HIGHLIGHTS

~ Thanksgiving Issue ~
2026



Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.
– James 5:7

THE VALUE OF STRUGGLE IN LEARNING

Mr. Dan Kuiper, Principal

Struggle is not something we usually get excited about. We like things that come easily and situations where we succeed. Yet, most of us can think of times when we learned a lot by working through a practical problem. Perhaps it was installing a dishwasher for the first time. The process may have been frustrating, but we probably learned something about how a dishwasher works, a little about plumbing, and maybe even something about electricity. We often see the value of such experiences in our own lives. Yet, as parents and teachers, it can be hard to watch our children struggle with a difficult assignment or have trouble understanding something new. Our first instinct is often to help them immediately and, in doing so, remove the need for them to struggle. But struggle, when properly guided, is an important part of learning. Some of the best learning takes place when students have to work through a problem rather than simply being given the answer.

The value of working through difficulties is not simply a matter of personal experience. Research in education shows that some struggle actually helps students learn better. Researchers sometimes use the term *desirable difficulty* to describe challenges that make learning harder at first but lead to better understanding and help students remember what they have learned over time.[1] For example, it may be easier for students to reread their notes than to close their notebook and try to recall the information from memory. It may also be easier for a student to repeat information exactly as it was presented than to explain it in his own words. Students may also prefer to be shown exactly how to solve a problem rather than work through it themselves, which often involves making mistakes and figuring out how to correct them. However, trying to recall information from memory helps students retain it better than simply rereading it. Explaining ideas in their own words helps them better understand what has been taught. And working through problems often leads to a deeper understanding than simply being shown how to solve them. All these approaches require students to think more deeply, and that effort is an important part of learning. Therefore, teachers do well to incorporate these kinds of challenges into their lessons and homework assignments rather than always trying to make learning as easy as possible. This is especially important to understand today, when answers are so easy to find on the internet and through artificial intelligence. These tools make schoolwork quicker and easier, but they remove the effort that helps students learn well.

Our children should understand that learning will always involve some level of struggle. This is partly because of the effects of sin and partly because we are finite creatures. But they should also understand that struggle is not always a bad thing. In fact, some difficulty is good and necessary for growth. This is true in school, but it is also true in our Christian walk. Sin affects our minds and makes it harder for us to think clearly and understand things rightly. It also affects our willingness to do the hard work needed to learn best. We are easily distracted and usually look for the easiest way to do things rather than put in the effort needed to grow in understanding. Helping children see that struggle is a normal and helpful part of learning can shape how they respond to challenges in school. Rather than becoming discouraged or looking for the quickest way out, they can be led to face difficulties with patience, determination, and

[1] https://bjorklab.psych.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/04/EBjork_RBjork_2011.pdf

a willingness to think for themselves. This attitude is important for another reason as well. As Christians, we are called to grow in our knowledge of God and His Word. This takes careful thought, a willingness to wrestle with difficult truths, and a desire to understand how those truths apply to our lives. Thus, learning to work through difficulties in the classroom can help students develop qualities that will serve them well throughout their lives as Christians.

Struggle is not always enjoyable, and it should never reach the point where students become overwhelmed. However, we can view it positively when we recognize its value for learning and growth. As noted earlier, we often see the value of working through practical problems in our lives. We see the same thing in athletics, where hard work and training are necessary for improvement. The same is true in education. Therefore, our goal should not be to remove every difficulty our children face. Rather, we want them to understand that some struggle is a normal and helpful part of learning. We want to encourage them to face challenges with hard work, patience, and a willingness to think. As parents and teachers, may God give us the wisdom to guide our children through these experiences and help them see the value of thinking carefully and working diligently. In this way, struggles in the classroom can be used as opportunities not only to grow academically but also to develop habits and character that will serve our children throughout their lives.

FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

EDUCATION COMMITTEE ARTICLE

Rodney Rau, Chairman
Scott Moelker, Brent Kregel, Kevin Huizinga

It's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is almost upon us. The school year is off to a good start, and we are already over 25% of the way through the school year. Thanks be to our heavenly Father for the blessing that Hope School is! Because of God's sovereign care and control, we have been given a Christ-centered institution where our covenant children are instructed day by day to grow in their knowledge of and love for their Creator. What a blessing it is to have distinctly Reformed Christian schools where we have the confidence that our children are spiritually cared for and loved by their teachers. It is our prayer that, by God's grace, we remain faithful in our calling to love and support Hope PRC School.

In December, the Lord willing, we look forward to Laura DeVries completing her studies and joining our staff to head up the work in our Discovery Room. A huge thank you to Becca Lubbers and Jenn Medema for capably running the program until then. In addition, RTI groups have been introduced for our K-3 students this year. Thank you to the classroom teachers and Jill Reitsma for adjusting their schedules to allow for this change, which we believe will be of great benefit to our students.

The Technology Committee has been busy over the summer replacing and updating equipment where needed. They recommended a network refresh to keep our internet running efficiently and fix performance bottlenecks. Thank you to Dan DeVries for keeping our technology reliable and usable every day.

Our Robotics teams are working hard every week on their programs and robots. Thank you, Matt Elzinga, Matt Moelker, and Ben Petroelje for another year leading the program! The students look forward to the RoBowl on Saturday, Nov. 21.

As we reflect with gratitude on God's provision for Hope School, II Timothy 3:14 – 15 reminds us: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

FEDERATION, PUBLICITY, CIRCLE CONTACT COMMITTEE (FPCC) REPORT

Jamie Langerak, Chairman
Brent Kregel & Rodney Rau

Colossians 2:6-7 – As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Federation

The annual Federation Association meeting was held on October 1. The committee members from Hope school attended along with many other delegates from local schools and others from across the United States through a video link. Kyle Bruinooge was reappointed to a three-year term as the Executive Director. Mark VanDyke from Adams School and Dan Howerzyl from Hope Redlands were voted in as the new board members of the Federation. The Teacher Training Program continues to be the heart of the Federation work. Tier 1 of the program has been refined with the intent to work with prospective teachers through each year of college. Structured as a progressive 4-year program guiding students from general encouragement in Year 1, to worldview analysis in Year 2, practical classroom management in Year 3, and interview and career preparation in Year 4. Through group touchpoints, job shadowing, and the first-tier summer gatherings, the goal is to keep these future educators connected to our schools long before they step into their first classroom. The Federation Association is also working on setting up a board member orientation. The goal is to train and help new school board members and encourage experienced board members. The Federation is planning to offer a workshop for this once it is developed and ready.

Publication

The Hope school website is a great way to keep up with the events going on at Hope School. You can see a calendar showing the upcoming events of the school, the full sport schedules for current sport seasons, and even a nice little write-up on each of our staff members. In case you misplaced your weekly memo, you can find a copy of that here too! Students and parents can use the site for checking grades, and the students can do some of their assignments from the Google Classroom link. There is information regarding the School Circle, the Foundation, and the Federation of PRC Schools as well. Our secretary, Laurel Lotterman, does much of the updating on the website, and she is much appreciated. Laurel also does a great job of getting all the *Highlights* articles together and published throughout the year.

Circle Contact Committee

The contact committee communicates with the School Circle throughout the school year. Through their fundraising, they provide funds for projects that are not planned on in the annual budget or that are of a special nature. The School Circle gave generously for the parking lot project this past summer and also covered the redecorating of some of the classrooms after the new cabinets were installed. The new cabinets in multiple classrooms and Dan Kuiper's office were funded through the Circle and completed this past summer. They help keep the school top notch with their keen eye for things that are needed. The Circle also covers the cost of the Robotics program at our school. On behalf of the Board, our committee would like to thank the School Circle for all the work they do to assist Christian education at Hope. Thanks a lot for all your time and work!

Have a Blessed Thanksgiving everyone!

SPECIAL BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Building Committee would like to report that the parking lot project has been mostly completed. There are a couple of finishing touches to take care of, but overall, we have been very pleased with how the project has gone. You may have noticed that the driveway to Wilson is not in the location that was approved at our Society meeting, and this is due to MDOT requiring more distance between our driveway and the Riverbend intersection. There have been a couple of events at school already, and we've received positive feedback about the additional parking. The junior high children have also been making good use of the new pickleball courts by the bus barn.

The Building Committee is happy to report that the project will be completed well under the budget approved at the Society meeting. The extra funds will be returned to the Building and Grounds Fund and the Long-Range fund. Hope School continues to be blessed with supporters who are willing to give of their financial means as well as their time to keep our school running. For this we continue to give thanks to God.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November 26-27	Thanksgiving Break
Tuesday, January 19	Band/Choir Concert – 7PM
Wednesday, December 23	Christmas Assembly – school gym - 1:15PM
December 24-Jan 1	Christmas Break
Friday, January 15	End of 1st Semester (1/2 day)
Saturday, January 16	Family Fun Night – 4-7:30PM
January 18-21	MAP Assessments
Friday, January 22	Fearfully & Wonderfully Made Day
February 4-5	Parent/Teacher Conferences
Thursday, February 11	PTA
Friday, February 19	Friends & Family Night
Friday, February 26	Buddy Day

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Vance Grasman, Treasurer,
Alex, Kalsbeek, Brad VanOostenbrugge

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." – Psalm 24:1

What a great truth of God's word that he reveals to us that everything is owned by our Lord Jesus Christ. Included in this is the "fulness thereof". There is not one object or being that the Lord does not possess. He owns all things in full. He sovereignly governs all things so that his name might be glorified. Included in the fulness thereof is our relatively small Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School. A school that is owned by God and is run by us as parents, who also belong to the Lord. The purpose of this school is to give a place for the education of his children from a reformed biblical perspective. Together let us be thankful to the Lord who owns and gives all things so graciously unto us.

The end of October marks 4 months (1/3) into our fiscal school year. Below are the budget results 33.3% of the way through. To date we are just under on our revenue mark, and about right on the mark with our budgeted expenses. We expect our revenue to get back in alignment with drive funds and special education support coming in and continued tuition payments being made. Overall, the numbers are looking healthy. Most items that are near or over 100% to budget are expected to be minimal for the rest of the year.

The Fall Drive is under way. We have an annual goal of $378,000. We hope to collect at least half ($189,000) before December 18. At this point, we are sitting a little over $116,000 from hitting that goal. Please prayerfully remember to support the school in this way as we go alongside our tuition paying families in their covenantal obligations.

Our tuition paying families are doing an excellent job with keeping up on their payments. The committee is grateful for this and for everyone's support of Christian education at Hope School. It truly takes a combined effort by so many to support the school. It is a privilege of your committee to witness this through the entirety of the school finances. If there are any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of the committee.

One final item to report is the annual audit of our financials from the previous year 2025-26 by Kaptein, Dykstra, and Co. The records were found to be in good order. We are thankful for their work on reviewing this for us and helping us file our tax-exempt IRS Form 990.

Actual to Budget July - October '26

Income	Total	Budgeted	%
Church Collections	$18,586.06	$50,000.00	37.2%
Gifts and Pledges	$72,075.00	$378,000.00	19.1%
Gym Rental	$3,185.00	$4,500.00	70.8%
Hope Foundation	$30,000.00	$60,000.00	50.0%
Miscellaneous			
Special Ed Society	$0.00	$16,922.00	0.0%
Tuition	$313,580.31	$888,680.00	35.3%
Z - Bus Fees	$14,315.09	$36,140.00	39.6%
Total Income	**$451,741.46**	**$1,434,242.00**	**31.5%**

Expenses			
Accounting Fees	$1,742.75	$7,500.00	23.2%
Accounting Software/Fees	$225.78	$2,800.00	8.1%
Band Expenses	$2,000.00	$3,000.00	66.7%
Building and Grounds - Y/E	$13,356.56	$50,000.00	26.7%
Class Trip Fund	$1,000.00	$3,000.00	33.3%
Educational Supplies and Books	$20,000.00	$37,000.00	54.1%
Federation Dues	$0.00	$4,439.00	0.0%
Insurance, General	$8,930.00	$18,285.00	48.8%
Insurance, Group	$34,666.33	$122,689.00	28.3%
Insurance, HSA - Y/E	$5,055.89	$5,000.00	101.1%
Insurance, Workers Comp	$1,409.95	$2,478.00	56.9%
Janitors Supplies	$745.21	$4,500.00	16.6%
Library Fund	$1,000.00	$2,000.00	50.0%
Long Range Building Fund Trans	$0.00	$0.00	N/A
Miscellaneous Expense	$1,002.26	$2,000.00	50.1%
Office Equipment - Y/E	$0.00	$1,500.00	0.0%
Payroll - Athletic Director	$0.00	$3,000.00	0.0%
Payroll - Band	$6,788.70	$20,785.00	32.7%
Payroll - Building Maintenance	$225.75	$2,000.00	11.3%
Payroll - Choir	$4,250.00	$8,350.00	50.9%
Payroll - Discovery Room	$26,124.68	$103,072.00	25.3%
Payroll - Janitor	$12,733.36	$38,200.00	33.3%
Payroll - Lawn Maintenance	$3,061.75	$5,400.00	56.7%
Payroll - Librarian	$1,440.00	$5,600.00	25.7%
Payroll - Office	$11,316.00	$43,700.00	25.9%
Payroll - Substitute Teachers	$0.00	$2,000.00	0.0%
Payroll - Teachers	$227,183.48	$694,212.00	32.7%
Payroll - Teachers Aids	$3,927.00	$29,146.00	13.5%
Payroll - Technology Maintenance	$0.00	$1,000.00	0.0%
Payroll Taxes	$20,259.32	$72,174.00	28.1%
Phys Ed Uniforms	$626.58	$500.00	125.3%
Repairs and Maintenance	$2,359.16	$10,000.00	23.6%
Retirement Plan	$6,050.92	$22,430.00	27.0%
Snow Removal	$0.00	$3,500.00	0.0%
Teacher Classroom	$1,000.00	$1,700.00	58.8%
Teacher Development - Y/E	$2,768.49	$2,000.00	138.4%
Technology Supplies	$18,327.50	$18,170.00	100.9%
Utilities, Electric	$8,796.01	$22,000.00	40.0%
Utilities, Gas	$892.33	$12,000.00	7.4%
Utilities, Internet & Phone	$1,592.25	$4,800.00	33.2%
Utilities, Trash	$714.46	$2,200.00	32.5%
Utilities, Water & Sewer	$760.14	$1,400.00	54.3%
Total Bus Expenses	$37,253.73	$82,871.00	45.0%
Total Expenses	**$489,586.34**	**$1,478,401.00**	**33.1%**

WHAT IS NEW IN DISCOVERY K-3?

Mrs. Jill Reitsma, Discovery Center

There are some new changes and a few new names to let you know about this school year.

We now have a Mrs. Dykstra, instead of a Miss denHartog. Congratulations, Spencer and Jayanne! Also, a Hope School alumni teacher is back working in the Discovery Center, Mrs. Connie DeVries!

This school year we have implemented an RTI time for grades K-3. What is RTI you might ask? *It is a Response to Intervention*. RTI is based on screening (or assessments) given to ALL students in the class to track progress. Each student's performance is based on what has been taught and in relation to his/her peers. These are given three times a year, fall, winter and spring. We follow benchmark cut off points to determine who needs extra support outside of the classroom:

1. Scoring above benchmarks indicates the student is 90% likely to achieve important math or reading outcomes in the classroom.
2. Being *on* the benchmark indicates the student is 70% likely to achieve outcomes.
3. Scoring below the benchmark (or cut off point), indicates the student is only 20% likely to achieve subsequent goals without additional, targeted and sometimes intensive support.

We use a tiered approach to intervention here at Hope School:

- Tier one is classroom environment and the regular classroom teacher.
- Tier two is taking a student out of classroom for targeted small group skills and concepts.
- Tier three is individual intervention on various skills and concepts.

Each grade has an appointed time in the morning or afternoon, Monday – Thursday for 20 minutes. During this time the classroom teacher is doing supplemental work and not teaching any new skills or concepts.

The main goal of RTI is to be proactive in identifying struggling students and provide intervention before the student falls too far behind. It also aims to reduce referrals for Special Education.

Parent involvement is important and open communication is necessary for the benefit of each student's Christian education, whether they are receiving extra support outside the classroom or not. I pray daily for parents to be invested in their child's education, walk of life and progression in school. May we all work together for the good of covenant education.

WAS HE SAVED?

Mr. Dan Hanko, 4th Grade

Teaching Bible to fourth graders is a highlight of the day. After morning devotions, singing from the Psalter, and reviewing memory work, I begin my Bible class which covers the Old Testament beginning with creation and ending with the anointing of David as king. A quick review of our previous story reminds the students of the characters and time period we are studying. While I tell the story of the day, hands go up from students with eager faces. When I call upon them at a good break in the story, details of the same story heard in

catechism or home devotions are excitedly added. An occasional question is also asked. At the conclusion of the story and after lessons for our own daily walk are mentioned, I entertain more questions and comments. The questions I receive most often at the end of a story are these two. "Do you think he was saved?" or "Was he God-fearing?" Students have a pressing interest in knowing whether a Bible character is in heaven. What do I answer? How can I apply this to their own Godly walk?

The question of whether a man or woman is God-fearing results in one of three answers. One such answer is that we can see from Scripture that God has indeed saved him. It may be that we find the name in question in a list of Godly people in Hebrews 11. The man or woman of strong faith is noted for the work God called him to do, and he lived a Godly life for our example. Others may be found in the line that leads to Christ. The genealogies from the New Testament are helpful for that answer. A few of God's people were directly taken to heaven - Elijah and Enoch, but rarely is a question brought up concerning these two saints. In the case of Lot, I turn to the New Testament which describes him as "just" (II Peter 2:7) or wait until the story of being delivered from the city of Sodom (hell). Still others were called by God to be prophets and warn God's people of the consequences of walking in sin. Students like to be told of a saint's salvation.

A second response is that God also chooses to show us by His Word that certain men were **not** saved. This certainly should be pointed out when asked the question, "Was he saved?" The "seed of the serpent" is evident in our stories time and time again for our instruction. Cain was cursed and brought low. The power of Nimrod (picture of the Antichrist) was thrown down. God's hatred for Esau was shown to Rebekah already when he was in the womb. (Romans 9:12-13) Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she longed for the sins and riches of Sodom. Pharaoh drowned in his stubborn pride in the Red Sea. Rebellious Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were consumed when the earth swallowed them up. These men and many others were judged by God in His wrath for their unrepentant sin.

A third reply to the question asked is that we do not know for sure, and we must leave it to the Lord. This answer for the questioning student is not always well received. We discuss what we know about this individual. Those actions which appear to be sincere and good are brought up. Bad behavior and great sins are brought forth also. But one must be careful not to condemn, "For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23) God is a merciful God. He has led Old Testament saints to see their great sin and corrected them in love. God does not always reveal to us what is in the heart. When no clear evidence of salvation is found in God's Word, we let God be the judge.

I have used this opportunity (the question if one is saved or not) to remind my students of their own Godly walk. Certainly, we show our faith by how we live. (James 2:26) How **are** we viewed by others? Is our speech and conversation of a nature that one listening would say, "He speaks like a Godly child. His language is clean." What about our attitude towards others? Do we show care and concern for one another, or did we just speak unkind words without thinking? No one should judge the heart - true. But is this how we would like to be seen in the minds of others? Is our act of hatred or mean-spirited words etched into the memory of one who heard and saw our behavior? I remind the children to think before speaking or hesitate before responding to words or actions that offend. Words must be said in humility. Our actions, speech, and attitude must show praise and honor to God. So often we fail.

Be thankful for a God of mercy! Be thankful for One who has forgiven us of all our sins! Be grateful for a God who pulls us out of the deepest and dirtiest pit, only to wash us clean so that we stand blameless before the throne of God! Give thanks to the all wise Judge who knows our heart and has redeemed His own by the shed blood of His dear Son! What amazing grace! To God be the glory!

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Amazing Animals

By Nora DeVries

Guess what animals I saw at the Outdoor Discovery Center? First, we went to the exhibit called "Birds of Prey". We saw birds who were injured by getting hit by cars or attacked. There were different kinds of eagles, hawks, and more! Next, we went on the trails. We walked through the woods looking at birds through binoculars. Then we went back towards the building and looked at more animals. There was a skunk that could not spray, a porcupine, and a fox! After that, we ate lunch.

After lunch, we went inside and learned more about amphibians and reptiles. We saw a huge bullfrog and got to hold a corn snake. The snake felt cold and a little bit squishy. That is what I saw and did at the Outdoor Discovery Center. God's creation is an amazing thing!

Our Amazing Trip to the Outdoor Discovery Center Visitors' Center

By Emily Tanis

Can you guess what we did while we were in the Visitors' Center of the Outdoor Discovery Center? First, we explored. Some people found some cockroaches.

They were huge! There was an eastern screech owl in a cage and a few snakes. Once we were finished exploring, we went into a separate room. There we saw a huge bullfrog and a toad. Next, we saw two turtles; one was a map turtle. Then we saw a corn snake.

Some people held it; some people only touched it. We talked about grouping the amazing animals of God's creation. Finally, we left the Visitors' Center and went on a scavenger hunt.

I think visiting the Visitors' Center was really cool!

The Panda

By Michael Engelsma

God made pandas with amazing traits and characteristics. Did you know pandas eat 99% of their food from all the parts of bamboo? They can eat from twenty to eighty-four pounds a day! They eat ten to sixteen hours each day. That is a long time! They can poop about forty times a day. When they are in the wild, they live around fifteen to twenty years. When they are tamed, they live around thirty to thirty-five years. God made the panda with amazing gifts!

Main Event

By Rowan Wassink

Can you guess where I went during Teachers' Convention? I went to a place called Main Event! First, we did a tour with a really nice person who said we did not have to pay for the food. Then, we played some arcade games. We played basketball, a piano game, and a lot of other games. After that, we went to eat some food. We had fries, chicken tenders, pickles, and pretzels. The pretzels were so, so, so good! Also, we played laser tag with everybody that was there. I was on the blue team. It was so fun! The room had black lights! The blue team won! After the game, we ordered fries and ate them. Everybody, except Uncle Luke and me, went bowling. Uncle Luke and I played arcade games. There was one game where you had to sit on a chair. There was a screen that showed a very dangerous railroad that you would be ''going" on. After that, we played a fun car game. Lastly, we played a game where we had to scare dragons! Main Event was so fun! I think you should go there!

My Family Trip to Utah and Arizona

By Nella Meulenberg

Have you ever gone to Zion or Bryce National Park in Utah or Page, Arizona? I have! I went there with my family over Teachers' Convention. On the first day we hiked "Scout's Landing." It was a hard hike, but we made it to the top. It was so beautiful! The following day, in Zion National Park, we hiked the Narrows, which is a river you walk down. Our family rented wet suits and shoes. It was so cool to be in a canyon with a river flowing through it. Later in the week, we went to Antelope Canyon in Arizona. We took a tour led by a Navaho Indian. It was like a crack in the earth. In my mind I could see God's hands pulling the earth apart. There were also plant fossils and prints that they called dinosaur tracks. This is what I saw in Utah and Arizona.

Going to Illinois

By Emma Koole

During Teachers' Convention my family took a trip to Illinois for a great vacation! On Wednesday we went hiking. Then we went back to our hotel and unpacked. Next, we went to the indoor pool and went swimming. On Thursday we hiked on a trail for four miles. On Friday we went on a two-mile hike. The last day we did a one-mile hike. Some of the hikes on our trip were very sketchy. That is what we did over Teachers' Convention.

A Bavarian Blast

By Savvy Veldman

During Teachers' Convention my family and I went to the Bavarian Inn. At the inn there was a water park. We went on a ride called "The Family Slide." It was really fun! You would sit on a tube. You could have three to six people at a time. At one point, there is a drop off. At the drop off you get splashed a lot. The tube slides were also really fun. At night the slides were pitch black because they went outside. The wave pool was very fun! When Wille (the mascot) blew his horn, everyone would run to the wave pool. The funnel slide was one of my favorite slides. At one point you go around in a circle until you go down the funnel. It was impossible not to scream. We only stayed for two days, but it was still really, really fun! I think the Bavarian Inn is one of my favorite hotels I have been to!

Our Autumn Days

By Charlotte Rutgers

Colored leaves falling all around
Leaves from the trees on the ground
Around campfires, stories we tell
Burning leaves is what we smell
Stuffing and turkey are what we eat
While donuts and cider is our treat
These exciting days are done
Later, we can have some fun!

The Beginning of Fall

By Zoey Van Overloop

Fall is here, feel the air
Look at the trees, they are all bare
So many leaves big and small
Look at the colors - love them all
We are having so much fun
Never want it to be done
Having so much fun with each friend
Never ever want it to end.

MOTIVATION

Miss Suzanna Smit, 7th Grade

"Why?" is a question that we often ask ourselves and those around us. We may ask a younger child why they threw their shoes or pulled their sister's hair or an older child why they didn't do their homework or decided to have a water fight at work. We may ask ourselves why we didn't just clean the dishes yesterday or bring the car into the mechanic before it broke completely.

Motivation is the term that describes the driving force of actions; it is what helps lead and guide us toward achieving our goals, often answering the question 'Why?' There are different types of motivation. The two major designations are intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic has to do with motivation that comes from within - an inner purpose guiding or driving an action. Extrinsic has to do with purpose that comes from without - associated with rewards or consequences. Bad grades, being grounded, or loss of other privileges would be considered extrinsic motivators. While both can be used positively, our goal should always be to move towards intrinsic motivations and motivators. As Christians, our reasons should not primarily be outward and physical (extrinsic) but inward and spiritual (intrinsic).

What are common patterns when we look at motivation? First of all, I tend to notice that the younger one is, the higher likelihood that he or she is motivated by simple earthly things and motivations whether it be a desire to be accepted socially or to earn a candy. These may be simple motivations driven by curiosity or the "I wondered what would happen if..." which are sometimes simple to the point where a child can't explain fully why they did something or can only say "I thought of it being possible, and I tried it." This does not necessarily fade as one grows older, but it is definitely harder to distinguish particular motivations from each other as a person grows and becomes more complex in their feelings and motivations. It appears that physical rewards or consequences are still just as motivating, but we are able to hide it better behind 'reasonable explanations.' Therefore, we need to be careful as we are setting our eyes on things below rather than things above and making idols of our money or entertainment (Col 3:2).

With that being said, is it wrong to use earthly motivators in a proper way? As a college student, I have placed a bag of chocolate on the far end of my desk. After I accomplished a certain portion of a task, whether a rough draft of a paper or a half an hour of studying, I would 'reward' myself with a chocolate. Is this proper or profitable? There may be varying opinions on this. In the end, it depends on the individual's heart. If my sole purpose was to finish the task, then I should reevaluate my priorities. The same can be said if we work hard for good grades out of the ambition or pride of our hearts. However, if we are studying or doing our work in order to fulfill our calling by God as a student to do our work to the best of our ability and to the glory of God, then we are not merely relying on physical motivations. Additionally, we should not discount the knowledge of the weakness of our flesh. Our body and brain need reasonable breaks from work and building those in productively can be very beneficial. Yet, we still have to be careful to not set our affections on the things of this earth (Col 3:1-2).

Can we use 'shallow' motivations to help us grow into better motivations? Or just better habits? A shallow motivation might be something that is not inherently good or bad, such as a candy. These can help build habits; even excellent habits such as daily devotions. However, repeated simple physical motivation will never build better motivations; it takes conscious

thought and meditation to praise and glorify God properly. One does not accidentally fall into these things; it is against our human nature. We must take the time to consider our hearts and our reasons behind our actions. We must ask ourselves not just *what* we ought to be doing or *how* we ought to be doing it but *why* we are doing these things. The book of Romans is clear on this. Romans 1 reveals that worshipping was not enough. The Old Testament Israelites used the physical things of this earth to worship - so did the other nations around them. However, Israel used the creation as tools to worship God. They needed to know the why - the significance of the furniture, sacrifices, and feast days. Otherwise, they, too, were as the heathen, worshipping the creation and becoming fools, unclean of heart, reprobate of mind, and the list continues.

Romans 8:5-8 speaks of this also, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God… So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." This passage reminds us that our thoughts must always be towards heaven. If we are constantly thinking of the earthly, as we naturally do, we will continue to do the things of the flesh; there is no sanctification there. Rather we must practice and spend time in the spiritual matters to become spiritually minded. Additionally, this verse reminds us that none of this motivation or ability comes from ourselves. We cannot work to make ourselves more spiritually minded; it does not come naturally to our flesh. This can come only from God. However, this does not give us permission to give up or to wait for a special 'bestowal' of motivation and spiritual-mindedness; instead, we are called to pray to God for this gift and use the means of grace as we have been commanded.

Continuing on, Romans 12:1-2 states, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect, will of God." Here we see our calling and purpose. We have not been set in this life to live unto ourselves and the pleasures of our flesh, but we are called to be set apart from the things of this life. Therefore, we must be transformed. Paul here emphasizes the mind; that is, first we must consider our purpose, and action will flow from there.

Romans 14:8 is a good summary of our calling and purpose. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." We must live *unto the Lord*. It is as simple, yet as difficult, as that. We are called to mortify our old man, repent of our sin, and live holy lives.

How do we encourage this in ourselves? In others? It comes down to making a conscious decision to live for the Lord. That means one's faith must be important enough to turn down the temptations of pleasure that the world offers. That means praying to the Lord and trusting that He will give strength sufficient for the day. Therefore, we must see our ultimate motivations or what must be the basis for all that we do. Colossians 3:17, 23-24, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." We do all things out of gratitude for our salvation; thus glorifying Christ and God through Him by doing all in His name. Yet we are weak and so can find comfort in the words

of Psalm 73:26, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

♦♦♦

to his garden, and if I would stop working for a second, he would get really mad. While I was weeding, I saw Henry. He kept doing his work, but he slowly started working closer to me. Then when he was right by me, we made a plan to escape.

Henry said that they sleep in this guy's house, so we would escape while we were supposed to be sleeping. Henry and I finished our work for the day and had a tiny plate of rice with one tiny piece of meat. Then after we crawled into bed, it was close to time to escape. We grabbed our blankets, wrapped ourselves up in them, and we quietly escaped the house. We made it to the canoe, and there were no oars, so we grabbed a few pieces of driftwood and used that. Henry had the biggest smile on his face; I have never seen him smile so big.

Finally, we made it home. This was the best day of my life. I was home with my whole family, and we were eating my favorite meal, gumbo. The next day everything was back to normal, finally. Everyone had a huge smile on their face all day long which was the best sight ever. - Faith

The First Whale

By Bridget Kleyn

Dear Diary, 11/15/1712

Every day has been the same but today was different. I was awakened by my crewmate vigorously shaking me. The boat was rocking back and forth, and my first thought was that a storm had come over the night. I was incorrect. When I got on deck, the morning sky was calm, but the ocean was not. A spray of water was coming my way so I ducked, but that didn't work, I still got soaked.

I heard the Captain shout, "It's a whale! Get in the boat!" As we got off the whaleship, and into the little boat, a giant beast rose out of the sea. I quickly grabbed a harpoon. The whale was getting closer, so I concentrated on hitting it on the first try. I used all my strength to get the harpoon in the whale. The whale took off, and our little boat was rushing along with it. I was taken off my feet and was soon on the hard wood floor. We traveled at high speeds for several long hours. Finally, when the whale was exhausted, it slowed down, but we couldn't drag it to the whaleship. When we were able to haul the whale, we were surprisingly quite close to the whaleship. It took a while to get to port with the whale in tow. When we got there, it was getting dark so we all went to sleep to get ready for the next big day for us.

Thomas Miller

Dear Diary, 11/16/1712

I had to haul the oil out in a six-hour shift today. My back is bringing pain from bending to haul the oil.

Thomas Miller

Dear Diary, 11/17/1712

Today I didn't really do anything other than moan. I am happy that we got the whale, but I wish I didn't have to work.

Thomas Miller

Dear Diary, 11/17/1712

I had to work again, but all I had to do was to boil the blubber to get any oil out of it.

Thomas Miller

Dear Diary, 11/18/1712

Today is the day our crew sold the oil we got. There were about 35 barrels full. I only got four shillings.

Thomas Miller

Running Out of Time

By Barbara Quenga

April 27, 1780

I hated it with my whole heart. Never could I ask for a more horrible life. I was orphaned at the age of 7, and now that I am 12, I knew it was time that it all changed. A month after my parents died of Typhoid Fever, a family in my village took me into their home. At first I was glad, the mother taught me how to read and write, but after a few days I found the real purpose of them taking me in. I was put to work cleaning all the rooms, helping and teaching the nine children what I had learned, and running errands. I was sick of it, but I was not old enough to fend for myself. They lived by a shipyard, and some days when I got locked up in my room, I would stare out the window at the vast stretch of blue water. Tomorrow was the day I would make my escape.

April 28, 1780

Before the sun started to rise is when I decided to slip out of the house. It was a foggy morning. I slipped out of bed, which was really just a lump of hay, brushed myself off, slipped on my petticoat, and tied my hair into a neat braid. I didn't want to be viewed as an orphan. I slipped out the door and disappeared into the fog.

April 28, 1780 4:00pm

After I slipped out, I snuck onto a boat anchored nearby. It was too foggy to see what kind of ship it was, but by then I didn't care. I slid under a canvas that had been carelessly tossed on the ground.

April 29, 1780

This morning I woke up with a jolt and banged my head on a wooden awning. I was rocking about. I lifted the canvas a bit and peered out. I saw men hurrying about. The next thing I knew the canvas was ripped away. A man shouted the dreaded word “stowaway”. Another man who seemed to be in charge ran up and asked me what I was doing. My throat was suddenly really dry. The man peered closer at me, then asked me if I was William Thomas’ daughter. I replied that I was. He told me that he once knew him because he would go down to the harbor and stare out to sea for hours, and they had become friends. Then our conversation turned back to the reason I was here. I told him about my history and asked him what kind of ship we were on. I was now a crew mate/stowaway. He told me that they were minor slave capturers on their way to capture slaves. Although they told me they weren’t going to sell them, I was still horrified.

May 9, 1780

We finally arrived in Africa. I haven't been writing because being a stowaway means I have to work, and at night I am too exhausted to write. I am lucky that the captain knew my father because otherwise I would have been thrown overboard. It is dark now, so we are staying in the boat overnight. Whatever happens I can't let them capture the Africans.

May 10, 1780

Yesterday after everyone went to their living quarters, I snuck out of mine, and slowly crawled onto deck, careful not to wake anyone. We were anchored about 200 meters offshore which meant I had to swim to shore. I lowered myself down to the water and started to swim. The water was freezing. It felt like 2 hours before I reached the shore, but once I did, I ran towards the nearest village. I knocked on every door warning people of the possible perils. Families ran out desperately gathering stuff and running to the nearest forest. At one of the huts, I knocked at, an old woman answered. She noticed I was wet and offered me a wrap. I graciously accepted, changed and ran to the next house. It took about 2 hours to cover the whole village, and by then I was exhausted. I ran back to the shore. I drew in a deep breath and plunged into the water holding my dress above my head. I had to get back before they noticed I was gone. I was cold, exhausted, and wet. My strokes became fewer and fewer until I couldn't take another stroke and that is when I hit something solid. Never had the feel of the weathered grain of wood felt so good. With all the strength I could muster, I pulled myself onto the deck. Weak and dazed, I laid there for a few minutes until I was strong enough to walk back to my living quarters. Once there I changed back into my partly dry dress. After I was changed, I walked slowly up to the deck, and tossed my drape overboard. Now satisfied that there was no true evidence of what I had done. I started to turn around. I jumped. There stood the captain. Instead of asking why I was up so early he instead stared out to sea and asked isn't it so beautiful. It was then that I noticed the brilliant colors illuminating the sky. I let out my breath and replied that it was. Thankfully there was enough spray so he wouldn't question my damp dress.

May 11, 1780

We're going home! The sailors came back enraged. With no Africans and little food we have to go home.

May 29, 1780

When we arrived, I ran harder than I have ever ran back to my home. I burst through the door. The woman wrapped me in her arms crying. From then on she promised never to treat me this way again.

Abena's Journal

By Emma Decker

April 6, 1708

I don't know how this happened! My brother, Kwasi, and I were captured by white men. We were in class when we heard a bang on the door. When our teacher opened it, a wave of these white men came and took us away. We were brought to a large ship where we were all crammed together, chained, and smelly. The only thing I was able to bring was this

notebook, which I always keep with me to practice my writing. I don't know whether my parents were taken too, or if they're safe at home in our village.

***

April 7, 1708

I needed to know if my parents were on the ship and asked around to figure out if anyone had seen them and someone had! They are only a few rows down, but we're not able to see or talk to them because the ship is so packed that I can't see over the heads of everyone. Tonight I'm going to try to make a plan to escape.

***

April 8, 1708

Last night I formed a plan. I don't know where we are going or what is going to happen to us, but when our ship reaches our destination, Kwasi and I will stay back in the group until our parents reach us. We will stay until we reach the place where we are sent, and then we will escape in the middle of the night and travel far, far away. I don't know where we will go. As long as we're together we will be okay.

***

June 1, 1708

My plan didn't work! Once we reached the port, 65 days after we left, my brother and I were pushed along in the crowd so tight, we were not able to reach my parents. My brother and I were taken away together. I saw my parents get taken away also. When we reached where we were going, I realized we were now slaves. Our master is actually very generous, and I learned my parents were sold to someone whose field is close to our master's field. Our master even said he would let us visit our parents on Sundays! I'm so excited to see them this Sunday.

Caught

By Rielle Doezema

Dear diary,

Today, as an African, it was an unusual day. I am only 14, two months away from turning 15. While still living in Africa my parents are debating whether to move to the new world although we have 4 people in our family. Of course, my opinion is to stay in our homeland, but my parents think otherwise. The real reason is because my brother wants to explore the new world over the next few days. It hasn't been our main focus because we are going through a drought and the crops are looking dry. I am doing endless amounts of work in the field each day while father and Kofi, my older brother, go out and work. These last few days have been harsh, and my father is only getting paid half a day's wages.

* * *

It is now the hardest time of the drought. Last night I also heard my Father and Mother talking about all of us going to the new world. I couldn't decide whether to be happy, scared, or disappointed. That next morning my parents made an announcement that we were going

to move to the new world. We would pack up all our valuables and move first thing the next morning. I was so frightened.

* * *

Today was unexpected. My brother and I were kidnaped. Over the night raiders had come. My father was killed by the intruder, my brother and I were taken, and my mother was locked in the house while the kidnappers set it on fire. My hopes of her escaping were very little. My brother and I were taken, blindfolded and put on what I guessed was a ship. I managed to get my blindfold off, and for a moment I was confused as there were only African sailors on the ship. We then realized that they had taken us to sell as slaves. Then one minute later, the man who I had guessed had kidnaped me, noticed I was not blindfolded and ordered one of the men to put it back on me. I heard the man say "yes Amrie''. Now we are in a foreign land which I am guessing is America, the new land.

* * *

Today was chaotic. My brother and I were taken to a merchant center. The only thing that both Kofi and I depended on was each other because that was the only thing we had. We were in some sort of auction where these white men were talking a language that I had never heard of before. Every minute a white man would take an African away harshly. Then, halfway through the auction I noticed that men were handing each other large wads of cash. Then it was Kofi's turn. They brought him up to a platform, and he was taken away to the white men. I noticed that when Kofi was brought to a white man and gave Amari a wad of cash I leaped out and yelled, "You can't do this." They just ignored me and shoved me back in line. After that the auction was over. Kofi and I were separated and would never see each other again.

* * *

The next day I went back to the auction again, and I was sold to a tiny little man that had brown hair. He was a merchant who made silk and cotton weaves. His name was Malter Mores. He needed me to harvest the cotton from his field. He lived in a small house by himself and was very set apart from everyone. I wondered why but didn't want to ask.

I worked for him for the rest of my life and never saw Kofi again. That might not have been how I wanted to come into the country, but I had many great adventures in my life.

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 29, 2027
29TH ANNUAL HOPE CLASSIC
REGISTRATION TO OPEN AFTER SPRING BREAK