

THE COURIER

FALL
2015

Published by the Board of
COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

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CHAPEL at COVENANT

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

(see page 10)





Challenges III

In this short series of articles in the Courier we have been focusing on the challenges that we face as we work to stay true to our mission of providing a truly Reformed education for our children. We first considered some of the challenges that are naturally a part of the educational process. Then, last time, we began looking at some of the external forces found in the world and culture in which we live, that have an effect on what we do in schools. In this last article we will consider how the culture of the world presents challenges to the schools.

There are many aspects of our culture that confront us with challenges. Some of them involve the environment in which the students find themselves and the situations that they must face each day. Some challenges come from the many different philosophies and ways of thinking that are propagated by our society today. Others come from how our children spend their time and the social interactions that they are involved in. We have to be vigilant against ideas and actions that take us away from our mission. To do this we must acknowledge that the culture of the world around us impacts who we are, how we act toward each other, and how we take on responsibility.

The Environment of the Home and Family

Our Protestant Reformed schools are parental schools. The parents, working through the school associations and school boards, enroll their children in the school because they believe it to be an extension of their home. Teachers are hired by school boards that work on behalf of the parents. Curriculum is implemented under the supervision of the school board on behalf of the parents. Communication between parents and the school administration and teachers must be centered on a unity of thought and purpose for the education of their children. The basis of this unity is the home and the relationships within that home. When the home does not take seriously the work of the school and support the work of the teacher, there are bound to be problems. If the essential relationships of the home break down, specifically that of the relationship between husband and wife, the children will be affected and the schools will feel the effects. A new dynamic will be introduced into every classroom in which these children are taught and every hallway in which these children walk.

God's design and plan for the growth of children is to use families and the broader body of Christ to foster that growth and keep it focused on a divine purpose. Dr. Walt Mueller in his book, *Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture*, discusses the various factors that influence teens as they grow up. He says the following about the family, "... parents are always the single most significant socializing

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force in the lives of emerging generations. God ordained the institution of the family at creation and established the family as the arena in which spiritual nurture is to take place (Deut.6:1-9). In the economy of today's culture, the failure of the family to function according to God's design and intent fosters a situation where the tasks of nurture and socialization are handed by default to other institutions or cultural forces. In other words, the family is always the greatest influencer of teens values, attitudes and behaviors, for better or for worse depending on the role the family is or is not playing in the life of the young person." (Mueller p. 26)

It is essential that parents support the school in every way possible. They should make the school and the teachers a part of their family devotions and prayers. This is one way that children growing up will experience their school as the extension of the home. It is also important that parents support the teachers by making sure that homework gets done and that children are taking the time at home to read and to study for tests. Children, by nature, will often be prone to settle for mediocrity. It is the combined efforts of the home and school that can help spur them on to do their very best.

Challenges for the school arise when the relationship between husband and wife breaks down because of sin. It is inevitable that the children in the family will suffer hardships because of the sinful actions of parents. Children find themselves trying to navigate through difficult situations that most other kids don't have to deal with. On top of the general pressures of dealing with school work, social interaction with peers, and growing spiritually, they now have a whole new set of circumstances to face on a daily basis. These circumstances rock the very core of their being and have an effect in every part of their life. These students come into school each day carrying these heavy

burdens. While constantly dealing with the fallout of these broken relationships these students are spending a great deal of emotional energy trying to reconcile the different messages that are coming at them. Dealing with these situations is often difficult for teachers as the necessary information is not always readily available to help understand the current problems. This makes it difficult at times for the teacher to have the wisdom in finding the balance between empathy for the student's situation while still holding them accountable for the work that needs to be done. Overall, I think our teachers desire the very best for all students and strive daily to help and guide them through life's difficult times.

In addition to dealing with the children who may be struggling, the schools also have to deal with the complexities of joint custody where the children may be living in two different homes during the week. There often will be antagonism of one party toward the Christian school, making school/parent communications difficult. The peers that surround them in the Christian school are often times a great source of help during these times. As schools, we need to continue to find ways to work with the families and the church to help and support these children so that these burdens don't take away from all of the positive experiences that happen in the schools.

Relationships and Social Media

Another challenge of our culture to the work of the schools is maintaining proper relationships with the proliferation of social media and connective technology into the lives of our children. There are many positive things that technology can bring into our lives and into the school, yet we have to consider how these things can affect the school in a negative way. Facebook (not so popular with kids today), Snapchat (the most popular with kids), Instagram, and Twitter are the most popular of the social networking sites. Much could be written about how social media affects the lives of our children but suffice it to say that it has a major effect on how they view each other. It also impacts their thinking, attention, and behavior. Studies have shown that this is also becoming a major concern for adults in the workplace. This is not surprising because of the addictive nature of social media. These habits and the associated need to remain connected are learned as teenagers and then carry over into adult life and the workplace.

One of the negative effects of young people being constantly updated on the activities of others is described by the acronym FOMO. This stands for, Fear of Missing Out. Since we are dealing with social media, I will take a few quotes from the Wikipedia website on FOMO to give you an idea about this "condition". "Fear of missing out or FOMO is a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent". "FOMO perpetuates the fear of having made the wrong decision on how to spend time, as 'you can imagine how things could be different'". "People who grapple with FOMO might not know exactly what they

are missing, but can still hold a fear that others are having a much better time or having a much more rewarding experience on the spur of the moment." .” This article goes on to describe how this can drive behavior. "Moreover, FOMO serves as a motive for an escalating usage of social media, which could distract people from learning in the classroom and operating motor vehicles. Furthermore, unhealthy digital habits, such as constantly checking on emails and social media updates, could be developed and thus lead to insufficient engagement in the present social interactions." (The official government website on distracted driving states that, "A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive. 20 percent of teens and 10 percent of parents admit that they have extended, multi-message text conversations while driving." www.distracted.gov) How often don't we see a group of kids together and many, if not all of them, are on their phones checking the latest social media updates and not at all engaged with the people that they are with. "FOMO may drive someone to constantly look for a better or more interesting connection with others, abandoning current connections to do so, without realizing that what they move to is not necessarily better, just different." (Quotes from Wikipedia "Fear of Missing Out")

The sense of missing out can push some young people, especially those who are not socially active, into greater and greater isolation as they are continually viewing the lives of their peers being posted on social media. They see the implicit and often explicit messages that "you are really missing out if you are not here". They see what they are missing and while wishing they were there, they realize that they never will be a part of that group. This has been seen to lead to an increased level of stress in teens which can progress into depression as they view their lives as more and more hopeless.

How does this condition affect the school? It affects the relationships that the students have with each other and the social interactions that form the community life of the school. It affects students who spend part of the day thinking about what went on the night before and what they may have missed and then the other part of the day thinking about what will be happening tonight. The work of the classroom and learning become secondary issues to these concerns. It affects the students as they try to interpret all of the "news" about this person or that person that is broadcast via social media.

FOMO also leads to some practical problems for those who work to organize activities in and around the school. I have noticed that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get our students to make a commitment of their time. Asking students to sign up for activities or make plans for something in the future is a painfully slow process. Nobody wants to commit for fear that they will miss something else that may be going on that they don't yet know about. It is also more prevalent that young people will not keep the commitments that were made because they become aware of a "better" opportunity. *(cont. on page 5)*

FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

John Flikkema III, President



Walking the Halls of Covenant Christian High

The meeting was over, my fellow board members gone. I walked down Covenant's hallways, in the darkness of late night, thinking of the growth of the physical school building which is much larger than the building I attended so many years ago – the size now, the years past, the size then. The terrazzo floor was still the same as the wax gleamed on the well-maintained surface; a distant light washed the locker fronts as I moved through space and I thanked God for his faithfulness....yesterday, today, tomorrow.

The building is a tangible, something the community has always rallied around. As it should be. But my work this term and in many others (has it really been six... seven?) has taught me this. A school building--truly lovely, truly a blessing--is just an empty shell without the students, and is nothing without the teachers who work both with the students and for them. Late night walks are one thing. These strolls down dimmed school hallways are reflective moments, introspective opportunities. The walks through Covenant Christian bustling during a full-force school day are something else entirely. A thousand conversations overwhelming a person as voices bounce like rubber balls. Who can focus on a student or have the ability to build relationships within this chaotic marketplace? Covenant's faithful teachers can, have, and continue to do this necessary work.

Covenant's teachers are a competent blessing. The interactions between our students and their teachers are a joy to observe. The eagerness with which the students approach their teachers and the welcoming smiles and attentiveness of the teachers, are clear to any observer. The interactions are not limited to the classroom, where the rigors of learning draw out the more serious sides of both teacher and student; they flow into the halls, as well. Laughter, banter, gentle humor, and goodwill flow back and forth between staff members and students and set the tone of the crowded and chaotic hallways. Exchanges such as these ring a school bell of good tidings and joy; one, which I am happy to say, has been often observed as I navigated Covenant's hallways. What a wonderful 'hallmark' of those who love Christ and are eager to do his will!

We parents and grandparents are eager to do God's will with regards to the heritage He has entrusted to us. This eagerness has led us to establish Covenant Christian, it causes us to build its additions and support its drives; and it leads us to send our loved ones here.

Our children are sent to Covenant Christian to

learn of their Father and the world He has created. The association's eagerness to do God's will has also led Covenant to employ good Christian teachers to assist us in our calling. Without their professionalism, discipline, and dedication, we would be hard-pressed to carry out our calling. But it is obvious to me (and, as I can clearly see, to our students, as well) that our teachers have moved beyond merely "doing their duty"; they show a delight in what they do as they focus to reach (and teach) the whole student.

As I continue to walk the halls of Covenant Christian, it gives me great pleasure to see good Christian teachers inspiring our students to the fullest measure of their ability and devotion.

John Flikkema III, Board President



FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

Eugene Kamps, Education Committee



The Education Committee for the 2015-2016 school year consists of John Flikkema, Dave Moelker, Doug Bleyenbug, Rick Noorman, and Eugene Kamps. The school year is fast approaching the half way mark with the first semester quickly coming to a close. The Education Committee would like to keep the parents and the supporters of CCHS updated on how the school year is progressing. We have a new faculty member for the Academic Support and Assistant Counselor position. She is Sydney Bomers, married to Luke Bomers and a member of Hope PRC. In the Academic Support position, she will be working with Paula Kuiper and Dorothy VanDerSchaaf. As the Assistant Counselor, Sydney

will work with James Haveman helping students in their preparations for college selection.

This past summer some of our teachers were busy preparing CED (Course Enrichment and Development) Projects. These projects allow the teachers to upgrade, modify, or supplement present course materials or prepare new course material for use in the classroom. We are happy to report there were seven (7) projects completed and now in use this school year. These seven projects include the following: Kristin Crossett produced a Spanish Curriculum, Rick DeVries revamped the Government Class materials, Kyle Bruinooge made Note Sheets for Algebra 1, Sue Looyenga reworked the Advanced English and Composition Course, Joel Minderhoud generated a new Chemistry Curriculum, Dan Kuiper and Joel Minderhoud worked together on a Physical Science Course, and Scott VanUffelen prepared a new Worldviews Course. We would like to express our appreciation for all of your work on these projects.

Kristin Crossett, our Spanish teacher, is expecting her first child in June 2016. We rejoice with Dave and Kristin and are happy for them. She will finish the school year out but will not be able to be at Covenant for the year end exams. Once again, the Education Committee will have to address the need for a Spanish teacher.

In 2 or 3 years there could be another change at CCHS. With an ever growing student body there will be a need for additional teachers and classroom space. The Lord has blessed us with a student population that continues to grow. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord and the fruit of the womb is his reward." Psalm 127:3. What a blessing it is to have like faith teachers and an administrator that are faithful in their calling to help and aid us parents in the instruction of the covenant youth in the fear and honor of God's name. Thank you to the Administrator, teachers, and staff for all your work and labors with the students here at CCHS.

The Education Committee covets your prayers for our Administrator, teachers, staff, students, and Board. May God be honored and glorified through the instruction of the covenant youth here at Covenant Christian High School.

(cont. from page 3)

Self-centered Life

I believe that another challenge of our culture is the increasing amount of self-centered behavior. Consider the rise of the "selfie". Is this just a product of technology, the capabilities that we have, and how social media works? Or is it more than that? It is hard to imagine that even 10 years ago we would have seen a young lady hold her pocket size camera in front of her face and take a picture of herself. I'm pretty sure that most people would have considered that

odd and even self-centered. What has changed? Is this a good change? Some of this activity can be seen as people working to promote themselves and put themselves into the best light as they are viewed by other people. This can have negative effects as they work harder and harder to please people and not God. And, the world in which they view themselves is controlled by the opinions of others instead of a world directed by God. The sense of one's life purpose can become distorted. The good questions about our purpose are seldom asked. Questions such as: What is God's will for my life? What specific gifts and abilities has God given to me, and how does He want me to use them? And, what goals are worth pursuing?

Dr. Jeff Myers, in his book, *Cultivate*, which considers the role of mentoring in the life of young people says, "The emerging generation is struggling tremendously with life purpose questions and coming up with convoluted answers that distort God's purposes. There are two things those in this emerging generations must stop doing and two things that they must start doing to arrive at meaningful life purpose. They must reject self-centeredness and immaturity, and embrace their God-given design and trust in his sovereignty." (Myers, p. 93)

How does the growth of self-centered behavior affect the school? It affects relationships between peers and between students and teachers. It shapes the environment to be one where the interests in others and work of Christ's Kingdom takes a back seat to personal fulfillment instead. It fosters a sense of entitlement and the attitude that I really don't want to work very hard for this because I don't know what it will do for me.

There are many more aspects of cultural challenges that we could discuss. The point that we must realize and be conscious is the fact that our schools do not exist in isolation. Just like the entire life of the Christian, the school exists in a world that is fallen and subject to sin. Our calling is to meet all of these challenges by living lives that are faithful to Jesus Christ. We do this by loving Him first and above all and loving the neighbor as ourselves. These would seem to be very simple principles, but they are so contrary to our natures that we want to love ourselves more than anything. We have to constantly remind ourselves and our children that our hope is in Christ (Col. 1:27) and that "God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). We have to trust him in all things, remembering the words of Romans 8: 31-32, "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Give thanks for our schools and our teachers. Assist and support the work of the schools as they work to battle these challenges that try to hinder our work. Help your children to see that school is a wonderful institution dedicated to preparing them to live their lives in service to Jesus Christ. To God be the glory in all of our work!



Profit and Loss Budget Performance 2015

In this issue of the Courier is a financial report for the last fiscal year (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015). This report shows the actual revenue and expenses for that fiscal year, the budget for that year, and the difference of actual compared to budget for each line item. As you look at this report you can see that our total income was \$2,371,185 and our total expenses were \$2,400,896. This means we ran a deficit for the fiscal year of \$29,710. This is not alarming, as it was somewhat by design. When the 2014-15 budget was proposed by the board and approved by the association, it was approved with a \$32,400 deficit, due to a large surplus from the prior year and a significant balance in our general fund. So although we finished the year with a deficit, it was a smaller deficit than what was budgeted. And while our total revenue came in \$14,865 under budget, our total expenses came in \$17,554 under budget.

There is much reason for thanks when reviewing this financial report. We thank the many supporters who continue to liberally give of their resources for the operation of our school. This is especially evident in the fact that we exceeded our budgeted support drive goal of \$270,000 by almost 15%, and we actually received over \$308,000! In addition, the amount received through church collections was also significantly more than budgeted. We ask that you all continue with this generous support which is so important to Covenant Christian High School. We also thank all

	<u>Jul '14 - Jun 15</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
INCOME			
4110 · Tuition	1,878,943	1,942,500	(63,557)
4200 · Church Collections	62,442	54,000	8,442
4300 · Pledges & gifts	308,330	270,000	38,330
4350 · CCHS Foundation Receipts	25,294	23,400	1,894
4450 · Special Education Receipts	91,872	90,650	1,222
4600 · Miscellaneous Receipts	3,392	5,500	(2,108)
4604 · Interest Income	913	-	913
TOTAL INCOME	2,371,185	2,386,050	(14,865)
EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES			
5010 · Teaching & administration	1,241,202	1,225,000	(16,202)
5030 · Substitute Teachers	215	500	285
5035 · Teacher Assistants	18,924	23,700	4,776
5040 · Office Staff	37,168	38,900	1,732
5050 · Athletic Director & Coaches	48,375	48,300	(75)
5110 · Payroll Taxes	101,949	111,200	9,251
5125 · Teachers' Retirement expense	35,877	44,000	8,123
5135 · Special Education	124,660	117,000	(7,660)
6110 · Teaching aids & supplies	12,081	13,000	919
6120 · Educational equipment	16,000	16,000	-
6122 · Technology fund	20,000	20,000	-
6130 · Physical education equipment	901	1,000	99
6140 · Library	4,100	4,100	-
6150 · Science lab supplies	6,032	6,000	(32)
6170 · Teachers' development	14,133	12,000	(2,133)
6180 · Music	3,654	3,000	(654)
6190 · Band instruments	3,050	3,050	(0)
	1,688,320	1,686,750	(1,570)
INSURANCE EXPENSES			
5120 · Group insurance coverage	230,000	230,000	-
5130 · Workers' compensation insurance	5,481	4,800	(681)
6040 · General insurance	14,656	15,000	344
	250,137	249,800	(337)

who are responsible for the expenditures of the school. Our total expenses came in \$17,554 under budget, demonstrating again the good stewardship of all who are involved in the operations of the school. We are also thankful to the many tuition paying families who see to it that their tuition is paid consistently and on time. Since tuition accounts for more than 80% of our budget, this is crucial for the operation our school.

Above all, we give thanks to our Heavenly Father,

BUILDING EXPENSES

5020 · Custodial services	56,024	55,700	(324)
5025 · Maintenance Wages	12,867	20,000	7,133
5110.1 · Payroll taxes - custodial	4,210	5,800	1,590
6000 · Utilities	61,337	65,000	3,663
6025 · Water improvements assessment	4,410	4,300	(110)
6050 · Janitorial supplies	9,303	11,500	2,197
6060 · Snow removal	4,905	4,500	(405)
6062 · Trash removal	1,330	1,000	(330)
6065 · Grounds maintenance	15,795	14,000	(1,795)
6070 · General maintenance	40,000	40,000	-
6080 · Major maintenance program	54,000	54,000	-
6090 · Building furnishings	6,613	5,000	(1,613)
	<u>270,794</u>	<u>280,800</u>	<u>10,006</u>

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

6030 · Telephone	5,455	6,000	545
6145 · Copier replacement	2,500	2,500	-
6160 · Equipment repair & replacement	620	3,000	2,380
6210 · Transportation expenses	900	2,000	1,100
6220 · Office supplies	7,402	6,500	(902)
6222 · Equipment service contracts	5,991	10,000	4,009
6225 · Publicity & printing cost	2,484	2,500	16
6230 · Postage	3,466	4,000	534
6240 · Federation dues	2,462	2,300	(162)
6245 · Graduation expenses	2,970	3,500	530
6250 · Accounting fees	4,200	4,200	-
6260 · Miscellaneous expenses	4,195	5,600	1,405
6300 · Property Acquisition	44,000	44,000	0
6310 · Debt obligations - facilities	105,000	105,000	-
	<u>191,644</u>	<u>201,100</u>	<u>9,456</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES

<u>2,400,896</u>	<u>2,418,450</u>	<u>17,554</u>
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NET INCOME

<u>(29,710)</u>	<u>(32,400)</u>	<u>(2,690)</u>
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By now your tuition for this year should be at least half paid. The Finance Committee is willing to work with families who are struggling, but included in that working together must be good communication and a plan to get the tuition paid. Tuition statements have recently been mailed – please check your tuition and make sure you are current, and if not let the Finance Committee know of your plans to be paid in full by the end of the school year.

The second highest source of revenue is our annual support drive. Our drive for the 2015-16 year is well under way. So far we have collected \$175,414 of our budgeted \$295,000 goal. We ask that you continue to prayerfully consider this great cause of Christian instruction of our covenant young people.

The Finance Committee, along with the Board, continues to covet your prayers, as we oversee the operations of this school on your behalf.

We see this as a daunting

task, made possible only by the grace and strength of our Heavenly Father. But we also see this as a necessary task, as we prepare our young people to take up their places in the church in these latter days.

who continues to provide the resources, as well as the commitment in the hearts of all who support CCHS, making it possible to continue this work of instructing our young people in His fear and according to His will.

There is one area of some concern, and it is the main focus of the Finance Committee each month. I refer to the amount of delinquent tuition. This is also evident in the financial report, which shows tuition revenue coming in more than \$63,000 under what was budgeted. As already stated, many of our families make sure their tuition is paid on time, and we are truly grateful for that; but there are some who may be struggling to pay their tuition each month. If you are falling behind, please keep in contact with the Finance Committee with your plan to get caught up.





Peer to Peer

A friend loveth at all times
Prov. 17:17

Many supporters came out on a beautiful day in September to participate in the first Peer to Peer walk. The objective of the Peer to Peer event is to raise awareness in our Protestant Reformed Community of the work of the Protestant Reformed

Special Education Society and the valuable contribution it makes in the education of the students in our Special Education program and their peers as members of the Body of Christ.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.
 Romans 12:6a



Powder Puff Football

On a beautiful Autumn day the entire student body gathered to cheer the Senior and Junior girls as they struggled for a tie.

STUDENT *Life*



Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the learning experience here at Covenant.

In September, the Advanced Biology class left at 4:30 A.M. for their annual camping trip to Pigeon River Country State Forest northeast of Gaylord.

In October, Mr. DeVries's World Geography Class explored the Gerald R Ford Museum.

Rooted in the Reformed perspective, our chapels are devotional times that seek to bring us together as an entire school body to be spiritually enriched as we meditate on the depths and truths of God's love. The Chapel Coordinator, Scott Van Uffelen, seeks to find speakers and create opportunities for the students and faculty to be encouraged in their spiritual walk together and be refreshed with the riches of God's love toward us. Chapels, usually held on Wednesdays each week, serve the goal of enabling us to build our education on the proper foundation (Matt. 7:24).

The main theme established this year is "God is Love". For us to love God means we must imitate His love. We do that in and through chapel. We do not come merely into a gym... we come into a place where Christ is... where love is... where we are filled with the Gospel message of love and redemption. Where scripture leads us in the narrative of God's love for us: the greatest love story ever written because it is a story of Perfect Love.

Our chapels take on various forms, as each focuses on the various roles and callings we have as co-heirs of salvation. The teachers often lead in the devotional time by directing the students to a passage and its specific application in our life together as students and teachers. Ministers and seminary students come in as well to fully develop a theme pertinent to the calling of young people. Multiple times throughout the year the students are led in their worship of God through the songs and music of the choirs and band.

Students love to get

One memory that sticks out to me is when we stood up and sang Psalter numbers facing each other as though we were singing for each other and even more towards the one goal - glorifying our God together.
Larissa Langerak

It is good to set aside a time to grow spiritually with your classmates.
Andrew Lubbers

together as classes and have singing chapels as well where they can lead one another in a smaller, more intimate way. Student Council leads multiple chapels throughout the year, including the Friendship-themed chapel, the Christmas chapel, and the Homecoming chapel. Each class also has the opportunity to lead the rest of the school in a chapel, students leading students in the walk and understanding of God's Word. Together we are enriched and refreshed by God's Word.

Scott Van Uffelen, Chapel coordinator



Chapel is beneficial for us as young people to hear speeches directed towards us specifically. Having chapels shows God's covenant faithfulness that we are able to freely hear his Word each week in our school.
Lynnae Miedema



Chapel brings us together to praise God and be instructed on how to live as a young person in this wicked world. This is a good thing to have every week so we can be reminded that we aren't like the world.
Calvin Van Bommel

I think Chapel is beneficial because we devote part of the week to hearing biblical truths applied to our daily lives here at school and in our interactions with those around us.
Josh Moelker

Chapels bring the whole student body together, which only happens twice a week (in devotions and chapel). Instead of seeing everyone as freshmen or juniors, we see them as a whole school.
Lindsey Kuiper





**COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
FOUNDATION**

As the Covenant Christian High School Board Representative for the Foundation Board, I have the task of sitting in on the Foundation Board meetings. I see the work that goes into trying to build the Foundation for the future of Covenant Christian High School. Many men currently, and in the past, have put in many hours trying to build this Foundation for the future instruction of our covenant children. The CCHS website says the purpose of the Foundation is “to provide funds to assist CCHS to meet its increasing financial needs.” A lot of money has been raised — but the work is not done. As a member of the CCHS Board finance committee also, I see that the financial needs are increasing to run a GROWING high school. We need the Foundation to GROW also!

The Foundation Board puts on two main fundraisers per year to help this cause and is looking at other fundraising options. The golf outing and Foundation dinner raise almost \$30,000 per year — thanks to all who have supported and helped at these events. (Don’t forget the Foundation Dinner on March 17 — reserve a table now!) These are wonderful events, and great fundraisers — but they alone will not build the Foundation. Monies are given to the school already to help aid in the running of the school in 2015. We need the Foundation to grow, and the fundraisers will not do it all.

The Foundation Board would like to stress one other way that you can help in this growth — and that is through estate planning. We all have an estate, some are big, and some smaller. We are all called to honor God in our estates and in the wealth He has given us (Proverbs 3:9 — “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:”) We all should want a plan for our estate that names whom you want to receive the things you own upon your death. Estate planning is not just for “retired” people and is not just for the “wealthy”. Don’t think “I’m not old enough”, or that “I don’t own enough” to start a plan. We all should have a plan. If you don’t have a plan, the state probably has

one for you, and you probably won’t like the plan. We are called to be wise stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to us; estate planning will help in our callings to be wise stewards. I Peter 4:10 — “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” Whatever gifts we have received, let us look at them as received for the use of others.

Some may think that it is too confusing to set up an estate plan. The Foundation Board works with the Barnabas Foundation to help assist those of you who would like to set up an estate plan. A Barnabas representative can meet with you and recommend an estate plan which you can take to your attorney, or they can help in finding you an attorney. Legal documents can then be prepared for your estate plan. Some of you have already done this, and the Foundation Board thanks you for remembering the Foundation in your estate. There are many that still need to do this. Please consider setting up an estate plan now to help the Foundation of CCHS GROW! You can contact a Foundation Board member if you would like more information or help in pursuing the set-up of an estate plan. The CCHS website also has a link to the Barnabas Foundation on its website if you would like to get more information that way. You may want to talk with family members, or talk with those with knowledge about estate planning to decide what is best for you. The Foundation Board asks that you get the discussion about estate planning started today.

As I said earlier, we need the Foundation to grow. The Lord has blessed CCHS with growth - and what a wonderful blessing it is! With this growth comes need - financial needs - future financial needs. The Foundation Board asks that you prayerfully consider an estate plan if you do not have one, and please remember the Foundation when you do prepare one. Let’s all work together to build and grow the Foundation for the future of Covenant Christian High School. Estate Planning is a good way to help in this cause. Remember, when you give to the foundation it is a gift that keeps giving for many years to come.

Brad Brower

CCHS Board Member & Foundation Board Rep

*Every man shall give as he is able,
according to the blessing of the Lord thy God
which he hath given thee.*

Deuteronomy 16:17

Robotics

The CCHS robotics teams are into their 6th season. Currently they are designing two robots for the 2015-16 international competition called FIRST Res-Q. The robots this year have to clear debris from an avalanche field, rescue climbers, and scale a steep and bumpy mountain to gain points and win the game.

The teams have really scaled up the technical precision of their robots compared to past years. Both robots are being modeled in CAD before the actual building phase begins.



Difficult to make parts are being built up one layer at a time with a 3-D printer that was just acquired. Additionally the robots are implementing color sensors, infrared sensors, and gyroscopes to autonomously control their robot and maintain position on the playing field.

Our home location has moved off of campus. We are now enjoying the use of a small log home that Covenant has acquired on an 11 acre parcel on Hall Street. Design and build happens on the main floor while the competition practice field is laid out in the basement.



Jon VanOverloop has reduced his involvement to only coordinate events and help with the financial aspects of the program. Travis Kuiper is running the program on a day to day basis. He is greatly assisted by a number of key mentors including: Jerry VanBaren, Ben Lubbers, Matt den Hartog, Derek VanOverloop, Taylor Dykstra, Meghan VanBaren and Jacob VanderWall.



This year we will be traveling to Wisconsin, Ohio, and Detroit to compete in qualifying tournaments. Super regionals will again be in Iowa and the world championship is in St. Louis, Missouri.

Jon Van Overloop, Teacher Mentor

Welcome

NEW TEACHERS

Hello! I am Briana Prins, the daughter of Bob and Carolyn Prins, and am a member at Trinity PRC. I attended Heritage and Covenant growing up, and am grateful for all that our schools offer. This is my first year teaching full time at Covenant. For three years, while a student at Grand Valley University, I taught in the Academic Support Program at Covenant and also tutored some of Covenant's students. I loved getting to know the students one-on-one and helping them in a broad variety of subjects. Moving in to teaching mathematics full time has been a fun change. I am teaching Algebra Concepts and Skills, Algebra II, and Geometry.

After attending Covenant, I have been able to see the blessing that our Christian schools are. This past year I graduated from Grand Valley State University

with a bachelor's degree for teaching secondary English and mathematics. During my time at GVSU, I studied abroad in Limerick, Ireland, where I attended the Limerick Reformed Fellowship. My time with the fellowship there reinforced the great blessing the Lord has given us with our schools.

There are not many places where the Word of God is taught with all subjects, and I am incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to teach here.

While Covenant has grown and changed over the years, the main focus remains firmly on Christ. The teachers are welcoming and quick to offer help, not only to students but also to each other. The main purpose of attending is still learning to be good stewards of what we've been given, getting the skills necessary to work to supply the needs of our families and the church, and learning more about Christ in all subjects. After attending public universities and working in public schools for my student teaching, it has been a blessing to come back to Covenant. I look forward to working with the students here.



Hello! My name is Sydney Bomers. I am from Lowell, Michigan. I graduated from Lowell High School in 2009 and then went on to Grand Valley State University. In 2013, I received my bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences. My original career goal was to become a doctor or physician assistant, but the Lord had other plans!

After graduating from college, I started attending a bible study near Grand Valley which led me to meeting my husband, Luke Bomers. We met in the summer of 2013, and then I started to attend Hope Protestant Reformed Church and later joined in December of 2014. Luke and I were married in June of 2015. I love to look back at small events in my life and see God's providence leading me to the truth and to the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Covenant Christian High School is, for obvious reasons, different from the high school I attended. It is a true pleasure to work in a school where we can openly express our faith with like-minded believers. Another difference between Covenant Christian and my high school is the size. My graduating class alone was slightly larger than the entire student body at Covenant Christian. Being in a smaller school provides an environment that is more conducive for getting to know students better.

I have a few different roles at Covenant Christian High School. I work three days a week in the guidance counseling office and two days a week in the academic support classroom. In the guidance counseling office, I assist James Haveman in meeting with students one-on-one to discuss careers, college, and future plans. I am also responsible for sending out transcripts, setting up college representative visits, setting up career speaker visits, and a whole host of other tasks. In the academic support classroom, I assist Paula Kuiper in providing support to students in their academic endeavors. So far, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Covenant Christian High School! It is a great place to be, and I enjoy going to "work" every day.

In my spare time, I coach and judge MHSAA competitive cheer. Contrary to popular belief, there is no music or dancing in MHSAA competitive cheer. This sport is heavily focused on stunting, tumbling (gymnastics), jumps, and precise motions. The uniforms are also more modest than what most people think. I enjoy being a part of this sport because it teaches young athletes to work as a team, to encourage their teammates, and to push them to set goals and work to achieve them.



The Covenant Christian craft show was a huge success. We had over 2,000 people walk through the doors of CCHS (not counting crafters, volunteers and committee members). It was a great show and already 45 crafters are signed up to come next year. The efforts of the committee were blessed and we thank them, the volunteers and the crafters for their many talents. We give praise to God, who provided for us richly.

CCHS Craft Show



The craft show featured many talented local vendors. There was a large variety of handcrafted items with over 100 local vendors lined up. The Bake sale looked amazing and the lunch room served delicious home-made cinnamon rolls and pizza.



All proceeds benefited the band and boosters programs at CCHS.

We are already planning for next year's event, so mark your calendar for October 29, 2016.



Comments:

From a vendor:

A BIG thank you to every volunteer at this event! You all made my day so much easier.

From Customers:

*So many smiles!
Such adorable stuff!
I might be spending way too much at your booth!*



Life As An Independent

Our athletic teams began the 2015-16 season without a Conference home. While this creates some opportunities, it also creates a large number of gaps in our sports schedules. In some sports, it creates an opportunity to “play up” against larger schools. In some sports, volleyball for example, where the schedules are very heavy with tournaments, it causes a lack of home games. In certain sports, it can cause increased travel. In basketball, it may mean fewer Friday night games. So, what happened? Why did the River Valley cease operations? In my opinion, two of the biggest reasons are school enrollment and football.



Many of the Christian schools that were in our conference saw very large drops in enrollment; one of the schools saw a drop from 130 to 80 students over the last 8 years. With those enrollment declines, those schools found it difficult to field JV and freshman teams. That would force them to put 9th and 10th graders on the Varsity teams. It often became difficult to produce competitive Varsity teams, because of low numbers of enrollment, and large numbers of underclassmen on the teams. Those schools began to look elsewhere for conference affiliation, in order to play against schools that were closer in size.

In Michigan,

and in the MHSAA, football is the “King” of high school sports (I imagine that is the case in most areas of the United States). Because of the MHSAA football playoff system, schools find it very difficult to schedule football games outside of their conference. Schools must find that “sure win” non-conference game in order to reach six wins, and make the playoffs. Schools in Michigan travel to Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and even into Canada to fill out their schedules. Because of scheduling issues, a school with football needs to have an affiliation with a conference. It only makes sense then, for a school with football to try to join a conference with other football schools. This guarantees them 5, 6, or even 7 games on their football schedule. It is the reason why many (most) conferences require that all of their member schools sponsor football. In some instances, the leadership will not accept an application from a school that does not sponsor football.



The River Valley Conference lost four schools to these situations. We are left in a difficult situation. We can continue to try to work through this as an independent, or try to join a conference. The options for us are limited by football and travel. We would make an excellent fit for a couple of the Leagues in our area. However, one requires football, and the others would require us to travel great distances. We continue to look at the options that are available to us, and look for the best option for Covenant.

What's new

For the 2015-16 school year, Covenant has contracted with Northern Physical Therapy for the services of an

Athletic Trainer. Our Trainer is Miss Rachel Sprenger, and she has become a very valuable part of our Department. Because of all of the rules, both from the MHSAA and the State of Michigan, surrounding concussions, a Certified Athletic Trainer has become a necessary part of our Athletic Department. The Trainer helps us keep our athletes safe, and healthy. Having an athletic trainer on site allows the coaches to do their job, without having to worry about assessing and treating injuries.

Get the most up-to-date schedules, scores, and information from our new Athletic Department Website: www.covenantchristianathletics.org

