the date to purchase another 30 Chromebooks and a cart to this year. There was a need for more Chromebooks this year with teachers making greater use of the Chromebooks in the classrooms as well as teachers creating lesson plans via videos being sent to quarantined students, and the additional students

needing them at home. These Chromebooks have recently arrived. In addition to the purchase of the Chromebooks, three teachers have received new computers and one new computer was purchased for the server/back up and remote administration. The purchase of a new gym projector has been delayed because at this time no large gatherings are permitted. Document cameras were also purchased for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms.

In addition to hosting 2 student teachers next spring, Hope School is presently providing assistance to others who are pursuing instruction of covenant youth. Leah Rau is presently observing kindergarten students 2 afternoons a week. Leah needs to observe young children in a school setting for 30 hours for her early childhood studies. Melanie Hanko is assisting Mr. Dan Hanko in 4<sup>th</sup> grade 2-3 afternoons per week to fulfill volunteer work in an educational setting as she is in the beginning stage of pursuing a teaching degree. Bri Meulenberg has been tutoring a 1st grade student for a number of weeks to fulfill her tutoring experience as part of an education class in her pursuit of an education degree. We are excited for this opportunity to provide a learning setting for these aspiring teachers.

The staff has been busy planning the all-school program. The program was scheduled for Friday, Nov. 20, but we have been informed that Grandville High School has cancelled all auditorium rentals through Dec. 2020. It was decided to reschedule the program to the spring with a date yet to be determined.

And finally we end with a quote from the board class room visitors this year: "It was clear the teachers we visited are gifted and handle our covenant children in a gentle and loving manner. It is also clear that the parents work hard at home to teach their children to respect the teachers and listen to them. It makes for an enjoyable atmosphere to learn and play! To God we give the glory!"

## FOUNDATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Jason Van Oostenbrugge, Chairman

Dave Rutgers, Gerald Feenstra, Dave Langerak, Josh Meulenberg, Matt DeBoer

Since our last article the Hope Foundation has been busy with two events. This past June we hosted our First Annual Hope Foundation Golf Outing. This was held at Sunnybrook Country Club. We had a great turn out and had a wonderful time of golf, food, fellowship, and prizes. Although the first time hosting an event like this has much work involved, Gerald did a good job of coordinating and spear heading it. This successful fundraiser was a great way to raise awareness of the Foundation, what we do, and how we help the school. Our second event was our Annual Sporting Clay event. Even though it was a holiday weekend, there was a good turnout and we had a beautiful day. The adrenaline runs when small clays are hoisted and your skills are put to the test to shoot them out of the air. Also with this event there is the possibility of going home with a new gun! Fun for all!

With these two events as our fundraisers for the year, the committee is thankful for those who participated. We are also thankful for the sponsors who step up and donate to help raise this awareness and also support Hope School. I wish I could name all the sponsors, but that would take some paper. The businesses, owners, and individuals have helped make this year successful.

Each year we struggle as a committee to find ways to stay in front of our constituents. Raising awareness is important in showing how the Foundation helps giving financially to Hope

School. We thought it helpful to remind everyone of how much the Foundation has contributed to the operation of Hope School. In the last 3 years we have given just over \$100,000 to the school to offset tuition. Despite giving these sums of money, the Foundation's portfolio continues to grow. Although this year started out on a downward trend, it has recovered, and we are up 5.5% year to date, with a balance nearing \$700,000.

This year we have received three estate bequests. This is the main way that the Foundation hopes to gain funds. We want those in or near retirement age, younger or older, to seriously consider including the Hope Foundation in their wills. Our aim is that these gifts are invested wisely and have benefits to the school for many years to come. As the portfolio increases the profit grows exponentially. Therefore, we can expect to give a healthy amount to the school each year. This is very rewarding for us as a committee to be able to support the blessing we have in Hope School. We are thankful to our Heavenly Father and for the financial stability we currently experience. As we face an uncertain future we continue to look to Him as our Provider.

## FEDERATION, PUBLICITY, CIRCLE, CONTACT COMMITTEE REPORT

Brad Schwarz, Chairman  
Ken Engelsma, Jason Kregel

The new school year has begun and it is time to keep you all informed about the work the FCCP Committee is doing. When I was put on this committee I had no idea what the FCCP stood for, or what the duties of this committee were. I am learning.

Recently, on October 29, we had our Federation meeting at Adams Christian School. The meeting was well attended with representatives from all the West Michigan schools, as well as many of our out of state schools represented and present via Zoom.

At this meeting we elected Kyle Bruinooge to a 3-year term as Executive Director of the Federation. We would like to welcome Kyle, and also thank the retiring Executive Director Rick Mingerink for his labors on the Federation for the last 6 years.

We also passed modules 1-4 of the Tier 3 phase of the Teacher Mentoring Program. Last year the Federation mentored 13 first year teachers, and this year we are mentoring 12 more first year teachers. The Tier 3 phase will support teachers in their 2nd and 3rd years of teaching.

Another proposal was to enter into a joint agreement with the *Perspectives* magazine. In this agreement the Federation would subsidize 50% of the total cost to print and distribute one Federation issue of the *Perspectives* magazine to every household in the PR denomination, in exchange for the *Perspectives* granting us a "Federation Issue" for the coming year. The purpose for this would be a way to communicate the activities of the Federation to an audience other than exclusively the school boards. This proposal also passed.

We also discussed a Federation Restructuring Proposal. This proposal would be to turn the TED Committee into the board of the Federation. This board would derive its authority from the association of member schools through the annual delegate association meeting. The board would have power to make decisions on behalf of the association of delegates. This was discussed, and will be looked at by all the boards, and brought back to a future meeting.

Last, we elected a new Vice President, Mark Scholten, who we welcome to the board. At this time, we would like to thank Brad Dykstra our retiring Federation President, and to welcome Ken Engelsma as our new President.

At this time, we as the FCCP committee and School Board would like to thank the ladies of our School Circle for all their labors on behalf of the school. Through their work and many fundraisers, they are able to fund many important projects for our school that otherwise we wouldn't have funds for.

We would also like to thank them for fully funding the remodel and updating of the school's kitchen. We waited a long time for this, and it was well worth the wait. This project is now complete and I am sure you will be impressed. So next time you are at school, check it out.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Jeremy Langerak, Chairman  
Brad VanderVeen, Trevor Kalsbeek, Dave Rutgers

Hope School's new fiscal year started in July 2020, so we are well into the new 2020/21 budget year. This year the society approved a total drive amount of \$315,000. The Finance Committee conducts a fall and spring drive to collect this budgeted goal. These drives help Hope School to maintain lower tuition rates for families and allows all of us as a covenant family to contribute financially to Christian education here at Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School.

The fall drive letters were sent out in the middle of October and our goal, the Lord willing, is to collect \$157,500 in this fall drive. The drive accounts for 26% of the annual income for Hope School so please prayerfully consider giving as the Lord has blessed you. If you have a matching gift program from your place of employment, you can send that form along with your payment. We will give updates on progress via bulletin announcements throughout the fall drive.

If you take a look at the attached financials capturing the first quarter (25%) of the year, you will notice that we are at about 22% for income and 22% for expenses overall. Basically we are right on track if you consider that only a small amount of drive income has been received thus far. You might also notice that we are projecting a loss of \$26,018 for the 2020/2021 school year compared to our balanced budget passed in April. Essentially the reason for this deficit is decreased income from lower than expected enrollment for the 2020/2021 school year. This makes meeting or exceeding our deficit drive goal amount even more important this year. The Finance Committee will keep you informed of how we are doing financially in future *Highlights* articles. Also thank you to our tuition paying families from the Finance Committee for your prompt tuition payments by the end of each month. It is not too late to have the Finance Committee set up an electronic funds transfer right out of your checking account to make payment easy. Please contact the Vice Treasurer Brad Vanderveen by email, [brad.vanderveen@gentex.com](mailto:brad.vanderveen@gentex.com), if you would like to set up EFT. Tuition statements continue to be emailed monthly around the first week of the month. If for some reason you are not receiving these statements, please contact the treasurer to make sure we have the correct address.

"Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Isaiah 26:4

## Hope Protestant Reformed School Actual to Budget - Highlights Report

	Jul - Sep 20	Annual Budget	% of Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
Church Collections	11,566.12	44,000.00	26.29%
Gifts and Pledges	14,107.82	315,000.00	4.48%
Gym Rental	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
Hope Foundation	0.00	40,000.00	0.00%
Special Ed Society	1,907.06	8,060.00	23.66%
Tuition	239,891.69	784,690.00	30.57%
Z - Bus Fees	6,614.59	13,450.00	49.18%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>274,087.28</b>	<b>1,210,200.00</b>	<b>22.65%</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
Accounting Fees	1,153.88	9,300.00	12.41%
Band Expenses	1,000.00	3,000.00	33.33%
Building and Grounds - Y/E	8,760.22	43,000.00	20.37%
Class Trip Fund	500.00	1,500.00	33.33%
Educational Supplies and Books	13,000.00	26,000.00	50.00%
Federation Dues	0.00	2,600.00	0.00%
Insurance, General	2,923.13	11,800.00	24.77%
Insurance, Group	29,259.77	112,062.00	26.11%
Insurance, HRA - Y/E	1,747.27	4,000.00	43.68%
Insurance, Workers Comp	509.40	2,113.00	24.11%
Janitors Supplies	2,298.13	4,000.00	57.45%
Library Fund	1,700.00	1,700.00	100.00%
Long Range Building Fund Trans	13,749.99	55,000.00	25.00%
Miscellaneous Expense	759.27	2,000.00	37.96%
Office Equipment - Y/E	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Office Supplies	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Payroll - Band / Choir	3,815.60	18,600.00	20.51%
Payroll - Building Maintenance	600.00	1,500.00	40.00%
Payroll - Discovery Room	2,887.51	49,060.00	5.89%
Payroll - Janitor	7,624.80	30,500.00	25.00%
Payroll - Lawn Maintenance	1,568.00	3,000.00	52.27%
Payroll - Librarian	137.50	4,200.00	3.27%
Payroll - Office	6,290.00	31,450.00	20.00%
Payroll - Substitute Teachers	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Payroll - Teachers	141,932.91	586,926.00	24.18%
Payroll - Teachers Aids	339.63	4,032.00	8.42%
Payroll - Technology Maintenance	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%
Payroll Taxes	11,363.18	56,133.00	20.24%
Phys Ed Uniforms	746.25	1,000.00	74.63%
Repairs and Maintenance	1,552.56	8,400.00	18.48%

## Hope Protestant Reformed School Actual to Budget - Highlights Report

	Jul - Sep 20	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Retirement Plan	0.00	18,531.00	0.00%
Snow Removal	0.00	3,500.00	0.00%
Teacher Classroom	600.00	1,600.00	37.50%
Teacher Development - Y/E	3,961.00	15,015.00	26.38%
Technology Supplies	6,025.00	12,000.00	50.21%
Utilities, Electric	3,410.43	23,000.00	14.83%
Utilities, Gas	139.19	13,000.00	1.07%
Utilities, Internet & Phone	702.97	2,800.00	25.11%
Utilities, Trash	371.28	1,700.00	21.84%
Utilities, Water & Sewer	228.44	1,300.00	17.57%
<b>Z. Bus Expenses</b>			
Bus Depreciation Fund Trans	4,374.99	17,500.00	25.00%
Bus Driver Cost Subsidy	104.00	1,000.00	10.40%
Bus Driver Payroll	2,370.00	22,250.00	10.65%
Bus Driver Payroll Taxes	344.80	1,580.00	21.82%
Bus Driver Workers Compensation	281.60	1,000.00	28.16%
Bus Insurance	585.00	2,316.00	25.26%
Bus Repair	0.00	7,000.00	0.00%
Gas and Oil	450.08	11,000.00	4.09%
Transportation Supervisor	0.00	1,250.00	0.00%
<b>Total Z. Bus Expenses</b>	<b>8,510.47</b>	<b>64,896.00</b>	<b>13.11%</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>280,167.78</b>	<b>1,236,218.00</b>	<b>22.66%</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>-6,080.50</b>	<b>-26,018.00</b>	
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-6,080.50</b>	<b>-26,018.00</b>	

### STAFF & STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS

#### UNITY, NOT UNIFORMITY

Mrs. Stephanie Daling, Discovery Room

This school year has brought with it countless amounts of change and new challenges for teachers, students, and parents. For myself, it has also brought on a whole new position and perspective on teaching. I jumped into something I have never done before and have been able to see in just two short months how truly blessed we are with such diversity in our students' God-given abilities.

In I Corinthians 12, Paul talks about the importance of all the gifts God gives by using the human body as reference. For example, "if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I

am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" The apostle Paul ends the chapter by saying we are all the body of Christ and members of the church, and we all carry different gifts that make us unique, yet we are all a part of Christ's body.

Particularly as teachers, we need to focus on our students' success, and how we can make lesson plans, activities, and assignments that will help our students succeed. This is where the body of Christ comes into play. Our students all have their own individual needs, and so we must provide individual attention – what are their interests, skills, learning abilities? Find ways to showcase these interests throughout our lessons. It is also important for us to make sure we are using a variety of instructional strategies. A variety of instruction is good for overall development and helps keep our students engaged. I know it is easy for us to follow in our habits of lectures and notes, or teacher instruction on the board and then students complete the assignment. While there is a time and place for these strategies, do not forget to incorporate others!

The strategies mentioned above, plus SO many more, are vital for the success of the student – the Christian student, but I would like to focus on providing individual attention to our students. I Corinthians 12:4 states, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." In this verse Paul is referring to spiritual gifts, but this can also be applied to the gifts God has given us in His grace. Some of our students do very well in math, others in reading. Others are very good artists or can play a certain instrument very well. Some have been given the ability to be good at different sports, whereas others are good at robotics or being a part of a Student Council. There is indeed a diversity of gifts! Yet, there is only one Giver who works through the diverse gifts.

These gifts are different for each student, but they all came from the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God who works in us through these gifts. As God's covenant teachers and parents, we must accept the responsibility for our students and child's learning. By figuring out each and every one of our students' interests, skills, needs and learning styles, we can help them figure out where their deficiencies are. We cannot assume that all students learn the same way or have the same abilities – and we must accept that just because we feel a lesson went extremely well that some students might not have understood it. We must take time to talk with and get to know our students. Knowing their needs and understanding that they need different means of teaching at times, helps with all student success and unity within the church.

Not only is it important to get to know each of our students' interests and gifts, but it is important to make known to the children that we have all been given different abilities. I had a student tell me that they were frustrated they struggled with math, when so and so seemed to just understand it right away. This gave me the opportunity to explain to them that we are not all great at the same things. I said, "Imagine if we all liked the color blue and our favorite food was pizza. How boring our lives would be if there was no diversity among us!" After having this discussion, the student realized that our differences are what make us unique and different – good different.

The apostle Paul tells us that each of these gifts are given for the profit of all. This means these gifts are not given to a particular individual just for his sake, but as a benefit to the whole church body. No one gift is greater than another. Just because one student may be good at math doesn't mean they are better than those who are not as great at math. Verse 11 states, "dividing to every man severally as he will." Here is another reason for unity and a reason against any superiority regarding these gifts. These gifts are distributed not according to the will

of man, but as GOD WILLS, and many times God's will differs from our wills. We should never assume that the gifts are distributed based off of how we would distribute them. Sometimes, our students and even we as teachers and adults, assume certain gifts are given because a person may be more spiritually mature or closer to God or perhaps God loves this person more than He loves us. We must continually encourage our students to understand that God gives us these gifts based off of His divine and most perfect will – all for a particular reason. It is okay to not be good at basketball or perhaps struggle with reading. We've been given some other gift instead – a gift the church needs!

We need to have a diversity in gifts because that is what makes our church body whole. Unity among believers is not secured by making all believers the same. Unity is secured among the many because all believers are in Christ. Though there is a diversity of gifts by the Spirit, by one Spirit all believers are baptized in ONE body. Paul illustrates the importance of each diverse member for the unity of the one body by drawing attention to the human body. The body needs the foot, the hand, the ear, the eye, and the nose in order to properly function. Each member contributes to the health of the whole, just like each gift we are given contributes to the health of the whole body of Christ – the church.

Take this last statement as a reminder to yourselves but also to give to your students or children. God graciously gives gifts to each of His children. He sovereignly decides who receives what gift and how many. Often Christians become discouraged because they do not have the same gift as someone else. Others can become proud because of the gifts that they have as though they earned those gifts. God's sovereign giving of gifts should evoke praise and thanksgiving rather than discouragement and pride, and should instill humility because of the gifts granted to us according to God's will. When considering YOUR gift, do so with a God-centered perspective rather than a self-centered one. And remember that all of our students and children have different gifts. Understand and believe that God has given them all different gifts, and keep this in the forefront of your mind as you watch your child grow and develop throughout this school year – struggles and all!

## LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THOSE IN NEED

Miss Rebecca Boeve, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

With so many saints in our circles today suffering afflictions, my students decided to write letters to loved ones to bring them an encouraging word from Scripture. This came into conversation at the beginning of the school year while we were studying the book of Ruth. When Ruth and Naomi came back to the land of Israel, they were poor and had nothing. Back in Old Testament times, the poor were provided for by being allowed to glean the farmers' fields during harvest time. So, Ruth set out to glean and collect some grain for them in the fields of Boaz. Boaz took special notice of Ruth and made sure that she was provided and cared for with many extra measures. He was sharing the love of God with her through his actions and words of mercy.

From this began our discussion of how the church today cares for the poor, and then more specifically, how we as third graders can care for and bring comfort to those in need. My students eagerly shared their ideas and experiences with each other and writing letters of

encouragement was one of the first ideas mentioned. They very enthusiastically decided that we should do this as a class and mail them out. I was thrilled to help my students work through this project! The personal notes written to grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and previous teachers were very touching and meaningful to those who received them and to the students who wrote them.

All the students picked their own Bible passages that they thought would bring comfort to the specific person who they were writing to. It is amazing to see the spiritual growth and life of my students already at their young age. We can thank our heavenly Father for implanting His covenantal love in their hearts. Isaiah 54:13 speaks of this when it says, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." I pray that these words from the mouths of God's children may bring you comfort and peace as well!



Psalm 146:5 "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." This verse brings us comfort because we have hope in God.  
~ Emmitt Cleveland

Psalm 103:1-3 says "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." These verses bring us comfort because it says that God healeth diseases. And God will always be with us so that we don't fear.  
~ Elizabeth DeBoer

Psalm 57:1 "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." This verse brings us comfort because we can find refuge in God. God will never give up on us.  
~ Cole Doezema

Psalm 23:1-3 says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." This verse bring us comfort because you know that you can trust in God because He with always take care of us.  
~ Brianna Feenstra

Isaiah 41:10 says, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." This verse brings us comfort because we know that God is with us. God gives us strength and He cares for us all the days of our life.  
~ Cole Feenstra

Psalms 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." This verse brings us comfort because this tells you that you are not alone. And God is with you.

~ Luke Kleyn

Psalms 141:1 says, "Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee." God will answer when we cry. He will help us.

~ Samuel Kleyn

Psalms 5:2-3 says, "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." These verses bring us comfort because God hears and answers our prayers.

~ Gabrielle Langerak

Psalms 100:5 says, "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." This verse brings us comfort because no matter how you feel God is always with you.

~ Reuben Langerak

Psalms 106:1 "Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." Psalms 116:1 "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications." These verses bring us comfort because he will never leave you when you are in deepest woes.

~ Charlotte Meulenberg

Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." This verse will bring you comfort because you can always pray to God. God will always be with you.

~ Sadie Meulenberg

Psalms 105:2-3 "Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord." These verses bring comfort because it talks about singing, so we can sing to the Lord, and bring glory to him and all the work God has done for us. Remember him in all our acts.

~ Nolan Moelker

Psalms 7:1 says, "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." This verse brings us comfort because we trust in the Lord.

~ Alexander Oosterhouse

Romans 8:38-39 says "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." These verses bring us comfort because it said God will be with us no matter what.

~ Cora Overway

Psalm 121:2 "My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." We learned that many of God's people have hard things in their life. I know God will help you. And I will pray for you.

~ Trevor Rutgers

## TRASH TALK

Mr. Dan Hanko, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

What do you find lying near each soccer goal and backstop and trampled on the field? What do you see hiding under the pea gravel by the playground toys? What is clinging to the fence near the marsh land where the cattails grow? What do you observe skimming across the parking lot on a windy day? What is collecting in the corner east of the kindergarten door? You probably guessed the answer. It is trash – plastic bags that held precious snacks, ice cream wrappers from hot lunch, milk cartons, shiny wrappers from fruit snacks, and chip bags with only crumbs at the bottom. This is what I find while out on my weekly patrol of the playground. You would be amazed at how quickly it accumulates within a week or two.

How has this trash gotten here? There are trash cans in many locations around the school. Even the smallest child can push the swinging door open to insert the trash! The answer is not so surprising. Students eat snacks when first released from the classroom at recess. They walk down to the field or gaga pit as they munch on their cookie or chips in a bag. A game has begun and suddenly they find themselves on a team or dodging a ball that threatens to get them out of the game. They may be standing in line at the nine square court waiting to enter the game. The snack is finished, and they find themselves with an empty snack bag in their hand. The easiest thing to do is to throw it down and get involved with the action. The snack may not be finished, as it is set aside for the time being, with the intention of picking it up again. The bag may be loosely stuffed in a coat pocket, only to fall to the ground with the slightest stretch or turn of the body. The wrapper may be intentionally buried in the small stones when the merry-go-round is about to be pushed and "super-duper" pushes given for the swings. It may simply be thrown to the wind without a care or concern of where it ends up, for Jonny is "it" and the chase is on. The excuses are many for why trash was not placed in the proper place. But certainly each child knows where the trash should go. The task is not difficult, and it takes little time to put it in the right place.

This litter thrown on the playground reminds me of our speech. Do we not do this same thing with our words? We quickly throw our insults and criticism out there, taking no thought of where it might land or what harm it may do. Are we not careless with the comments we make to one another or the words we whisper to a friend? We think they are hidden, only to resurface and cause an unsightly scene later on. Comments are made so carelessly, thinking that no harm could be done. It is so easy to let our sharp words slip out rather than thinking about what should or should not be said. "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (James 3:8)

As it is our duty to take care of our trash, so it is our calling as God's covenant children to be careful of the words that spill out of our mouths. Let us help one another also. Remind

your friend and say, "Your words were not so kind to say. You should really say you are sorry." Or one could comment, "I would not have liked those words if they were said to me. You should be a little kinder." It would do well to remember the proverb of Solomon which says, "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (15:23) God has given us the great gift of speech and communication. Let us use our words carefully, with meekness, showing our spiritual strength and wisdom. Let us pray with the Psalmist, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14)



### **My Favorite Trip**

Anthony Kregel

Have you ever been to South Carolina? I have! We drove over nine hundred miles to get there. It took two days and one night to get there. It took place in August of 2020. We drove through the mountains of West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina.

First, we started packing clothes, food, lawn chairs, and sand toys. Our van was very packed! We got our own iPads to play video games on them. Preston, Brooklyn, and I had our own, so we could play them whenever we wanted to. We stopped at a lot of places on the way there. Our van had purple LED lights on the windows, and best of all, blinds on the windows.

When we got there we got souvenirs. We went to the beach and the pool. I got a pocket knife that had a palm tree and a moon on it. It also had my name on the other side of the knife.

Last, we packed the van and drove nine hundred miles back home. We took the same highway back as we did to get there. South Carolina has cool ships from World War I and World War II. You should go to South Carolina too!

### **A Present I Will Never Forget**

Brooklyn Huizinga

Have you ever gotten a present from your parents that made you super excited? I have! When I did I jumped up and down and hugged my mom and dad!

First, Mom and Dad called all of us kids to the counter. They asked us if we wanted a dog. All of us said, "Yes!" The next day we decided to go to somewhere where they were selling their puppies. So we went and looked on a Saturday and picked one out.

Two weeks later on a Saturday, when the puppies were eight weeks old, we went back and bought a chocolate lab. On the way home we stopped and got her some food, toys, and a collar. All that night Kahlua barked, whined, and cried for her mom, brothers, and sisters. My dad, Colton, and I slept on the floor by her crate to try to get her to calm down. We did not get much sleep for a couple of nights.

Kahlua will be two years old on December 8. We have trained her for a long time, and now she is very calm and gentle. She is a very good pet, and I love to take her for walks, play fetch, soccer, and Frisbee with her. Kahlua's favorite things to do are playing with her best friend Leo, my Aunt's dog, and going in the water to swim.

## **My Fun Vacation**

Mayla Mahtani

Have you ever gone on a vacation many hours away? I went on a vacation nine hours away. While we were there we went to a wedding and took a little vacation. It was so much fun!

One morning my mom woke me up and told me that we were going on a vacation to Tennessee! I was so excited! It was a long drive, but we had many things to do. When we finally got to the house we rented, we unpacked our stuff as fast as we could so that we could go fishing in a canoe. I did not catch anything, but it was still fun.

The next day or some day after that we went to a wedding. Lyndi and Tressa were flower girls. After the wedding was over, we did fun activities and ate dinner. The wedding was so much fun!

After the wedding we went on so many hikes and saw a lot of waterfalls and also went behind them. Then we went on a nine mile hike! We saw many waterfalls on the way, and at the end we saw one huge waterfall! It was so cool!

The last day I went into a cave. We learned a lot of history and interesting things. It was so cool! I hope I can go to Tennessee again!

## **A Strange Sound**

Hannah VanderVeen

One night when it was cold outside, during quarantine, and we were listening to a meditation, I heard a strange noise outside of the slider door! I looked through the curtains and guess what I saw? I saw a beautiful cat looking straight up at me with its glowing eyes! It was the most adorable cat ever!

The next morning the cat was still there. It stuck around our house most of the time. We started to ask mom every day if we could feed the cat. She eventually said that if the cat catches a mouse, we can feed it. All of the kids were so excited!

The following day we started up the mower. Immediately a little newborn mouse, who did not have fur yet, scurried out. Our cat ran over and ate it! We looked in the barn and saw a mom and baby mice.

Finally my Mom got the cat some food, toys, and a bed. We named it "Coon" because it looks like a raccoon. He loves us, and we love him a whole bunch!

## **An Exciting Day**

Sonya Minderhoud

Have you ever wanted to go to your friend's house? Well, that is what I was able to do a couple months ago! I got a call from my friend's mom. She asked if I could come over. When my mom said "Yes", I got ready to leave.

First, I got picked up by Hannah's nice mom. Then I was brought to McDonald's to have a hamburger for lunch. I was excited the entire way to Hannah's grandparents! When we got there I jumped straight out of the car and ran to the small lake.

Next, we got some tubes to sit on in the sparkling lake. Then we swam, canoed, and raced in the beautiful lake. One time we got into some canoes and went across the lake, and

we saw some waddling ducks. There were four of them, and I was so amazed. Then Hannah's mom called us back to leave and have a snack.

Finally we got back to Hannah's house and went through woods, played games, and read books. Then we had a great supper. I loved it! It was amazing! Then we went back outside and went on the tramp, sprinkler, and looked through the house. Then I had to go home. I wish I could go there again sometime!

### **My Birthday Party**

Lily Rutgers

Have you ever had a birthday party at a lake? I have. I shared it with my cousin Aubrey. We had a great time!

First we set up everything and the games. We filled up cups with water for a jump rope game. We got sprinkles, chocolate syrup, gummy worms, and a lot of other stuff to eat ice cream later.

Then everyone came and put presents on the table. I could not wait to open them! While we were waiting for people to come, some people went swimming. The water was freezing cold! (When you got used to it, it was not that cold.)

Next, when everyone came, it was finally time to open presents. Aubrey and I sat in chairs while others sat around us in a circle. We opened all the presents. I got a ton of things! I got a ton of candy! Then it was finally time to eat ice cream. It was amazing and so good!

Last, everyone went swimming and tubing. When we were tubing, a lot of people fell off. Some people fell off on purpose. I fell off once. We went pretty fast! It was stupendous!

When I had my birthday party, it was fantastic! It was the best birthday party I have ever had!

### **THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD**

Mr. Jason Boone, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

2020 has been a whirlwind of a year. Most of it has not gone how we would have liked. Nobody wanted school shut down last year, nobody wants to lose a loved one to cancer or COVID-19, no one wants to argue about disunity in the church, nobody wanted to see President Trump lose the election with allegations of election fraud being the excuse. Each week there seems to be more worry that school could get shut down as the COVID cases in West Michigan increase. We keep wondering and worrying what is going to happen next.

What does Scripture tell us of these things? Lord's Day 10 should be a good reminder to us that these things are not out of control but rather sovereignly mandated by our heavenly Father. He "upholds and governs... sickness and health... that all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand". We must understand that all of these things are used as tools of God to encourage us as His children to continue to "place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father". We should be amazed how God uses a microscopic virus to move nations. We should understand that God selects the leaders of the nations to bring us closer to the end times. We

should be thankful for Christian magazines to remind us to be constantly studying the Word and not grow complacent. God uses all of these things to bring us closer to Him.

It is very earthly of us to think that 2020 will soon be history and that we will return to normal soon. We are nearing the end times in which God will use the pale horse to wipe out a fourth of the population. Whether or not that is a figurative or literal number, I believe we can all agree that what is coming is much worse than COVID-19. We must not be afraid, but trust that the Lord is control of it all even when He takes our loved ones to their heavenly home before we would think it should happen. We must share Job’s confession that “the LORD gave, and the LORD taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, we study ancient civilizations and I attempt to incorporate how God uses these wicked nations. I think we sometimes forget how much worse things were in biblical times. For example, the Assyrians were ruthless people towards their captives. They would flay them alive, cut off limbs, gouge out eyes. Can you imagine living in Jerusalem, being surrounded by the Assyrians, being afraid of what they would do to you and your family? Or when the Babylonians came and conquered Jerusalem and took them captive to Babylon. Can you imagine an enemy country coming into your home and forcibly removing you from it and forcing you to move to another country where there is no church or school for your children to grow up in? Now think, these historical things will not compare to the persecution of the end times. Yet, God is in control.

To conclude this article, I want us to focus on the statement “nothing shall separate us from His love” – Question and Answer 28. All these things that happen to the biblical church and to the present church CANNOT take us away from God. He is in control; He is sovereign over all things. Yes, God allows horrible things to happen and even guides them for our benefit. We must be thankful for God’s providence in this year 2020.



*One of the first assignments we work on in 6th grade is writing “How – to” instructions. We focus on transition words and following a logical flow.*

### **How to Brush Your Teeth**

Leah Kalsbeek

Have your siblings ever made fun of you for having stinky breath? Here are some tips to help you. First, grab your toothpaste and brush. Next, unscrew your toothpaste. Third, squeeze a reasonable amount of toothpaste on your toothbrush. Then, screw the cap back on your toothpaste and set it down. Now wet the toothbrush- don't wash the toothpaste off! Next, stick your toothbrush on your bottom molars and brush back and forth. Do the same with your other teeth. Then wet the toothbrush, this time wash everything away. Dry your toothbrush by hitting it on the side of the sink. Now put the toothbrush away and spit out in your sink the foam filling your mouth. Make sure to run the water to wash away excess spit and foam. You are now done brushing your teeth, I can tell the difference already!

## **How to Make a S'more**

Lydia Minderhoud

Have you ever been camping and smelled smoke from nearby campsites and wanted a s'more? Well, here are a few instructions to make a s'more. First, you need to start a fire. Then you need to get marshmallows, Hershey's chocolate, and graham crackers. Then you need to put 1 marshmallow on a roasting stick. Next, you put it over the fire till the marshmallow turns a light brown color. Fifthly, you put however many pieces of chocolate you want on half a graham cracker. Next, take the marshmallow off the roasting stick and lay it on the half a graham cracker with chocolate on it. Then lay the other half a graham cracker on top of the marshmallow. Now, next time you are camping you can satisfy your hunger by making a s'more and eating it!

## **How to Bake the Best Brownies**

Alanna Kalsbeek

Did you know that Americans eat almost 1.5 billion brownies a year? Contribute to that total and bake your own! First, preheat the oven to 350F. Secondly, melt two sticks of butter in a large saucepan on the stove on low. Then, while the butter melts, measure two cups of sugar, half a teaspoon of baking powder, one cup of flour, half a teaspoon of salt, a few drops of vanilla extract, two thirds cup of cocoa powder, and four eggs. Next, take the butter off the burner and add previous measured ingredients, whisking vigorously. This is optional, but you can add a half a cup of chocolate chips or marshmallows. Furthermore, spray a 9 by 13 and pour the batter into it. For half an hour, let the brownies bake. In the meantime, clean up your mess. Finally, you can serve the brownies with any topping such as raspberries, strawberries, chocolate syrup, or even frosting. Now you can eat those fresh brownies topped with ice cream and caramel that you crave!

## **How to Fold Your Short Sleeve Shirt**

Brice Feenstra

Have you ever had it where your clothes fit in your case at the beginning of your trip but not at the end? Fold your clothes! These are my how-to instructions on how to fold your shirt. First, pick up the two sleeves. Secondly, take the ends of the sleeves and put them together so that your shirt looks like only a half a shirt. Next, fold the sleeves inwards. Then, take the bottom of the shirt and fold it upwards. Finally, start making the pile that your folded clothes will go in. Now your clothes will fit in your case!

## **How to Prank Your Siblings**

Olivia VanDenTop

It's April Fool's and you need to get revenge!!! Follow the steps below to get them back! Start with a fake spider or a black thing that looks like a spider. Next, grab a string about a foot long. Thirdly, grab a piece of tape about an inch long. Next, tie the string to the spider. Then, open your cupboard that you keep your cups in. Next, put the spider and the string on the top shelf and grab the other side of the string. Next, put the string on the tape and stick it to the inside of the cupboard, should be in the middle of the cupboard, close the cupboard. Next, calmly ask the person for a cup. When they open the cupboard the spider should fly out. Now, they should go AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!! And EWWWWW!!!! Now, that's how you get your revenge! 😊😬