



HIGHLIGHTS

Spring Issue

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March 2021

**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and
renew a right spirit within me.**

**Cast me not away from thy presence;
and take not thy holy spirit from me.**

**Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and
uphold me with thy free spirit.**

Psalm 51:10-12

VIEWING THINGS PROPERLY

Mr. Ron Koole, Principal

Ecclesiastes 1:1, "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem."

We and our children live in a world fallen in sin and under the curse. God has given to us the book of Ecclesiastes to instruct us with spiritual wisdom and to teach us a proper world-and-life view. The theme of Ecclesiastes is "the vanity of man's life in a fallen and sinful world." This vanity of man's life exists because of sin and God's judgment upon it. The idea of the word "vanity" is that of a breath or a vapor. The idea is that of futility or emptiness. The Preacher in Ecclesiastes will expose all of life to this vanity and there are many topics examined from many points of view.

However, God is realizing His counsel and purpose. The inspired writer (Solomon) teaches that life has meaning and value by having faith in Jesus Christ. One of the main purposes of the book is to guard the child of God (especially the youth) from the folly of the world that seeks its life and happiness here below. The true meaning of life and its purpose cannot be found in this world "under the sun". I mention briefly just a couple of topics taken from the first chapter which must be taught to our sons and daughters.

Ecclesiastes 1:3, "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

Solomon first examines the idea of labor. What does it profit? What does man's labor really accomplish? What of his labor abides? Man comes into the world naked, with nothing, and with what does he leave? Nothing! And how long is his name remembered? Life and death – a seemingly never-ending cycle. The Preacher points us to the creation itself to help us see this aspect of labor and vanity. He draws our attention to what are not merely natural processes but the work of God, the Creator. The creation itself is in constant motion and activity (it is full of labor). The cycles of the sunrise and sunset (verse 5), the blowing of the wind from north to south and whirling continually (verse 6), the rivers flowing into the sea and yet the sea is not full – the water cycle (verse 7) - demonstrate vanity. We must point these things out to the children. Nothing ever has fullness on the earth; it is all going in circles. All the labor of man and of the creation is a weary burden because it neither satisfies nor obtains an enduring end.

So we must warn the children "Don't be deceived. Don't make life a striving to heap up! It is foolish." Rather the Preacher will teach us that only by pressing all into the service of God with thanksgiving will we experience any happiness and purpose in life. Jesus warns us in Luke 12:15, "And he (Jesus) said unto them, take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

*Ecclesiastes 1:10, "Is there any thing whereof
it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been
already of old time, which was before us."*

A second important truth which Solomon teaches in the opening chapter of Ecclesiastes is that there is nothing new under the sun. Here too is a false delusion of which to warn the children. For man would try to convince us otherwise, boasting that he has achieved something NEW. But the Preacher is looking at the underlying principle or essence of things. The developments in science and technology may have the appearance of something new in some external form, but transportation is transportation, whether you ride on a donkey or speed away in a bullet train. The same is true of communication. Whether you handwrite a letter, email using a computer, or text using your smartphone, there is no advancement in life itself, but man the sinner only obtains more abundant ways to sin.

Of man and all his activity, there is nothing new under the sun because he is finite and fallen into sin. That which is new can only be of God and that by a wonder of His grace. The Preacher points us to God and the new things which He alone has wrought in Jesus Christ. Herein is wisdom!



SCHOOL BOARD NEWS



EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

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

We are thankful to God that he has so ordered things that we have been able to continue in-person learning at Hope School during this school year. Being able to work with students face to face makes a big difference in their ability to grasp concepts and in the teachers' ability to understand their needs. A little more than 2 months remain in this school year and absences due to COVID cases are way down compared to 1st semester. We thank all the volunteers and substitute teachers who have graciously stepped in to keep our school running smoothly during this year.

From our perspective the school year is moving swiftly. Already in January the Education Committee began looking toward the 2021-22 school year this fall by conducting annual interviews with our teachers, advertising and interviewing for openings in our teaching staff, and giving recommendations for the 2021-22 budget line items under the supervision of this committee.

During three evenings in January and February we met with each teacher, as well as our administrator and secretary for the annual teacher interviews with a view to renewing contracts for the coming school year. This good practice also provides a forum for the board, through its committee, to stay in close contact with our staff and to express our appreciation on behalf of all the parents for their faithful labors. The committee had a very profitable time with the teachers and staff and came away deeply thankful to God for providing us these Protestant

Reformed teachers who stand in our place each day. The theme for the interviews was, *Maintaining Covenant Education during COVID – Challenges & Opportunities*. In that connection we read together *Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 10 on God's Providence*.

Q. 27. *What dost thou mean by the providence of God?*

A. *The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, **health and sickness**, riches and poverty, yea, and all things **come**, not by chance, **but by His fatherly hand**.*

Q. 28. *What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by His providence doth still uphold all things?*

A. ***That we may be patient in adversity**; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things which may hereafter befall us, **we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father**, that nothing shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.*

These teachers join together with us to carry out the calling we have as parents to rear God's covenant children to spiritual maturity. We thank God that there continues to be close unity and cooperation between our teachers and parents in this work.

We are happy to report that all full-time staff who were planning to return next year have signed and returned their contracts. We will have a new 7th grade homeroom teacher next year. Jill Reitsma has ably taught 7th grade this year but desires to go back to helping in the Discovery program part-time next year. We welcome her back to that position. We are very pleased to report that Ethan Kalsbeek has signed a contract for the 7th grade homeroom position for next fall. Ethan is a former student of Hope School. Ethan has taught grades 5-8 the last two years at the Protestant Reformed School of Wingham and the previous five years teaching grades 4-6 at Genesis Protestant Reformed School in Lacombe. He is now making plans to move his family back to Michigan. We welcome Ethan to Hope School!

We will also have a new 6th grade teacher for next year. Due to Jason Boone's decision to leave the Protestant Reformed Churches, the board recently decided to dismiss Jason from his teaching position because the *Constitution for the Society of Hope Protestant Reformed School* requires that all teaching staff be communicant members in good standing in the Protestant Reformed Churches. We do express our appreciation for the work that Jason has done over the last three years at Hope School and we thank God for providing him as a means to instruct our covenant children during this time. We thank Mary Brummel, Miki Kooiker, and Stephanie Daling for filling in until the end of the school year to teach the 6th grade. The Education Committee has conducted interviews to fill this position for next year but at the time of this writing, no teacher has signed a contract for this position.

Pray for your board members who represent you in operating the school and pray for our teachers who stand in your place each day.

TRANSPORTATION REPORT

Scott Moelker, Chairman
Trevor Kalsbeek, Brad Schwarz

The doldrums of the winter months are declining and the warmth of the spring sunshine has once again lightened the mornings. A special thanks to our bus drivers, who for the last few months, awoke in the dark, cold and snowy mornings to be “super” bus drivers. The kind of bus drivers who knew that they were depended upon, who arrived early to get the bus started and warming for the major task at hand of picking up our children. Then with a warm and cheerful “Welcome!” greeted each and every child who stepped on board. Finishing the route with patience by bringing the precious cargo, our children, to school.

Our bus #15 was out of service for approximately two weeks getting some body work repaired. We’re thankful that Adams Christian School graciously allowed Hope the use of one of their buses during this time. We express our gratitude to our heavenly Father for the safe travels this school year.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

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

The Finance Committee continues to meet every month, counting and recording all of the income received. 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 73% of budget, and our expenses at 63% of budget, with \$114,713.39 of net income.

We will be starting the spring deficit drive shortly. The drive amount collected through February is \$219,368, which is 61% of our budgeted annual amount of \$315,000. We will send out spring drive letters and forms to collect the remaining amount balance of \$95,632. Over 26% 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 School
Actual to Budget - Fiscal YTD Last Month

YTD February 2021	Jul '20 - Feb 21	Annual Budget	67%
Ordinary Income/Expense			% of Budget
Income			
Church Collections	31,967.22	44,000.00	72.65%
Gifts and Pledges	219,368.35	315,000.00	69.64%
Gym Rental	180.00	5,000.00	3.60%
Hope Foundation	20,000.00	40,000.00	50.00%
Special Ed Society	5,937.30	8,060.00	73.66%
Tuition	597,150.01	784,690.00	76.10%
Z - Bus Fees	17,253.52	13,450.00	128.28%
Total Income	891,856.40	1,210,200.00	73.69%
Expense			
Accounting Fees	6,758.20	9,300.00	72.67%
Band Expenses	2,000.00	3,000.00	66.67%
Building and Grounds - Y/E	12,656.83	43,000.00	29.43%
Class Trip Fund	500.00	1,500.00	33.33%
Educational Supplies and Books	26,000.00	26,000.00	100.00%
Federation Dues	4,124.23	2,600.00	158.62%
Insurance, General	9,502.95	11,800.00	80.53%
Insurance, Group	76,896.45	112,062.00	68.62%
Insurance, HRA - Y/E	4,999.90	4,000.00	125.00%
Insurance, Workers Comp	2,091.40	2,113.00	98.98%
Janitors Supplies	3,086.74	4,000.00	77.17%
Library Fund	1,700.00	1,700.00	100.00%
Long Range Building Fund Trans	36,666.64	55,000.00	66.67%
Miscellaneous Expense	1,057.68	2,000.00	52.88%
Office Equipment - Y/E	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Office Supplies	165.30	1,000.00	16.53%
Payroll - Band / Choir	5,314.52	18,600.00	28.57%
Payroll - Building Maintenance	1,620.00	1,500.00	108.00%
Payroll - Discovery Room	18,054.77	49,060.00	36.80%
Payroll - Janitor	20,332.80	30,500.00	66.66%
Payroll - Lawn Maintenance	1,984.00	3,000.00	66.13%
Payroll - Librarian	2,286.50	4,200.00	54.44%
Payroll - Office	20,706.00	31,450.00	65.84%
Payroll - Substitute Teachers	1,080.00	1,000.00	108.00%
Payroll - Teachers	383,332.69	586,926.00	65.31%
Payroll - Teachers Aids	3,424.28	4,032.00	84.93%
Payroll - Technology Maintenance	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%
Payroll Taxes	33,275.35	56,133.00	59.28%
Phys Ed Uniforms	746.25	1,000.00	74.63%
Repairs and Maintenance	5,521.38	8,400.00	65.73%
Retirement Plan	9,994.04	18,531.00	53.93%

Hope Protestant Reformed School
Actual to Budget - Fiscal YTD Last Month

			67%
YTD February 2021	Jul '20 - Feb 21	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Snow Removal	270.00	3,500.00	7.71%
Teacher Classroom	600.00	1,600.00	37.50%
Teacher Development - Y/E	8,071.00	15,015.00	53.75%
Technology Supplies	12,275.00	12,000.00	102.29%
Utilities, Electric	12,344.45	23,000.00	53.67%
Utilities, Gas	4,468.79	13,000.00	34.38%
Utilities, Internet & Phone	1,894.74	2,800.00	67.67%
Utilities, Trash	1,122.90	1,700.00	66.05%
Utilities, Water & Sewer	788.33	1,300.00	60.64%
Z. Bus Expenses			
Bus Depreciation Fund Trans	11,666.64	17,500.00	66.67%
Bus Driver Cost Subsidy	209.00	1,000.00	20.90%
Bus Driver Payroll	15,910.50	22,250.00	71.51%
Bus Driver Payroll Taxes	220.72	1,580.00	13.97%
Bus Driver Workers Compensation	281.60	1,000.00	28.16%
Bus Insurance	1,585.80	2,316.00	68.47%
Bus Repair	3,886.81	7,000.00	55.53%
Gas and Oil	4,417.83	11,000.00	40.16%
Transportation Supervisor	1,250.00	1,250.00	100.00%
Total Z. Bus Expenses	39,428.90	64,896.00	60.76%
Total Expense	777,143.01	1,236,218.00	62.86%
Net Ordinary Income	114,713.39		
Net Income	114,713.39		

LET'S GET CAUGHT READING!

Mrs. Susann Grasman, 1st Grade

If you were to take a quick and simple poll, which category would your child fall into?

- A. LOVES to read!
- B. Could take it or leave it.
- C. Really dislikes reading – a lot.

Our goal at Hope school - and I'm guessing your goal at home too – is to get your child into the first category mentioned above – LOVES to read. That is why we have been celebrating March as Reading Month – our desire is to encourage a love of reading and to make sure that our students “get caught reading.” Here at school we have been taking part in a number of activities that encourage reading. Some examples are: Book Character Day, Read a T – shirt day, Poem day, and Teacher Swap day when teachers will switch classrooms and read to the kids in another grade. We are also having school wide scheduled DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time as well as Get Caught Reading Prizes. We are halfway through March as I write this, and so far the reading activities have been a huge success and enjoyed by staff and students alike. However, as great as this is, the ultimate goal of reading month is to encourage children to read all year long. For some, that can be a struggle and a real challenge. Reading can be hard work for a struggling student, and will not be considered interesting or enjoyable. For others, reading isn't hard work, but it is not interesting or exciting either. The question is then, “How can you get your child from disliking reading to loving and enjoying it? How do you motivate your child to read?” The following are some creative ways to encourage your child so that they are often caught reading!

1. **Make time for reading.** Reading should not be shoved into a jam packed schedule so that it seems like an unwelcome chore. Allow reading to be a relaxed and enjoyable time, free from pressure.
2. **Set aside a regular read-aloud time.** Choose a wide variety of high quality literature that appeals to your child's age and interests. Audio books also make a great option for a reluctant reader. And don't abandon read-aloud time as your children get older – although your teenager might not admit it – no one is too old for a great read-aloud. 😊
3. **Make sure that the reading material isn't beyond your child's reading abilities.** Even if the interest is there, if the book is too hard to read, the motivation will be lost.
4. **Create a cozy reading nook.** A special reading space may be all the encouragement your child needs to settle down and spend time with a good book!
5. **Look for a wide variety of reading material.** Kids often gravitate toward the fiction shelves at the library, but don't let them stop there. There are many other genres to consider: non-fiction, joke books, how-to books, biographies etc.
6. **Try buddy reading with your struggling reader.** Buddy reading can help improve a child's fluency and make him feel more comfortable with reading on his own.
7. **Have your reluctant reader read easy picture books to younger siblings.** This provides excellent practice, yet it doesn't feel like work.
8. **Let humor work its magic!** Read up to a certain part and then stop reading. If your child wants to hear the rest and find out what happens next, he'll have to read it himself!

9. **Exhibit a love of reading!** When kids observe that older siblings and adults love to read, they are more likely to develop a love of reading themselves!
10. **Provide access to books.** Use the public library. Use your school library. Create a home library. Be sure that whenever your child decides he wants to read, there is a book waiting at his fingertips. Make it possible that you and your kids “Get Caught Reading!”



1st Grade Student Writings

My favorite book is *Mr. Popper’s Penguins* because a penguin made a nest and lives in the freezer. I dressed up as Mr. Popper for Book Character Day.

~ Grady Hanko

I love to read *Knuffle Bunny*. It is about Trixie and his daddy at the laundromat. I like this book because it is hilarious.

~ Bridget Kleyn

My favorite book is *The Wonder Horse*. My teacher read it to me. I love it because it is a true story about a real horse.

~ Rielle Doezema

My favorite book is *Biscuit*. The dog in the book has my name.

~ Dakota Bleyenbergh

I love to read *the Bible* with my Dad. I like to do this because I learn more about God.

~ Seadon Kalsbeek

My favorite book is *Library Lion*. It is about a library.

~ Haley Miersma

My favorite book is *Harry Mclary*. Harry is the name of the dog in the story. I can read this story all by myself!

~ Cienna Jordan

Bartholomew and the Oobleck is my favorite book. The king does not like the things that come down from the sky. He asks his magicians to make something else come. They say that they will make oobleck. When it comes everything gets stuck to it.

~ John Kalsbeek

My favorite book is *The Cat and The Hat*. It is funny. The cat cleans up his mess at the end.

~ Beckett Veldman

My favorite book is *The Book With No Pictures*. It is very funny and uses silly words.

~ Barbara Quenga

I love to read *Curious George* books. He is a super funny monkey and sometimes he makes people laugh. He is a good character.

~ Daniel De Boer

My favorite book is about basketball. My mom read it to me. I want to go to a real gym and get better at basketball. When I get older I will be able to dunk and I will be a real basketball player.

~ Seth Cleveland

My favorite book is *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*. I like this book because it is fun. I wish that I had it at my house, but I don’t. It

is all about oobleck and the king and his servant.

~ Olivia Cleveland

My favorite books are the *Boxcar Children*. They are mysteries. I like learning about what the children in the book are doing.

~ Kenzie Huizinga

My favorite book is *The Cat in The Hat*. It makes me laugh sometimes.

~ Jolee Schimmel

I love to read *Flynn Saves The Day*. Flynn is a fire engine who puts out a fire. I can read it all by myself even though it has easy words! It is my favorite book!

~ Nick DeVries

I love to read *the Bible*. I believe it too. It tells you about the things that happened a long time ago. It tells the story of a donkey that talks. There are other stories too.

~ Lucy VanUffelen

I love to read *Frozen*. Elsa has imaginary powers and Kristof has a reindeer.

~ Emma VanSlambrouck

My favorite book is *Amelia Bedelia*. She is funny. My mom reads a lot of these books to me.

~ Lucy Van Den Top

My favorite book is *the Bible*. I learn about when Jesus was born and it speaks about God. Today I learned about when the walls of Jericho fell down.

~ Ruby Wassink

I like to read a book called *The Wonky Donkey*. I like to read that book when my mom does my hair. My dad laughs when I read it!

~ Brynlee VanOostenbrugge

I love to read because it helps me so much. Reading is so much fun!

~ Lily Langerak

MORNING BLESSINGS

Mrs. Julie Schwarz, 2nd Grade

In past years when I was an aide here at Hope School I would walk down the hall and hear the different classrooms singing for morning devotions. It was such a joy to hear them singing the Psalms that we hold so dear. Now, as a teacher, I am able to participate in this and it is one of my favorite times of the day. At the beginning of second grade we sing a lot of the same songs over and over, but soon the second graders become better readers and as they become more proficient with the Psalter, they begin to branch out and pick a variety of new songs.

As we sing the different songs in the morning, I am struck by how many of them speak of trusting in God as He is our refuge and our help. What a comfort this is! This past year has been filled with much heartache and trials for so many of God's people. There have been many afflicted with sickness. Many mourn for loved ones who have died. There is turmoil in our churches that affect our families. There is anxiety over what is taking place in the world. We find ourselves trusting in earthly things and we become anxious and despairing. Then we can sing the words to Psalter #7: "In God's love abiding, I have joy and peace...In His care confiding, I will sweetly sleep, for the Lord, my Savior, will in safety keep." Often we can become so anxious that we cannot sleep. Here we sing that when we trust in God we can sleep

peacefully for we know that God is taking care of us. These words remind us that it is only in God that we have true peace.

Psalter 100 is also filled with comforting words. We sing "Rest in the Lord with quiet trust, wait patiently for Him; tho' wickedness triumphant seem, Let not thy faith grow dim." We see so much wickedness all around us. We fear for our little children who have to grow up amidst all this wickedness. We worry for our young people who have to fight temptations all around them and we get overwhelmed, but then the words of the Psalmist point us back to Christ and remind us to put our trust in God and to have faith in God's promises.

I am so thankful that I can begin my day singing these songs of praise to God with my students. As singing is such an important part of the lives of the child of God and the Psalter numbers are so precious to us, I wanted my students to think about the words of their favorite songs and not just the tunes. Following, you will find their thoughts on why they like a particular Psalter number.



I like Psalter number 434 because I like the tune and it is pretty. It tells us that our Father is in heaven and we will be with our Father. Jesus teaches that we ask God for our daily bread. We are on earth but heaven is better. I like this song because it is a prayer and makes me happy.
~Millie DeMeester

I like Psalter number 140 because it shows me that God forgives our sins. Verse 1 tells us that God blots out our sins and that He washes our sins away. Verse 3 gives us a picture that God washes us white as snow.
~Brody DeVries

My favorite Psalter number is 53. I like the words because the words comfort me when I am sad. Verse 1 tells me that the Lord is my Shepherd. Verse 5 tells me that goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. This Psalter number makes me very happy.
~Ainsley Huizinga

I like Psalter number 199 because I like the tune and I like the words. It is my favorite number because verse 1 tells me that we praise God and His kingdom. Verses 4 and 5 tell me to praise His name and word and to praise His might, power, and glory forevermore. It is our doxology at Grace Church.
~Jayden Koole

My favorite Psalter number is 42. I like this number because the words talk about God's law. Verse 2 tells us that the precepts of the Lord are right. This number is my favorite because it makes me think about God's law.
~Preston Kregel

My favorite Psalter number is 383. I like the tune and it makes me have joy in my heart. I like the words because they comfort me. Verse 1 tells us that we must worship God and not sin. Verse 5 tells us that when we sin God will lead us the right way.

~Tessa Kregel

My favorite Psalter number is 140. I like this number because it talks about us being whiter than snow. Verse 1 tells us that God is merciful too. Verse 3 gives us a picture of being whiter than snow. This Psalter number comforts me when I think of it and when I sing it.

~Kelsey Minderhoud

My favorite Psalter number is 9 and I like it because I like the tune and the words comfort me. Also, it tells me Jehovah hears my words and He hears my cry. I like verse 2 because it tells me that God hates the evil and loves the good. I picked number 9 because I like the words and the words comfort me.

~Macy Moelker

My favorite Psalter number is 55. I like this number because it makes me feel calm. The words make me picture a shepherd who holds me in his arms. Verse 1 tells me how Jesus takes care of me. Verse 3 tells us God supplies me with everything I need. This Psalter number makes me happy.

~Tony Oosterhouse

My favorite song is Psalter number 199. It tells us that God's name never ends. Verse 1 tells us that His children shall be saved and live forever. Verse 3 tells that all the nations shall hear God's word. This Psalter number is special because it has a pretty tune to it.

~Bella Peters

My favorite Psalter number is 226. I like this Psalter number because I like the tune and it sounds pretty and it praises God's name. In verse 1 it said that God answers my prayers. Verse 3 tells me that God is my shield and comfort. This song comforts me in trials.

~Gavin Rau

My favorite Psalter number is 254 because I like the words and they tell us to worship God. Verse 1 tells us we keep singing to God. Verse 3 tells us that we bow before God and we are His sheep.

~Jude Rutgers

My favorite Psalter number is 14. I like the tune and the words because they tell me that God is stronger than men. Verse 1 tells us that God glorifies us. God crowned man with that glory so we can go to heaven. Verse 6 says all flocks and herds, beasts and birds and all that is in the sea glorifies God. This psalter number is very special to me because it tells me that God is always with me if He is with animals.

~Silas Rutgers

I like Psalter number 125. I like this number because it talks about the church being the bride of Jesus Christ. Verse 1 tells me about Christ the King. Verse 7 tells me that I should never stop praising God. This Psalter number is pretty and it comforts me.

~Darla VanDenTop

My favorite psalter number is 306. I like this number because it tells me that I have to praise God. Verse 1 tells me to never stop praising God and verse 3 tells me that I can always trust God and that He is king. I like 306 because it tells me that God reigns over all.

~Danton VanderVeen

My favorite Psalter number is 299. I like 299 because it shows confidence in the Lord. My favorite verses are 1, 5, and 7. Verse 1 tells us we rejoice in the Lord. Verse 5 tells us all lands shall see God's holiness. Verse 7 tells us the help of man is nothing so we ask Jesus to help us. I picked this number because I sang it at a program and the words are pretty.

~Finley VanOverloop

My favorite song is Psalter number 50. I like this number because the tune is nice and the words are Godly. Verse 1 tells us to come and fear Jehovah. Verse 2 tells us Christ has power over sin and death. Verse 3 tells us both high and low shall worship and both strong and weak shall bend. This number is special to me because it makes me happy.

~Austen Veldman

My favorite Psalter number is 226. I like this number because the tune is pretty and it talks about us having fellowship with God. Verse 3 tells us that the Lord will give it. This number is special to me because it helps me to praise God.

~Teddy Langerak

My favorite Psalter number is 197 because the first and second verse tell us to praise God. The first verse tells that God only does wondrous things. The second verse tells us to praise God.

~Nathan Price

My favorite Psalter number is 51. I like the words and how it starts. Verse 1 tells us that God's people talk about Him and worship Him. Verse 2 tells us that God feeds the meek and satisfies them. I like this number because it talks about God.

~William Cleveland

My favorite Psalter number is 251. I like this number because it has a nice tune and I like the words too. God tells us that we must thank the Lord for His blessings and His lovingkindness. Verse 2 tells us that God heals all the sick and suffering. I love this song because it comforts me.

~Levi VandenBerg

THE STEADY EYE

Mr. Brian Dykstra, 5th Grade

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
Proverbs 4:25

God warns us many times in Proverbs about disobedience. In this section of Proverbs, however, we are told how to obey Him, how to keep the heart for out of it are the issues of life. God just commanded us to put away a froward mouth. He now gives us direction regarding our eyes.

Our five senses connect us physically to creation. They are also inlets to our souls. How we observe and interact with the creation influences our spiritual life. This is especially true for our eyes. Christ warns us, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Jesus also warns us about the evil eye and the resulting spiritual darkness.

Knowing that our eyes exert a powerful influence in our lives, Solomon instructs us on how to use our eyes properly. We are to "look right on." Satan knows how powerful temptations presented through our eyes can be. The things on which we fix our eyes will direct the soul. The inspired apostle Peter knew this as well. He wrote of those who departed from the truth, "Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:" (2 Peter 2:14). This is clear to us in today's entertainment. The music, dancing and various forms of video presentations display to our eyes a world full of adultery which cannot satisfy a depraved desire for sin, and the world's lack of moderation in its use of alcohol fuels the fire of hedonistic passion.

Eyes have often led people into sin. Lot's wife did not keep her eyes straight ahead. She turned to see the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, evidently desiring the life she had enjoyed there, and was turned to a pillar of salt. During the destruction of Jericho, Achan saw among the spoils some treasures which he desired. He coveted, took the accursed thing, and all Israel suffered the consequences in a humiliating defeat. Then there is David. Instead of keeping his eyes fixed on the enemy on the battlefield, he stayed in Jerusalem where his wandering eye saw Bathsheba. His life would never be the same.

There are examples of eyes which are looking straight at a goal. The idea is someone who looks steadily at a mark in order to walk a straight path. When I mow my lawn in a diagonal pattern, I do not have the edge of the driveway or side of the road to keep the mower lines nice and straight. I must pick a spot where the grass meets the road on the opposite side of the lawn, stare at it and walk as straight as I can toward it. When I'm successful, the result is a nice, straight pattern.

Job directed his eyes this way. He did not want adulterous thoughts to enter his heart, so "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1) He would not allow his eyes to wander so as to arouse sinful desires. He would be careful with his eyes. Joseph did this though his master's wife certainly did not keep her eyes fixed on godliness. We read, "his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me." (Gen. 39:7) With her eyes she recognized Joseph to be attractive and desired to satisfy her sinful passion.

Joseph, however, guarded his eyes. In fact, Joseph would not even allow himself to be in the same room as she so his eyes could not fall upon her and lead him into temptation.

We must keep our eyes straight before us, on the single goal of glorifying God. Our eyes must be on the path God sets before us by His law. Keeping our eyes fixed shows our gratitude for all the blessings He has given to us in Christ. The pleasures of sin do not lie in the path of God's law. Distractions to a thankful life lie to the right and left. If we allow our eyes to wander from the single purpose of living a thankful life, we expose ourselves to myriad temptations. Were we to follow our eyes, seek the things of this world and satisfy the desires of the old man of sin, we would lose the feeling of God's favor. We would no longer feel the spiritual warmth of God's gracious countenance which is more than life to us. (Canons V, Art. 5 & 13)

Which brings us to eyelids. "Let thine eyelids look straight before thee." None of the commentaries on my bookshelf mentioned the significance of why Solomon switches from "eyes" to "eyelids." However, there must be more to the divine inspiration of scripture than allowing writers' literary discretion to avoid dull repetition of terms.

Here is my attempt in dealing with "eyelids." When I walk a pathway which is smooth and has nothing which would cause me to stumble, I can keep my eyes up to see distant things and enjoy the scenery. However, when the path has many obstacles and I must place each step carefully, my eyes are down. This is when someone coming from the opposite direction sees my eyelids, not my eyes. In the next verse Solomon writes, "Ponder the path of thy feet," which has the idea of having to walk carefully. We must have our eyelids straight before us when the path of life becomes more difficult or presents more dangers.

We must take this admonition seriously. Living a Christian life is no joke. This world is not a place of amusement for us. God does not call us to serve ourselves. We may not live a frivolous life. We are engaged in a serious spiritual battle. The stakes are high. Satan is as a lion seeking his prey, and we had better be alert, keep our eyes fixed straight before us and not allow our eyes to see the sinful distractions which the world offers. If we cannot control our eyes, if we realize they constantly lead us into sin, Christ instructs us, "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." (Mt. 5:29) It is that serious.

Being careful about the use of our eyes is an aspect of keeping our hearts. We must protect our spiritual eyes at all times. We want to enjoy fellowship with God through grateful living. This is the true life of our hearts. May God help us and our children to have our eyes look right on, and let our eyelids look straight before us.



The 5th graders were asked why they were in a Christian school. Here are some of their responses:

Why do I go to Hope School? I go because Hope School teaches about God in everything. I go because my parents are covenant parents and let me go to a Christian school that teaches about God.

~ Daniel Langerak

We are here because our parents sent us here to learn about God. We don't learn about God just in Bible but also in math, reading and geography. Some people have a hard time liking school though. The teachers work very hard to help us learn. We should be very thankful for a Christian school because some people don't have one. Learning about God is very important in school. It is also important to go to school because it helps us later in life when we get older. We are very thankful for this school.

~ Lucy Schimmel

I am here at Hope school to learn things. Our parents send us here for a Christian education., and I am thankful for it. Here at Hope School, we are able to spend time with other Christians. I also go to Hope School because it is quite close to my house. Also, my parents send me here. When my parents baptized me, they said that they would give me a Christian education. They have and they are. We are also here to learn about God. At a public school we would probably be mocked and definitely would not learn about God.

~ Gwen Overway

My parents sent me to Hope School so I could get a Christian education. The public schools do not teach God's word. Hope School teaches us a Christian perspective in all the subjects we learn about. That is why my parents sent me to Hope School.

~ Colton Huizinga

I am at Hope School because it is a godly school. I have godly parents that sent me here to get a good Christian education. There are also other Christian students to be with. They wanted me to learn about God and treat the other students well and be kind to them. My parents also wanted me, when I grow up, to be a good, godly example. That is why I am at Hope School.

~ Jacob DeBoer

WHEN AM I EVER GOING TO USE THIS?

Mrs. Jill Reitsma, 7th Grade

The question which serves as the title for this article is echoed by many students throughout their school days. The 7th graders and I have discussed this particular question many times already this year. Learning does not mean you will use a particular skill every day of your life, but that we are equipped to recall or use our knowledge and skills in different situations of life.

We don't study World War II or the Civil War because we will grow up and fight in a war. We study the reasons people go to war, and the outcomes of the war, to learn how to view these conflicts in the light of God's Word. We learn how to diagram a sentence in English so that we have a better grasp of proper writing skills and to be able to articulate and express complete thoughts. Will we ever dissect a frog again? Probably not, but we do it in school to have a better understanding of the muscular, respiratory, and circulatory systems and how they work. By understanding how they work in a frog, you understand how they work in a human. We don't just learn to memorize verses in Bible class, we apply those verses to our walk and

attitude here on earth. Math teaches us how to think through problems and decide on solutions to the problems. Higher levels of math challenge our thinking and we can become more efficient problem solvers.

One thing is guaranteed: we will have to solve problems our entire life. Life problems. Some will be simple and some will be difficult. All this learning is nothing apart from the Word of God, knowing Christ as our Savior and being filled with the Holy Spirit. God requires that we live according to His teachings. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. *The beginning* does not mean that "the fear of the Lord" is left behind in the course of obtaining knowledge, but that it is the controlling principle of it. We are also to be a light, shining in a dark place, and show our faith in word and deed in respect to those around us. Psalm 119:105 teaches us "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." By grace, Christian education is a wonderful way in which that is accomplished. We must be equipped to be Godly citizens seeking the Heavenly kingdom. Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.



Here are a few samples of some of the writing assignments 7th graders worked on this year. Enjoy!!

Book Review by Miriam Marcus

Book: *The War Below*

By: Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch

Genre: Historical Fiction

After escaping from a Nazi slave labor camp in Ukraine, 13-year-old Luka Barukovich only wants to get back to his home in Kyiv, Ukraine and reunite with his family. The words of Luka's pharmacist father sticks in his mind, "You have the tools to heal yourself." These are the words that helped him when on a loving couple's farm, a long trek in the mountains in Germany, and an encounter with the underground Ukrainian Insurgent Army hideout. He is so set on surviving, that at one point, Luka even kills a Nazi soldier to stay alive. After the war, Luka searches with perseverance for his precious work-camp friend, Lida, and his loving parents. The author continues to show the double sided tyranny that many Ukrainians experienced. First forced to work in dangerous German ammunition factories while under Nazi control, then to be forced after the war to suffer under Stalin, (when their land returns to Russian control) where anyone who 'allowed themselves' to be captured by the Nazis was considered a traitor.

This book was so hard to put down. Even though many of the names were a mouthful, it makes you understand that these Ukrainians were real people, who were up against very bad people, some even being their own country-men. The author used description that painted a picture in your head on what it was like for Luka and other confused Ukrainians, and accurately shows what was going on in the Kyiv people's minds.

The events of the story show us that just like Luka was a survivor of so many things, we as Christians also have this in our lives. It says in the Bible that God works all things together for our good, and just as all the circumstances added up to Luka's safety, all things that God

does work together for His people. Even in the most difficult circumstances, it is for our good. We need to give thanks in all situations God puts us through.

This book is for an audience that likes survival and getting their heart racing a little bit. It will keep you on the edge of your seat, and if you read it in bed, you just might be up all night reading!

Book Review by Maddie Schwarz

Book: *Emma's Secret*

Author: Veda Boyd Jones

Genre: Historical Fiction

Emma's Secret starts out in Cincinnati in 1832. Emma has been through a massive flood of the Ohio River and an epidemic of Cholera. This book is about how women are expected to grow up and take care of the home and be a wife, but Emma wants to be more than that. She wants to do exciting things. Eleven year old Emma and her cousin, Rob, hide in the tallest room hoping the raging water won't reach them. Is their family safe? Will they survive the dangerous waters slowly creeping upon them? The town is full of dirty pollution from the flooding. A few weeks later, they hear of a disease making its way to Cincinnati. A disease called Cholera that kills people in hours, and it spreads fast!

Both characters are kind and loyal to their friends. They are religious and go to church. Emma has a secret, she tells a lie. One time at church she feels guilty because of her lie. Emma thinks to herself, "Is it really wrong to lie when I'm hiding the truth for a good reason?" She decides to share her lie, knowing that is the right thing to do. We must trust in God because everything is His will.

The author made the book exciting by always making you wonder what was going to happen next. There are many interesting facts about Cholera and what could happen during a flood. It was easy to read and there weren't any slow parts. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes historical events and a little mystery. Emma has secrets that she is dying to tell, do you want to hear them?

THE VIRGINIA ADVENTURE

By Jeremy Rutgers

Last summer I went on a trip to Virginia. We stayed in a resort in the mountains. We played many things, went swimming, and climbed in the mountains. I went with my younger siblings, my parents, and my aunt and uncle with two of their kids.

We stayed in a resort in Virginia. It was about a 10 to 12 hour drive. One of the first things on the way was a stop at the Richmond National Battlefield Park. This is at the site of one of the major Civil War battles. We saw where different troops were stationed, and many important places that contributed to the Union winning the war. This was one of the best parts of the trip. Another thing we did was swim, and canoe in Lake Laura. We also went fishing, and walked around the lake.

Our resort was located on a golf course, with a river visible out the back window. On the first day, Trevor, Jacoba, and I decided to wade through the river with water shoes. Once we were about 40 ft. down the river, we started seeing golf balls. We kept going and kept finding more golf balls. After about 5 minutes, our hands and pockets were full of them. This is when Trevor and I really started collecting golf balls. Over the week, we went there twice

more, and found over 200 golf balls. Another thing we did was actually go golfing. We got to play golf and hit at the driving range.

Although this was all fun, the best part of the trip was the hikes. One hike had a lot of cliffs and rocks that we could climb up. Another hike we did was very pretty. It was all uphill, and it was a treacherous hike. This was the best because of the great view at the end. You are standing on a cliff, and you could see for many miles from the ridge you are on. This ridge is very steep and drops down around 150 feet. These activities are some of the many things that made this one of the best vacations of my life.

These activities aren't the only thing that made this trip worth going on. I got to spend time with family and cousins, and spend time playing in the great outdoors. I really enjoyed it, and wish I could return there again.

SHOOTING STARS

By Raquel DeVries

My camping trip could not have been better, until I heard we were going to watch the stars. At first I didn't really think much about it, but when I found out there was a meteor shower, I couldn't wait.

About 11 o'clock at night while watching the stars; I spotted one. Just a streak through the sky, but so beautiful, wonderful, and amazing that was. It was a shooting star. Never had I seen a real shooting star before, but now they were happening all over in the vast sky, just right above me. There were many shooting stars. I probably could have watched them for more than I had, but I knew how beautiful they really could be.

It was a wonderful thing to stand there and know who created them and create a memory of my own that would never fade away. That sight was one of the most beautiful sights ever. I knew that watching the stars would be fun. How could we ever give credit to the Creator, who created everything, for we are mere sinful creatures, specks of dust, who can see his creation? We also can praise Him and learn about Him in studying his magnificent creations. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear," Hebrews 11:1. We study God's word so we can learn. We also study his creation so we can see the wonderful ways of God. He is perfect and creates everything perfectly, so we must give Him all the credit. We must give all the glory to God, and we must not take anything for ourselves. We are nothing compared to God. Marvelous are His wondrous ways. It was amazing to be able to be outside watching the beautiful stars.

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN

To me, what it means to be a Christian, is to follow Christ with everything we have. By following Him, we show our being filled with love for Him. In Mark 12:30, Christ commands us to love God and our neighbor with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Christ also commands us to witness to the world in Matthew 5:14. Even though it might be our sinful nature to hide our light, we have to shine. The world must see our love for God. Our love shows to the world that there actually is a reason to love because you can't love a nothing. Our

witnessing might bring others to God's truth. We follow Christ by obeying Him and acting as He does.

~ Julia Kleyn

Being a Christian is being a follower of Christ. This means that we must tell others about Him in everything that we do. We can witness to others through our words and through how we act towards one another. We must also be in constant prayer, not as the Pharisee in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, who prayed with proud words for others to hear, but we must pray in humility, as the publican, who knew of his sin and knew his need for forgiveness. We can do all of this through the Holy Spirit, who gives us faith to know and trust God and His Word about Jesus. Through faith we can know that He has all control over everything in our lives, and no matter how bad the circumstances may seem, He will do everything for our good.

~ Levi Mahtani

The dictionary defines the word "Christian" as someone who "belongs to the religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ". This is a proper definition, but it does not truly show how wonderful being a true believer is. To me, being a Christian is not just following Christ, but living in Christ. Living in a sinful world, there are many temptations and hard decisions to make. As a Christian, I am able to look at these situations through the Word and understand what is right. Christians must be the salt of the earth that has savor by living by what is true in God's eyes. Being a Christian encourages me to study and understand the Word that God has given to me to grow in that knowledge. With the Word we see how greatly God has blessed us, and we are grateful to Him even in hard times. Psalm 62:8 says, "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah." True Christians live their lives to the glory of Jesus Christ and show their love and devotion to Him in everything they do.

~ Sidney VanderVeen

Acrostic Poem by Donnie Peters

Countries from all around
Ongoing miles upon miles of land yet to be
seen
Long wars not to be desired
Ongoing rivalries between families, kings and
countries
Never ending hardships
Indians
Enticing riches yet to be found
Stories and myths of treasures unfound

Acrostic Poem by Levi Overway

Companies in England fought
Over
Land and
Over sea trade
Nations fighting over Ohio Valley
Iroquois Confederacy changes the tides
Enlightenment
Spread

HOPE CLASSIC

Saturday, May 22

**Online registration will
open soon!**