

# Herald



The Board and Staff Newsletter

February, 2025

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### Nuggets!

Mr. Brian Kuiper, Administrator

*“Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.  
My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold;  
and my revenue than choice silver.”*

Proverbs 8:18-19

The young reader might be thinking about a Chicken McNugget or a Dino Nugget right now! Certain students who have been discussing westward movement in the 1840's on the Oregon Trail might be thinking about a gold nugget. Other people may have thought about that one critical piece of advice that they have received in life from a sibling, parent, teacher, or grandparent. Whatever the case, we all love nuggets.

Proverbs 16:16 says, “How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!” There is a reason that the Bible uses the idea of gold, silver, and riches so often as a picture of how important Godly wisdom and knowledge must be to us. It's because we are earthly and our eyes and mind are captured by riches and material things. God says that these are less important for several reasons. One reason is because of their relative worth - when compared to the ways of God, not of value. Another is because they will pass away and what will be left is eternal life with no need of earthly nuggets.

The idea of nuggets came to my mind at two recent times during professional development opportunities. I'd like to share those nuggets with you as I feel them to be profitable for more than just teachers.

The first nugget comes from Dr. David Smith who addressed the teachers at Teachers' Convention this past Fall. Dr. Smith is a professor of education at Calvin University and is actively involved in exploring ways to teach more “christianly”. One of the essential questions he posed to us was “What are teachers doing to ensure that homework brings families together?” Now, to be sure, Dr. Smith understands well the busyness of the christian home with one or several children living in it. His question was NOT intended to seek ways to make homework more difficult or burdensome to parents, many of whom have had no training in educational process and practice.

His question - our nugget - is how can christian education be used to *bring families together?* He doesn't call for the simple act of gathering three elementary children around the kitchen table to ensure that all are working on the homework productively while mother cooks the meal or father washes the dishes. He

challenged us to find *occasional* opportunities to send work home that is thought provoking and benefits from the family gathering in the living room for ten minutes after supper to spend meaningful time discussing a real question, a theory that needs support, or a story which brought meaning or change to their life. Those questions or discussions are effective when used occasionally and planned for carefully. That would be the teacher or child prompting the family that “either tomorrow or the next night, can we talk at supper or after supper about ...”? Teachers - have you taken him up on this idea? Parents - will you provide time for this together as a family if asked?

The second nugget is derived from Dr. Zach Groshell, who works for an organization called Learning and the Brain. This is a group of educators whose mission according to their literature and website is to “connect educators with the latest scientific research and evidence based practices to improve instruction and interventions in schools”. Dr. Groshell presented to the teachers of Heritage recently during our professional development day. Among many nuggets he served up, the juiciest might have been when he told us with great confidence that multitasking doesn't work quite as well as we believe it does. When discussing working memory - the short term memory portion of the brain is only able to hold four things for twenty seconds - he confirmed the idea that

learning becomes meaningful only when held and manipulated so it becomes long term. Additionally, under the topic of attention control - maintaining focus on the task at hand and ignoring irrelevant information - he encouraged us to consider our classrooms for “distractors” that are drawing the focus of children away from the lesson being taught. The research shows that multitasking, which requires attention and memory, leads to increased errors, increased processing time, and decreased productivity.

His instruction - our nugget - has a profound impact on our work in school and at home. Every day and many times each day we juggle multiple tasks. Simplifying things will lead to better outcomes. Teacher to student – “Stop back in 3 minutes and we can discuss that question more meaningfully.” Parent to child – “Wait for 10 minutes, and I will be able to help you with that.” It's language that's hard to use because we are in the moment so much that we don't pause for a brief time to consider a better time for the next discussion to begin. We must be able to have those pauses and learn to structure our time to be more effective in our work.

My hope is that these nuggets will lead to increased wisdom, understanding, walking in the fruits of the Lord, and will show benefits in our discussions and in our teaching.

### **Insurance Committee Report – Mr. Jared Dykstra**

When I was first told I had to write a *Herald* article I was surprised and thought, “Really? For insurance? No one is going to read that!” But here you are, proving me wrong. Don't stop now, keep going!

At the beginning of the school year, Brian Kuiper, Cori Hop, and I sat down with our Insurance agents to review our policies and to make sure that we have adequate coverage and what kind of increases we will be having in the coming year. The largest line item expense for HCS outside of employee wages is health Insurance. HCS pays 75% of the cost of health and dental insurance, and the teachers are responsible for the remaining 25%.

As many of you are aware, insurance costs have been rising and our plan increased by 14% this year...when we normally budget for a 5% increase. With the rising costs many employers are getting very creative on their employee plans to limit or not provide insurance for working spouses and/or families. We are fortunate

to not have to do this yet. All of our policies were renewed and our insurance agents do a good job keeping us informed of changes and rates.

I also want to say THANK YOU for all the work that our business manager Cori Hop does for our insurance policies at HCS. Cori manages all the behind-the-scenes insurance paperwork, agency communication, submitting claims, enrolling new staff members, and the annual renewal process for all of our policies. If any of you have ever dealt with insurance paperwork, you can really appreciate the amount of work and attention to detail that goes into all this. Thank you, Cori!

We are very grateful we can offer health insurance benefits to our talented teachers and staff here at HCS. We are also thankful for the many ways in which God has blessed us and that we are able to have insurance policies in place in the event we would ever need them.

### **Building Committee Report – Mr. Travis VanderKolk**

The Building Committee's work at school ebbs and flows based on the time of year. Decisions revolve around if the work is needed immediately or if it is a summer project. Most of the projects or tasks this time of year are related to indoor work and keeping things operational. Many items can seem routine and remain an ongoing conversation; and then there are those that become an

immediate need. The two types of projects on either end of this spectrum are a parking lot and a boiler.

Our parking lot is for the most part original. It has served its useful life. Wear is starting to show and replacement looms nearer and nearer. We know it's coming. We wait to see what the spring thaw does to it and will assess whether this is a two year away project, or three, or more. We can plan for this and bring it to the society as

this project will come in at a cost of over \$350,000. The Finance Committee is aware of this upcoming project and is beginning to figure out funding, Fundraisers is beginning to look for items to give funds to, and everyone is aware this is going to be a capital project in the not-to-distance future.

One of the boilers on the other hand just recently started leaking. No warning!! I can tell you we didn't have a plan in place for this. However, we do have a back-up boiler, and right now no one really is aware that behind a door labeled "Boiler Room" is a boiler that is down. We will be assessing if we need to just fix the broken one or replace both since they are stacked like bunk beds. All these thoughts and conversations are now absorbed into emails, texts, and phone calls among a group of men who make this work a priority.

While there is some work that seems planned or unplanned there is also work that goes unknown. We have a very capable person who handles every little thing around our school without ever letting the committee know. I express our sincere appreciation for all the work Leon Kamps does in our school and for the teachers and children alike. A broken desk, a squeaky door, and a summer of project planning coming quickly - he handles it all and we express our thankfulness for making our lives easier.

The needs of our school building continue to be met. I am sure there will never be a shortage of to-do lists. I want to thank those in all the trades who we call on to help us once in a while and give of their time. A plumber, a welder, or a builder here and there. It is the donated time and efforts that make our school operational and keep our costs down.

*Congratulations to Mrs. Erin VanRijs (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
for attaining an advanced degree from Calvin College this past December!  
– Masters in Education with a concentration in Literacy –*

### **Where the Lord Directs Your Feet – Mrs. Cathy Kamps**

I was only four years old when my mother abandoned me and my eleven siblings. My parents were addicted to alcohol and my mother picked up one night, left and never came back. My dad tried to keep my large family together, but eventually, he forfeited his responsibility. He took us to a campus in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, where adults are employed to care for children. I lived a fair childhood. My house-parents were Baptist so I was raised Baptist. However, as I gained independence I grew away from my Baptist upbringing. In fact, I withdrew from God almost entirely.

At age seventeen, I left the only security I knew and moved to West Michigan to begin studies at Grand Valley State University. I quickly found a job at Applebees in Grandville and worked there all five years of college. I was determined to succeed and graduated with a degree in History and earned an Elementary Teaching Certificate. Despite my confidence in school and work, I had never felt so alone. I had abandoned all I knew, but more importantly, I had abandoned God. Even so, God was still there and His plan for me included some impressionable young people.

My ambition at work led me to take on the larger groups of guests who came to Applebees. So, when many late-teen, early twenty-somethings made their way through the doors I excitedly accepted the "challenge" to wait on them. Little did I know, this would be the first of many times I would encounter this group of young Christians. I knew they were Christians because of their walk. They

talked of godly things and were not ashamed of it. Over many Monday nights at Applebee's (they came after catechism) they began to ask me about my faith and my life. They were patient to hear me and ready to answer my questions about the Reformed Faith. I was intrigued by their faith. It didn't seem possible to be so normal and also religious. Yet these young people were both! These were Christians living their lives under the umbrella of their faith. Remember young people, don't be friends with someone just because they're "cool". Make sure they are godly, faithful friends, who build you up and walk uprightly according to God's Word! Lord's Day 47 of the Heidelberg Catechism gives a beautiful explanation of how we must live our lives. It refers to the first petition of the Lord's Prayer "Hallowed Be Thy Name, that is...that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words, and actions that Thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honored and praised on our account." See how important your very words and actions are? First, they must bring glory to God. Second, you are accountable before God for your actions. These (imperfect, of course) young people were striving to live according to God's law, and it showed by the way they acted.

The Lord used several young people to bring me to faith. I didn't, of course, just believe right away. I spent months in Catechism with eighth and ninth graders under the instruction of Prof. Gritters. Also, months visiting his office on Sunday afternoons where he

instructed me further in doctrinal standards. Most importantly, I sat for three years under the pure preaching of the Word. I could feel a transition taking place. I was struck by God's Word and when studied in its entirety, it made "sense"! I could feel the Lord working in my heart and my life. The Lord, through His written word and the preaching of the gospel, brought me face-to-face with him, and I could finally confess my sin and guilt, lay it at Jesus' pierced feet, turn from a life of emptiness and dedicate my life towards serving God. He had made me whole!

The way God used these young people in my life is a beautiful example of how your everyday behavior can influence someone. Remember this each day you walk through the doors of Heritage Christian School. Not only did God use the young people to encourage and direct me to himself, but he also gave me an edifying group of friends and a godly, loving husband, George. The

most beneficial way to evangelize is simply being conscious of your daily interactions with others, whether it be a fellow classmate or those who will be gained to Christ (LD 2).

Some of you may be struck by my past, and some of you may have experienced far more tragic things than I ever did. Even so, it is God who directs these events in your life. It is important then that your response to hardships is proper. That is, knowing God has sent these trials and that He is working them all for your salvation! (Romans 8:28). So be encouraged, knowing God is in control. In response to His abounding grace and love through Christ, live out of thankfulness. Let that life of gratitude be your confession and live unashamedly at school, at home or wherever the Lord directs your feet, for he may direct them across the path of someone He is calling to Himself.

### **The Skies Are His Handiwork Too – Mrs. Jodee VanOverloop**

Where would you go if you could visit a place in our solar system? My second graders were given this journal prompt after concluding the solar system unit in Science. During this process, they were encouraged to write multiple sentences focusing on the 4-Point Check learned in Writing. The 4-Point Check is a list of reminders for students as they write their thoughts into sentences. Did I remember capitals? Did I put finger spaces between my words? Did I use correct punctuation at the end of my sentences? Do my sentences make sense? So, where would my second graders visit in our solar system?

A favorite destination of almost half of my students was one of the gas giant planets, Saturn. **James Dykstra** writes "Saturn is my favorite planet because Saturn has rings. Saturn is the color of the sand. I like Saturn because Saturn is the second biggest planet." "Saturn is my (**Molly Boer's**) favorite planet. If possible I think it would be fun to ride on the rings. I would be able to see Jupiter and Neptune better. I would also like to go because it would be like a vacation." **Dawson Holstege** "would drive race cars on Saturn's rings. I would zoom on the fast winds. But I might get blasted off Saturn and fall on Uranus." **Ava DeVries** "would go on Saturn's rings and slide! I would jump on Saturn's sandy yellow surface. I would go to the bottom of Saturn. I don't want to sink in the gas. Saturn's rings are made of dust and ice. Saturn's rings do not melt. It is cold on Saturn." Finally, **Emmett VanTil** shares he "would look at the rings up close. It would be fun! I would stay there for 2 weeks. I would bring a scale to see how much I weigh. I think I would weigh 10 pounds. It would be the best!"

Where else would my second graders like to visit? **Lee Langerak**, **Eli VanDerSchaaf**, and **Liam Wassink** would like to travel to the fifth planet from the Sun, Jupiter. **Lee** "wants to go to Jupiter to visit Jupiter's Great Red Spot and because it is so big." **Eli** "would go into Jupiter's storm which is its big red spot. I would watch the Earth for one hour. I would get there by a rocket ship. I would bring my pet, Jimmy, and Emmett." **Liam** writes Jupiter "is so beautiful. I would take some of its ground. I would

grab a jar and take some of the wind storms inside of the Great Red Spot."

Yet others would like to voyage to the dwarf planets, the moon, and the planets, Venus and Uranus. **Marie Langerak** "would love to go to the dwarf planets. I want to go to the dwarf planets because I want to see all the rocks there." **Ryer Bouwkamp** puts on paper he "would want to go to the moon. I would want to see the Earth from the moon. It would be fun. You can jump really high." "I would go to Venus," states **Gabe Nienhuis**. "I would sit in the sun all day. When I go to bed I would have nothing bang on my window. I will say 'Hi' to Mercury, but Mercury might go too fast. I'd cook steak by roasting it out the window. Satellites would give me water when I'm on them." Both **Collin Spronk** and **Coba VanDyke** would like to visit Uranus, the seventh planet from the Sun. Although Saturn is **Collin's** favorite planet, he "would go to Uranus because it is my second favorite planet. Blue is my second favorite color. It (Uranus) spins on its side." Maybe you are like **Coba**? "I would stay on Earth. But if I had to I would go to Uranus! Uranus spins on its side. You knew that! Right? It's light blue. You know in the start of how I said I would stay on Earth. The Earth has the only life in it. So that's why I want to stay on Earth!"

As you can see during these past few months, my second graders and I learned about the eight planets, the Sun, the moon, the stars, and our incredible universe. Through all of it, we were reminded of how great our God is.

So, where would you go? Though it's cold outside, I encourage you to step out and look up in the night sky. In January and February of this year, there is an astronomical event - a planetary parade, or alignment in the sky. Currently, there is a four planet alignment that is visible.

Stand in awe of God's magnificent universe and be even more amazed by His great love for you and me. "My God is so great, so strong, and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do. The mountains are His, The rivers are His, The skies are his handiwork too. My God is so great, so strong, and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do, for you."

## Non Medicinal Ways to Treat ADHD – Mrs. Deb Altana

No one wants to put their child on medicine. Even when the child has a legitimate illness, we hesitate and ask the doctor about potential side effects. The trick is to balance the benefits of the treatment against the risks. It is common to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder with medicine. It's a proven method of reducing symptoms in a child who appears to have this disorder. Yet some children have more difficulty with the side effects than others.

To be clear before we begin to explore non medicinal methods of treatment, we must understand what exactly ADHD is. It has four main symptoms, the first of which is hyperactivity. The child seems to have almost boundless energy and simply seems unable to just sit quietly. Most likely some part of his/her body is always moving. The second symptom is distractibility. The child has difficulty filtering out normal distractions and increasing his/her focus on what is important at the particular time. Thirdly, the child is very impulsive with little attention to detail, making hasty, careless decisions. The final symptom is indecisiveness, in that the child can be "spacey," forgetful, and emotionally upset by changes in plans or expectations. He/she often needs assistance in getting started with school work, chores, or even play.

Another type of ADHD that isn't as noticeable is the Inattentive type in which the child is not hyperactive. These children can be irritable, indecisive, distractible and sad or depressed when they are having a flare-up up of symptoms.

Several Heritage teachers were able to attend a workshop that addressed ADHD and other disorders. We were intrigued by the multiple treatment approaches that can be used. What can we as parents do to help our child with ADHD succeed in school? One important way is to provide structure for the child to complete homework. The child feels chaotic inside so is almost always helped by consistency on the outside. Set up a specific time for homework and stick to it. Give breaks and help the child see that there will be time for relaxation, too, in the schedule.

Another key component is to make sure your child is getting enough sleep. Lack of sleep increases forgetfulness, mistakes, and moodiness. Emotional control and concentration is reduced when the child is not getting enough sleep. Establish a regular and reasonable bedtime. Aim for 9-10 hours of sleep a night. Often children with ADHD have sensory disorders also so make the bedroom and the bedding as comfortable as possible. Avoid exercise for the final hour before bedtime. Serve a protein rich snack about 30 minutes before bedtime.

We can control our child's nutrition to decrease ADHD symptoms. "The brain is a 'protein factory' with a constant need for amino acids." (John Taylor, Autism, Asperger's, SPD & ADHD seminar) Serve protein-rich snacks between meals and always include protein in each meal.

All vitamins and minerals are needed by the brain. The common deficiencies that make symptoms worse are magnesium, zinc, calcium and iron. A multi vitamin is a good way to ensure your child is receiving a large quantity of necessary vitamins and minerals.

Try to have your child drink a glass of water about every two hours during the day. Diluted fruit juices, watermelon, herbal teas and vegetable juices are good alternatives if your child won't drink enough water.

Our bodies also need natural fats and oils which are easily found in plant sources that are raw, so salads, fruits, vegetables, and nuts are good snack choices. Fish oil is also a good source of these "essential fatty acids." A guideline is 1000 mg daily before puberty and 2000 mg daily after puberty.

Increase glucose, the fuel the brain runs on, by increasing protein, not by sugar!

Of course our brains need oxygen so regular exercise is crucial. Before homework, have your child do four minutes of mild exercise like jumping jacks or running in place. Exercising before coming to school will get the brain "fired-up" and ready to learn. Consider a longer period, like 15 minutes, before getting on the bus/getting in the car.

Fortunately, there are alternatives other than medicine to treat your child who struggles with ADHD symptoms. Perhaps your child needs more of one particular area of treatment than another. That means you as the parent need to be the "captain" of your child's treatment plan. Medicine is a safe and proven method to treat ADHD but if you choose not to give your child medicine, then research the alternatives. Try multiple approaches when addressing his/her symptoms. Discuss these things also with your doctor and find out what has worked for other parents who have children with ADHD. Above all, keep the well-being of your child foremost in your heart and mind, for he is God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2: 10

## Fleeing From Sin – Mr. Rick Gritters

A simple search of the word flee or fled in scriptures yields over one hundred results. Most of these verses involve one person fleeing from another, or one army fleeing from an opposing army. In I Samuel 17:51 we read, "Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, **they fled**. Matthew 2:13 says, "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and **flee into Egypt**, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him".

On some occasions, scripture uses the word flee to describe those who hate God fleeing from Him because they know God will destroy them. Psalm 104:7 states, "At thy rebuke **they fled**; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away". In Exodus 14, we read that the Egyptians fled from Israel because they knew the Lord fought for them. And Psalm 68:1 exclaims, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him **flee before him**".

And yet other times in scripture, we learn that God's people are called to flee from sin. Jeremiah 51:6 says, "**Flee** out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this *is* the time of the LORD's vengeance..." I

Corinthians 10:14 warns us to “**flee from idolatry**, and I Corinthians 6:18 commands us to “**flee fornication**.” I Timothy 6:11 teaches that the man of God must “**flee** these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

Whatever the case may be, there are common elements associated with any type of fleeing. One, there is a danger or threat that one needs to escape from. Second, there is a safe place that one runs to. And third, there is a legitimate fear of the danger that causes one to run.

God’s people are constantly engaged in the spiritual battle against sin. It is a lifelong battle, one we face until the Lord takes us to glory. Our three enemies: the world, our depraved nature, and the devil himself all work on a daily basis warring against the new man within us.

Our calling is to run! Escape! Flee from sin. Yes, this is how we do battle against sin. Do you remember Joseph and what he did when Pharaoh’s wife tempted him to commit adultery with her? He ran away from the situation; he fled. Genesis 39 says, “And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out”.

Is this what we are doing? Is this what we are teaching our children and young people to do?

I hope so, because it’s a matter of life and death. The devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. It’s something that takes hard work and thought. We can be thankful for God’s grace that gives us the strength to be successful in this spiritual battle.

Here are some things to understand and remember in your battle against sin:

1. Identify your weaknesses and know the enemy. We’ve already spoken about our three fold enemy, but it’s just as important to know your own personal weaknesses. Be honest with yourself and come to grips with exactly what you struggle with. The devil knows your weaknesses and will attack at just the right time when you are most vulnerable.
2. Avoid tempting situations and people. This is one way to abstain from the fleshly lusts that we’re warned about in I Peter 2:11. Don’t allow yourself to be in a situation or with

a particular person that you know will make you more prone to fall. This might even include sharing your temptation or struggle with a friend or family member, who can help hold you accountable.

3. Read and meditate on God’s word. This cannot be overstated. Pick a book of the Bible to read, pick a devotional to read, pick a time of the day to read by yourself or with family. And don’t simply read the passage or the devotional, but have some discussion on it if you’re reading with a spouse, a friend, or the family. At least eight times the book of Psalms instructs us to meditate on God’s word and works beginning with Psalm 1:2, “But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law does he meditate day and night.” In Colossians 3:16 Paul says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom”.
4. Spend time with God in prayer. Prayer is for adoration of God. Prayer is for thanksgiving to God. Prayer is for making supplication to God. And prayer is also for confessing sin and asking God to lead you away from temptation. Jesus Himself taught us to pray, ‘Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil’. And when you pray, your faith will assure you of the wonderfully comforting words of I Corinthians 10:13 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
5. Focus on serving the Lord and doing what pleases Him. In other words, don’t only put off the old man, but also put on the new man. After all, isn’t this our calling throughout the Word of God? I Timothy teaches us to follow after righteousness. Romans 12:9 tells us to cleave to that which is good. Galatians 6 instructs us to do good unto all men and to not be weary in well doing. What other motivation do we need than the words of our faithful, loving Father Himself?

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:20-21

### **The Prayer Experiment - Mrs. Denise Uittenbogaard**

“Who would like to close in prayer for us today?” Thirty seconds of silence occurs. “I understand that this is a little scary and nerve-racking, but you all know how to pray. I know you do it every day. We are all going to take a turn, so who would like to pray to end our day today?” Another LONG moment of silence while five, big pairs of eyes stare at me, and the other fifteen look away, avoiding eye contact. After about a minute and a half, one brave girl raises her hand and quietly says, “I will”.

As I began teaching eighth grade this year, one of the goals I had was to help the students become more comfortable praying in front of others. Why is prayer in front of our peers so difficult? Even as

adults, many of us are uncomfortable praying in a group setting. How can we work on this? How can we make this better? Prayer is so important for the child of God, and it is such a blessing when we are able to lift each other up in prayer!

The training for praying in front of others begins when the children are very young. While at home, we teach our children to pray “Lord bless” at the dinner table or “Now I lay me” before bed. But when it comes time to think of their own prayers, they need instruction, guidance, and practice!

Our elementary teachers do a wonderful job of guiding the students in the proper way to pray. They are taught about Jesus’ example

prayer in Matthew 6, when he prays “The Lord’s Prayer”. They discuss the different parts of a prayer using the A.C.T.S acronym (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). Beginning in first or second grade, the students are guided in reading a passage and leading the class in a prayer that they have prepared. This is a needed and important work in our schools! It is so encouraging to hear our students as they learn how to pray.

This tradition continues through grade school, middle school, and even into junior high. I have a group of eighth graders who take turns leading the class in devotions after lunch break. But when it came to the end of the day, I wanted to challenge the students to be able to pray without any planning. That is where my “prayer experiment” began. The story I mentioned earlier is exactly what happened in the beginning of the year with my class at the end of the day. It did not start so well, and there were times I had doubts that I should continue. We had some awkward moments of silence and a lot of blank looks. But we have grown!

I recently gave each of the students an index card. I had them write down how they felt in the beginning of the year when I asked them to pray without preparing. The students shared a lot of the same feelings. Some said “I was so nervous that I wouldn’t be able to think of something to say” or “I was afraid people would think my prayer was too short or I talked too fast”, or “I thought I would stumble over my words,” or even “I was so scared I thought I was going to cry!”

Since the first week of school, I have had different students take turns praying at the end of the day. At this point, everyone has had a few turns. The prayers started out quite short and quiet. The nerves were evident. But I can tell you that these students are growing! Growing in their confidence and growing in their ability to

express their feelings in their prayers. They are seeking God’s guidance, thanking him for the multitude of blessings He gives to His children, and lifting up those in need. They pray for their parents and families, they pray for their ministers and teachers, they pray for fellow students who are struggling with illness or death. It is so amazing to see how these students have grown to be able to show their faith and express their love and care for each other through prayer. And let me tell you - they have beautiful prayers! It is evident that they have been listening to wonderful prayers in their homes.

I was curious how they were feeling now that they had had some time to practice praying in front of others. I had them reflect on the same index card as before. Their responses were very encouraging! Here are a few of them: “Now I realize that it doesn’t matter if you mess up because we are talking to God and having a conversation with him! He is our best friend!” “I do not feel uncomfortable at all to pray in front of my friends!” “I am so thankful that I am comfortable praying and being a joyful witness in front of my friends!” What a blessing these students are! I no longer have a hard time finding someone to close with prayer at the end of the day.

I pray for the students at Heritage Christian School. I pray that they will grow up to become confident in their faith. I pray that they may continue to be an encouragement to their peers and an example to those who follow them. I pray that they may always be a joyful witness of the work that the Holy Spirit is performing in their hearts. I pray that as Godly parents, we will continue to encourage our children and young people to pray! It is a gift!

### **Screen Time – Mrs. Rhonda Holstege**

The increased use of electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, has been attributed to shorter attention spans in children. Constant exposure to fast paced content such as videos, social media, online games can make it harder for kids to focus on tasks that actually require attention. Because they rapidly switch between different types of content, they train their brains to expect quick rewards. This leads to difficulty with slower activities such as reading or doing their homework. Some children will struggle to concentrate for long periods of time and may become distracted more easily.

Also, excessive screen time can also disrupt sleep patterns This makes it hard to pay attention in school the next day or days. Overstimulation can lead to restlessness and difficulty in their focus at school. It might affect their academic performance, and possibly their overall well being.

What can one do? We will never get away from all the computers and tablets or smartphones, but we can balance their screen time with other activities. Include outdoor play and maybe face to face interaction with other children or relatives. This is essential for children to develop stronger attention skills and a healthier habit. I then asked the children what they could do instead of having so much screen time. What follows is what they would sometimes do.

- **Dena:** Read a book.

- **Andrew:** Play basketball.
- **Lawson:** Play football with the neighbors or my mini hoop basketball.
- **Owen:** Draw.
- **Bill:** Play with my hot wheels.
- **Audrey:** Run around outside.
- **Calvin:** Play with my dinosaurs and my brother and sister.
- **Madison:** Read books by Erin Hunter.
- **Blake :** Play dodgeball in the upstairs garage.
- **Shiloh:** Play by the creek.
- **Annie:** Play with my dog.
- **Ezra:** Go in my hot tub.
- **Piper:** Read a book by Erin Hunter or go in the hot tub.
- **Lydia:** Play the game ‘Don’t let the balloon touch the ground.’
- **Chase:** Read some Dog Man books.
- **Kayla:** Read a book.
- **Claire:** Go snowboarding or sledding.
- **Henry:** Science stuff like experiments.
- **Mackenzie:** Play with my dog.
- **Alexandra:** Play with legos.

## **Using “Justified, Sanctified, and Glorified” to teach Verb Tenses – Mrs. Sandy Glashower**

In IEW (Institute for Excellence in Writing), we incorporate cross-curricular materials to make writing more engaging and meaningful for students. Not only that, but we’re also encouraged to weave Biblical truths into every subject we teach. One day, while listening to a sermon on Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification, I had a lightbulb moment—these incredible works of Jesus Christ align with the three verb tenses: past, present, and future! Since my class needed more practice with verb tenses, I decided to turn this into a lesson that combined both grammar and faith.

To start, I wrote the three key words—justification/justified, sanctification/sanctified, and glorification/glorified—on the whiteboard, along with simple, clear definitions. Then, I explained how **justified** represents the past work Jesus has already done for us, **sanctify** reflects His present work in our daily lives, and **glorify** points to the future work He will complete when we enter heaven.

After that, I invited my students to share their thoughts on each of these truths—what they meant to them personally. As they spoke, I wrote their responses on the board beneath each definition. Finally, I had them put it all together in writing. Each student wrote down the definitions of justified, sanctified, and glorified using the correct verb tense, followed by their personal reflections.

The results? Their responses—both spoken and written—showed me they understood the meaning of each word **and** how verb tenses work. Below, you’ll find some of their heartfelt responses from this assignment.

ChatGPT, response to "Using Justified, Sanctified, and Glorified to teach Verb Tenses," OpenAI

### **#1**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died for me and made me “just as if I had never sinned.”

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means Jesus sends His Holy Spirit to purify me of sin and helps and encourages me to do the right thing.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus will make a place in heaven for me because he loves me.

### **#2**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died to save us from sin. This encourages me and makes me happy.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means he sends his Holy Spirit in me which helps me.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means I will go to heaven and I can’t wait to get there!

### **#3**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died to save us from our sins. This makes me feel grateful and cleansed.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means having the Holy Spirit now! It makes me want to live a good life. I am encouraged and thankful to God.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means God will give us this in heaven. I feel happy, joyful, and glad.

### **#4**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died to pay for my sins so I feel like I never sinned.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means that Jesus sends His Holy Spirit so that I can live like Jesus.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means that I will go to heaven in glory with Jesus.

### **#5**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus Christ died to save us from our sins. This makes me feel grateful.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means now every day, Jesus sends His Holy Spirit on me. This makes me feel thankful.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus promises a place for us and will take us there.

### **#6**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died for me which makes me as if I had never sinned. This makes me feel pure.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means the Holy Spirit is helping me not to sin today. Having the Holy Spirit now makes me feel grateful.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus promised He will take me to heaven. This makes me feel happy.

### **#7**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died for me. This makes me feel cleansed.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means the Holy Spirit is living within me and guiding me in the way of the Lord.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus will bring me to glory and I am looking forward to this.

### **#8**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus made me just as if I had never sinned. He conquered death. This makes me feel pure, grateful, and cleansed.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means Jesus is helping me live today. I feel thankful, and it encourages me to live like Him.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means I will see glory or heaven in the future. This makes me feel happy, joyful, and glad that Jesus promised us heaven.

### **#9**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died to pay for my sins. Knowing this, I feel grateful that Jesus died for me and I am amazed Jesus still cares for me.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means God sends His Holy Spirit to help me live. I feel like praising God because I am thankful and I want to live for Jesus Christ.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus is going to prepare a place for me in heaven. This makes me happy, joyful, glad because God is preparing a wonderful place for us.

### **#10**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus died for me and my sins. Knowing this, I am grateful.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means Jesus’ Holy Spirit is helping me now and forever. I feel thankful and encouraged. I want to live a good life.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus is making everything ready for me in heaven. I will feel happy and joyful when I am in heaven.

### **#11**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus Christ died to pay for our sins. This makes me feel comforted but also sad because of what I did (sinned).



PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means God did not leave us without anything. We can live, love, and learn about Him now. I feel loved.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus has promised us a place in heaven and will take us there. I feel grateful.

#### **#12**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus made me “just as if I had never sinned”. This makes me feel grateful and cleansed.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means the Holy Spirit is helping me to live today. This makes me thankful and encouraged.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means heaven where I will have no more crying, sin or any sickness. This makes me feel happy and glad.

#### **#13**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus Christ died for my sin because he chose me. Knowing this, I feel pure, cleansed, and loved. All my dirty sin has gone white.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means having the Holy Spirit now as a gift. This makes me feel thankful and gives me a nice feeling.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means Jesus is making a place for me in heaven. Knowing this makes me happy, joyful, and glad that I will be living there.

#### **#14**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus Christ died for me and cleansed me so I don't have to go to hell. This makes me feel grateful, relieved, pure, and in debt.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means that Jesus left His Holy Spirit with us to guide us. I feel thankful, encouraged, and safe.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means that Jesus is creating a place for us where there will be no sin, sadness, pain, and sickness. This will make everyone joyful and glad.

#### **#15**

PAST Tense: Justified means Jesus Christ died for our sins to save us. I am pure and as if I had never sinned. This makes me want to sing praise to God and learn more from the Bible. Also, I feel cleansed and so grateful He died for me.

PRESENT Tense: Sanctify means having the Holy Spirit in me now. This makes me feel thankful and encourages me to burst with joy, to sing praise, and to live a sinless life. But, no one is perfect, so I will try to not sin.

FUTURE Tense: Glorify means I will be made perfect. We will never be sad, mad, or cry. We will praise Jehovah and be happy forever.

### **Teaching: A Journey – Miss Annika Brands**

It may not surprise you to hear that fresh-out-of-college teachers have a lot to learn yet in their profession. Teaching is certainly a job where you improve and grow through years of experience! However, if you would ask them, even veteran teachers would readily tell you that there is so much left yet for them to learn. Teachers are lifelong learners. We are on a journey, continually asking ourselves how we can improve. It is one of the most wonderful trademarks of teaching!

I was reminded of this idea a few months ago when I came across a book titled, *Always Becoming, Never Arriving*. In his book summary, the author says, “Teaching Christianly is a journey, a process of growing as a more faithful disciple, and more closely following Jesus day by day. Learning to teach Christianly is an adventure of ‘always becoming and never arriving,’ until that day when we meet the Lord face-to-face.”

For Christian school teachers, the idea that “teaching is a journey” is true in a very deep and rich sense. It causes us to ask questions such as: Can we better plan our lessons to show our students who God is? Can we better manage our classrooms to reflect both the grace and the accountability that God shows to us? Can we better create a classroom culture that models to students the valuable

role we all have in the body of Christ? As the list of questions goes on, it becomes clear that there is certainly room for growth in any teacher's classroom!

While the metaphor of a journey certainly applies to educators, I believe it is a valuable reminder that we can all take to heart. The life of any Christian is a journey—a journey marked with blessings in many forms and led by our faithful Guide. It is a journey with rough terrain and bumps in the road, but it is also a journey on which God equips us, His children, with all that we need to serve Him faithfully each day.

May we rely on our Father's wisdom and strength to continue learning and growing on this journey—in our careers, in our churches, in our friendships, and in our families. Most importantly, may we pray for His work in our hearts, and for a desire to continue growing in our knowledge and love of Him, trusting that He will direct the path on our journey according to His good will!

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all they ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

## **Holy Handling of the Hard Stuff – Mr. Dan VanDyke**

My students shuffle into class and open their novels as I scan through my lists of unfinished assignments, ungraded quizzes, and unanswered emails. Why is it so hard to keep up? The frustration builds over the incessant time-crunch. Even the simplest tasks loom, relentless in their recurrence.

A year ago, I wrote a *Herald* article on the blessings of community, especially as they are found within our Christian schools. Lately I've had to force my thoughts to return to the value and benefits of our Christian schools, which are too easily taken for granted by teachers, parents, and students alike. How easy it is to say that our Christian schools are a blessing, but what a challenge it can be to live regularly in a way that shows that we are being blessed by our school.

This time of year can be a tough stretch. Wednesdays pass into (or slog through?) a gray February, as stress and weariness steal more and more energy. You see it both in the students who struggle to finish the simplest assignments and in the teachers who wonder if they are making any progress in leading their students to a better understanding of their place in God's world. Parents also grow weary in the daily grind of prodding their children to grow in responsibility and other forms of holiness. Just the normal hard stuff that we all face. Sometimes there are times of rest and true joy, but challenges always seem to threaten that peace.

As a class discussion opener one day, I asked my students what they felt the greatest benefit of a Christian school was. Their answers were a great reminder and blessing: learning to live for God, enjoying Christian friends, following godly role models. As we talked about these excellent answers, I wondered how we could all make these benefits an even greater daily reality for ourselves and one another. It struck me that each hardship must be turned into a blessing only by means of intentional thought and action from each of us, and how impossible that thought and action is outside of the grace of God. This is true no matter who we are or what hardships we are facing.

Three thoughts to motivate us. First, we must remember that the work that we do here is God's work, not our own. Too often hardships turn into frustrations simply because we focus on our goals, our plans, our hurdles. Whether we are students, teachers, or parents, the work we do in any area of our lives does not depend finally upon us. God has given us our work to fulfill His purposes in us and in our community. He will see to it that what He

has planned will be accomplished in the end. Every lack of mine will be filled by Him, often by means of other saints, students and/or colleagues.

Second, that first reminder must lead us to lean on His strength and wisdom. How can any of us hope to maintain a balance between working as hard as we know we should without succumbing to stress and burnout? We face each challenge with prayerful remembrance that He will provide everything we need to do what He has asked of us. I know I can grow panicky when my own shortcomings prevent me from doing what God clearly wants me to do. When this happens, I must call that sin by name: simple pride and idolatry - pride because I am assuming that His work depends on my work, and idolatry because I am trusting on my own strength, not His. I'm leaning on my own abilities to do His work and neglecting the many graces that He has provided for every task. Careful, diligent work must not become anxious work.

Third, while we remember that the work is God's and that He will supply all we need, we must also realize that activity is still needed. God doesn't fill our need by removing the work that He's called us to do. He gives the desire and strength to work, and then commands us to run that race. No Christian will taste the fullness of God's loving care and provision without activity. The blessings of our Christian school are not realized and savored by those who sit on the sidelines watching the goings on here. God calls us to work.

This call applies to all of us, not only in our participation in school-related activities, but in every area of our life: family, work, recreation, etc. And each of us faces the daily danger of falling off either side of this particular horse: the self-trusting stress side or the complacent self-serving lazy side. Pray daily that God will grant you both the energy to finish the work He's given you and the contentment to leave unfinished the work He's kept from you, so that all praise always goes to Him.

A few days ago, a godly grandma stopped me in the hall to ask how school things were going. When I shared these thoughts that I've shared here, she said, "How can we pray for you?" What an important and faithful question! Pray for all of us here at school - the students, teachers, staff, administration, board members, and parents as well. Please, Lord, shower us with daily graces to finish our daily work faithfully.

## **Biblical Applications in the Classroom – Mr. Benji Kuiper**

When it comes to writing a *Herald* article, it always takes me some time to think about what topic I'd like to focus on and write about. After some thought and discussion, I have decided to write an article about Biblical applications in the classroom.

If you were to take a look at Heritage Christian School's mission statement you would find that one of the schools main goals is that the "children will view all of the subjects taught through the "spectacles" of the Holy Scriptures, and that through this instruction, the students will increase in their knowledge of God." To prepare for this article, I asked a few family members which

subjects they think it would be easiest to teach and incorporate Biblical applications into and which subject's they think it would be the hardest to incorporate Biblical applications into. As many of you would guess, many of my family members responded by saying that it would probably be the easiest to incorporate Biblical truths into Bible (of course), history, and science class, and it would probably be hardest to do so in a math class and English.

In 6th grade, we have three different teachers. Greg Holstege teaches all of the 6th graders history, Katie VanOverloop teaches all of the 6th graders Bible, and I teach all of the 6th graders math.

Along with this, all three of us teach our homeroom students science, English, PE, and art. In my first couple years of teaching, I can admit that as the math teacher, I was finding it a little more difficult to come up with Biblical applications in math. However, what I have begun to realize over the last couple years is that I might argue that math is now one of the easiest subjects to incorporate Biblical applications into. Yes, although I prepare and think of Biblical applications for the different concepts that I teach on my own, one of my favorite things to do is teach a math lesson and then ask my students to come up with their own Biblical applications connected to the specific lesson that we just had. Every single time I do this, I am left in amazement. The things that they think of and the connections that they are able to make at 11-12 years old are truly fascinating. Not only have these applications helped us understand the material a little better, but what I believe it has really done is helped myself and my students develop a deeper and better understanding of God.

Although I'd love to write about all of the different ideas that we have discussed, I have decided to focus on what we are just recently wrapping up in our math class. That topic is fractions. After talking about what fractions are, where we are going to see them in the real world, and how to do different operations with fractions, I asked my class if they could help me come up with different Biblical applications for this topic. Before you continue reading, are you able to think of any on your own? To kind of spark some ideas, I wrote a couple examples of fractions on the board and asked if there's anything that comes to mind when they see them. Right away, I had a bunch of students raise their hands. One of my students looked at the fraction  $1/2$  (one half) and talked about how as God's people, we shouldn't just dedicate a part of our life to God, and we shouldn't be a Christian just half of the time, but God calls us to dedicate our whole life to Him. We read of this in Colossians 3:23. This verse says, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." By bringing up this idea, not only does it tell me that that particular student understands what the fraction means, but it helps us all reflect on our lives as Christians and ask ourselves if we are truly devoting all of our life to Christ and doing all things for His honor and glory. After having some discussion on that, I picked another student's hand. This student pointed out the fraction  $1/3$  (one third) and connected it to the Trinity. He said that this fraction reminds him that the Father is

one third of the Trinity and that together with the Son and the Holy Spirit makes up that one being, God. Once again, this response tells me that this student understands what the fraction one third means, but it also tells me that he understands the doctrine of the Trinity that we believe in and confess. Matthew 28:19 speaks of the Trinity when it says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Although there were many more ideas brought up, I'd like to focus on one final concept. This concept was the main spiritual application that I had in mind as I taught this lesson, but it was also brought up by one of my students. When one of my students raised their hand, they said that fractions remind them of the body of Christ. They said that fractions represent a part of the whole so when we think of fractions, it reminds them that they are just a part of the whole body of Christ. It reminds them that all of God's people make up that one whole body and each and every member of that body is important and helps make up the whole Church. We read of this in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 when it says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." Once again, to hear this type of response is so encouraging as a teacher. It shows me that this particular student understands that as an individual, as a school, or as a church, we are only one part of the body of Christ and Christ's church which includes all of His children spread throughout the earth.

Although I have only brought up a few ideas in this article and only focused on the topic of fractions, I can assure you that these students were able to come up with so much more on this topic and have brought up so many great ideas for the other topics we have discussed. As a Christian school teacher, I am truly blessed to hear these things come from the mouths of these children every school day. I can also assure you that not only are these children growing in academic knowledge, but they are growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I'd like to conclude with our school text. 2 Peter 3:18 says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

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

- March 19, 2025** – Solo & Ensemble Festival (Hope School)
- April 4-11, 2025** – Spring Break
- April 25, 2025** – Kindergarten Program
- May 5-9, 2025** – 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade MAP Testing (avoid appointments)
- May 7, 2025** – Elementary Program (in the afternoon)
- May 13, 2025** – Band & Choir Concert
- May 19, 2025** – All Schools Band Concert
- May 26, 2025** – Memorial Day (no school)
- May 28, 2025** – Last day of school (1/2 day)
- May 28, 2025** – Graduation (7 PM, Fellowship Reformed Church)

## **SUMMER, 2025**

- August 18-23** - Hudsonville Fair Restaurant

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

- August 25, 2025** – Open House (9 AM – Noon)
- August 26, 2025** – School begins
- August 29 – September 1, 2025** – Labor Day Break
- October 16-17, 2025** – Teacher's Convention
- November 20, 2025** – All School Program
- November 27 and 28, 2025** - Thanksgiving Break
- December 24, 2025 – January 3, 2026** - Christmas Break
- February 20, 2026** – Mid Winter Break
- April 3-10, 2026** – Spring Break
- May 25, 2026** – Memorial Day (no school)
- May 28, 2026** – Last day of school (1/2 day)
- May 28, 2026** - Graduation