

Published by the Board of
COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

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Student Written Work

In this Courier, we are featuring many stories, poems and articles written by our students during the past school year.

Our teachers at Covenant strive to prepare students to achieve their potential in the written word. They hope to prepare them for college and give them the ability to communicate more clearly and effectively.

Our teachers like to encourage those student writers who are willing to take risks and ask hard questions. Then they challenge them to expand on a topic and write to persuade others effectively. Our students are taught that scripture must be the starting place to find guidance in addressing the controversial issues of the day.

We hope that you find the following student articles in this Courier to be thought provoking, informative, and interesting.

An Eagle's Beauty

Their wide spread wings enclose all land and seas.

With grace and beauty thou dost roam on high.

Its beauty uncompered and prone to be

As great and strong as mountains below lie.

A landscape fair is where this eagle flies.

A "SQUAWK" it gives for every passerby,

Who look upon it with such gazing eyes.

Its crafted home not permanent. He'll fly

And fly with outspread wings, where lies his strength.

Each claw, majestic and strong, is held.

He's clothed with golden feathers in such length.

His beauty, power and such strength beheld.

A creature alone not all understand,

And oh, no creature I will see so grand.

by Alex Van Uffelen

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Rick Noorman



There are times that I will comment to people about the fact that I have to work with 370 teenagers every day. This generally leads to a bit of a chuckle as they give thought to what that must be like. Implied in this is the idea that this is a really unenviable and unenjoyable task. But in reality, I can assure you that nothing could be farther from the truth. I wake up every morning and look forward to the blessings and challenges of spending my time with such a great group of young people. I count it a great privilege to be able to have a part in the development of each one of these Christian young men and women during these very important years of their life. Covenant Christian High School is a very special place. Our students are very special people. Each one of them is a gift to our school, our faculty, and our staff that God entrusts to us. He uses our excellent staff of teachers to teach them more about who He is and help them grow and develop to better serve Him in their lives. This issue of the Courier is dedicated to sharing some of the work of these students with our supporting community. As you read the student selections, you will hear from young people who are all different in some ways but who are all placed in this school by God so that we can grow together as a body of believers.

As we consider this we also have a good opportunity to briefly consider the characteristics of the students attending Covenant Christian High School and their calling as they come to school each day.

Covenant Children

We are thankful that we can view each student as a covenant child of God. They are God's children, given to believing parents who bring them to this school that we may assist them in the rearing that was promised in their baptismal vows. They come from covenant homes that participate in and support the work of the school because it is a parental school. The school is an extension of their home. The school then shares in the great responsibility that is given to the parents to teach them in the fear of God's name. (Deut. 6) The children then are the subject of the work that takes place in the schools with the goal that they learn more about God and how to love and serve Him in every aspect of their life.

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Sinners Saved by Grace

These students, who come to school each day, are sinners, fallen in Adam, who in their old nature do not want to learn for the right reasons nor do what is required of them with a thankful spirit. As we, who are also sinful teachers, labor with them, we together experience this battle with the old man of sin. Yet both students and teachers are redeemed by Christ. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we strive to turn from that old way and seek to please God in our work. We experience this in our labors together. We see this in students as they recognize their sinful nature and fight against it to do the work that they are given. We experience this grace as they respond properly to discipline and instruction that is given. The writing of the students found in this Courier gives evidence of that work that is taking place in their hearts. By God's grace they are able to do this work that shows that they are children of God.

Thankful and Joyful

“Joyful children, sons and daughters, shall about thy table meet, Olive plants in strength and beauty, full of hope and promise sweet.” This verse from Psalter #360 describes the joy that is found in the children of the covenant home. This same joy can be observed in the Christian school as we gather in the classrooms. Essentially, every child of God is called to live their life thankfully and to live it out of the joy of their salvation. For the majority of students, school is an enjoyable place to be. They may all have a different aspect of school that they enjoy more than another. Some may enjoy the challenge of the Statistics classroom while others enjoy singing in choir each day. Still others simply enjoy being with their friends. The hallways and classrooms are full of the joyful energy of youth.

Individually Gifted

Each one of our students has been gifted by God with unique abilities. These gifts may vary by the subject matter or by the skills that they have been given. Students will also vary in the level of their abilities and their capacity to handle certain types of work. Yet each one is capable, through the work of Christ’s Spirit, of using their gifts to know Him in the fullest way and developing in their ability to serve Him through the use of those gifts. As we labor with



these students in school we ask each one to work to the best of their ability and assist them in any way that we can. We must remember to celebrate the accomplishments of each student. We must hold them accountable for the quantity and quality of the work that they do in relation to the abilities that they have been given.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ

All of us at school are called to live together as spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ. Each one is in a relationship with others and has his or her own place, own gifts to apply to the relationships, and own needs for others to minister to. It is an amazing thing to see it work out “that everyone must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of the other members.” (Q. & A. 55 of Heidelberg Catechism.)

This was evident in the recent loss that we experienced when Samantha Lubbers was suddenly taken from us and delivered to her heavenly home. The students and staff were able to come together and share the grief of the loss and the hope of the resurrection



with each other. As Scripture was read, songs sung, and prayers raised to God, it was done as one body with the awareness that we depend upon God and we need each other. It is encouraging when we see students rally to the side of a hurting classmate or give of themselves in a way that helps or builds up another member of the body. And when we see the old man of sin working in this area to destroy our relationships through selfish and hurtful talk and actions, we must make it a priority to address the problems and seek to return to a unified body.

I give thanks daily to God for allowing me to work with these fine young people in such a great environment. Each one of them brings their own special qualities which add to the character of the school itself. Please enjoy the articles, poems and stories in this Courier written by our students that will make you aware of this great blessing.

Student Articles

On the following pages you will find submitted work from students that our teachers found to be exceptional.

A Godly Nation Becomes Godless

“One nation, under God.”

These are the words found in America’s Pledge of Allegiance. Five years before the Pledge of Allegiance was published, a U.S. navy officer, George Balch wrote this salute to the flag: “We give our heads and our hearts to God and our country. One country, one language, one flag.” America was once a nation that was unified under God. The words, “In God We Trust,” were also added to the American Dollar Bills at this time. However, these words that once might have seemed to be true for America (the once God-centered nation), no longer seems to be true today. Today violence, mass shootings, riots, feminism, and sexual immorality corrupt the United States. A nation (once established in order to worship God freely), is becoming increasingly immoral. Particularly in regards to sexuality and the sanctity of married life, America is sinning. No longer is our nation united in their love for the one true, almighty God.

There are many branches to the sexual immorality that has grown within this nation. These branches are as follows: the sexual revolution, the gay rights movement, and divorce and remarriage. These three branches all belong to this growing tree, a tree which sprouted from the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve. We read in Genesis of the immoral, sexual sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. Homosexuality took root at this time. What did God do to this city? He destroyed it with fire and brimstone. The world today is becoming the “Sodom and Gomorrah” of Abraham and Lot’s day. Sexual immorality is growing! Although these sins already existed before America was founded, they were not commonly heard of during the time at which America was founded.

So how did America come to be the immoral nation it is today? It is estimated that around the 1920’s the

sexual revolution took its root in America. What is this sexual revolution? It was a time of change in America in which couples began to see nothing wrong with sex outside of marriage. In fact, many found joy in partaking in such sin (Clayman Institute, 1). This sin of fornication became especially common after the years of the Great Depression and World War II because many Americans had the desire to live in and enjoy the moment (Extracts, 1). Gradually this awful sin led to even more sin in America (Clayman Institute, 1).

Divorce and remarriage were also becoming widely common in America during this time. The sexual revolution and the feminist movements had a major role in driving up the divorce rates during the 1960’s and ‘70s. Due to the feminist movement, wives felt more freedom to leave their husbands if they felt the marriage was abusive or merely unsatisfying. Also, during the ‘70s the “soul-mate” view of marriage became popular. This was a view that the obligation of one’s marriage was no longer focused on the family, but on one’s self. Therefore, those who were in unfulfilling marriages felt it was their obligation to divorce (Evolution of Divorce, 1). God’s institution of marriage had been thrown out the door! To many, marriage was no longer “for life.” Its God-given purpose, that the woman becomes a help meet for the man in the way of helping him in his service to God, had been destroyed! From this sin and the sin of fornication evolved the sin of homosexuality.

Homosexuality became more common in America due to the sexual immorality that already existed in the nation. The birth control pill, the sexual revolution, and divorce and remarriage played a major role in the emergence of this sin. The gay rights movement and feminist movements also played a part in this homosexual movement. This movement has developed into the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) movement today. For many years, homosexuality was seen to be shameful and a disorder of the mind (History of the Gay Rights Movement, 1). However, it gradually became more and more accepted within American Society,

*“We do not write in order
to be understood;
we write in order
to understand.”
C. S. Lewis*

especially with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in 2015 that gay marriages be made legal in all 50 states in America (Chappell, Bill, 1). Today, this sin has become widespread throughout the whole of the United States.

These sexually immoral sins have become so common in America that a person can go almost nowhere without running into some kind of version of these sins. The social media is a common place in which these sins are portrayed. Television shows, movies, websites, and more all are examples of places where this sexual immorality is so commonly displayed. One cannot so much as turn on the TV anymore without finding signs of these awful sins. Divorce and remarriage have become so common throughout the television that it seems as if there is nothing even wrong with it. Sex before marriage is so common in America that it is abnormal for a young person to be of the age of 17 without having ever engaged in sexual activity. How truly sad that is! All of this is exemplified throughout the TV shows, music, and even books of today!

God's word comes to us with a sharp reminder that these sins are not only horrible in themselves, but they are against the most high majesty of God! Not only has America allowed these sins to develop within her country, but these sins are displayed for all to see. God is thoroughly displeased. Clearly, He has given us commandments, warning us to abstain from these horrible sins. In Leviticus 18:22, God warns his people against the sins of homosexuality: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it [is] abomination." It is abomination! The sin of homosexuality is an abomination to God! The word abomination literally means a thing that causes disgust or hatred. Homosexuality causes God to be disgusted; He despises it.

In Matthew 19:9, Christ Jesus tells us that any man that divorces his wife, except it be for the cause of fornication, committeth adultery. Further we are told in Proverbs 6:32, "[But] whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he [that] doeth it destroyeth his own soul." The sin of divorce and remarriage is a sin that, if not repented of, destroys the soul.

As Christians living within this country, we see increasing immorality all around us. The devil uses the means of the television, music, books, and so much more to entice the children of God into letting down their guard and allowing these sins to creep into their lives.

Therefore a child of God should be prepared to guard his/herself from allowing such sins to creep into his/her life. He/she must be aware of the sins around them and be ready to stand strong in fighting these temptations.

America. Once a nation established on the basis of finding a freedom to worship God, is now no longer interested in serving God, but rather in satisfying the lusts of human flesh and in serving oneself. We know that the sexual immorality of America is only a small segment of the full immorality that exists in this country. More and more is this nation becoming corrupt. Our only comfort in this is that Christ Jesus is coming again to judge the wicked and to take His people to live eternally with Him. The words of Matthew 24 come to us with this encouragement: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (vs. 12, 13)." May we then be encouraged as we live in this increasingly immoral nation, to hold fast to our faith and endure to the end! One country, one language, one flag has one desire for godless freedom. With freedom, Americans have given their heads and hearts to the god of self-satisfaction. Sadly, the once godly nation of America is corrupt and godless.

Jori Baas

US History

Scott Van Uffelen

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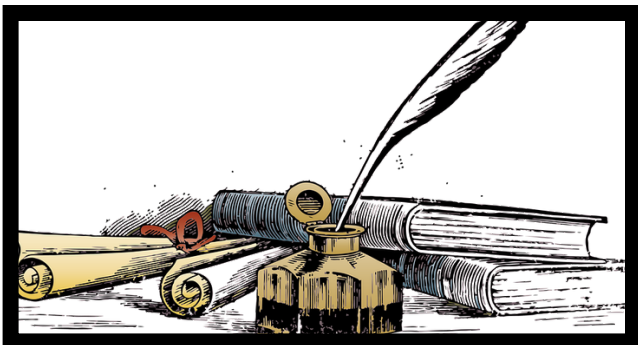
CCHS: A Cherished Memory

Covenant Christian High School, a center of education for the children of covenant parents, is a place dear to my heart. My graduation is only a month away, yet I will always treasure what I have experienced in my four years here. I will always remember the events and classes in high school that helped me to grow and develop my faith, my friendships, and the bond between the young people at this school.

The last thirteen years, I have experienced the great blessing of Christian education. This precious gift that God has given to His people greatly encourages and strengthens us as young people for our next step on the path of life. The four years at Covenant helped me to develop everything that I had previously learned. The teachers made sure to emphasize how each of the different subjects could be applied to our lives as Christians. From these classes, as well as weekly chapels, I grew stronger in my spiritual life. They have prepared me to step out into a world of wickedness, where I will need to put everything I have been taught to use.

Special classes to me throughout high school include two church history classes and a worldviews class. Being someone who enjoys history, I immensely enjoyed learning the history of the church. Experiencing Dan VanUffelen's "museum" of all things Hoeksema and listening to Scott VanUffelen's unending fount of knowledge, I gained a great appreciation for the church fathers who kept the truth alive, while realizing that it was the sovereign hand of God guiding them to do what they did. It was made clear to us how God preserved His church throughout all of history.

The church history trip to Eastern Avenue CRC and the old First Church building helped me to visualize what we had been taught. I could picture Rev. Hoeksema standing on the pulpit while the young people raised a ruckus in the balcony. I could imagine the men gathered in the consistory room



discussing the charges against their pastor. This trip was interesting and educational at the same time. My faith was strengthened and I became even more interested in the history. The trip made it real, and I hope other classes have the privilege of participating in it as well.

Three out of my four years of high school, I was privileged to take a trip to Hull, Iowa. Two of these were for band, and one for choir. The best parts of these trips for me, were meeting some of the students at Trinity Christian High School and developing friendships there. The second and third times that we went, I grew closer to the people I had met before, and now that I am graduating, I know I will miss being able to see them at least once a year.

Events such as the purple-out games, cheering with the students at the Breslin Center, and going to the Junior-Senior Banquet, helped me to grow closer with the students. I can see the school as a whole, that no matter who you are, you are a member of the student body, and a part of something more. You are united in the common purpose of glorifying God in everything you do. He is the reason we are in this school. We are learning more about Him and developing a bond with other members of like faith.

We have fellowship outside as well as inside of school, and we can see that we are the future generation of the church. This is why it is so important to embrace what we learn. We need to be educated in order to know what to do as church members. We need to know the history of the church so that we don't make the same mistakes, and learn from the examples set for us in the past. I have learned discernment, and Lord-willing at the end of this year, I will have a portfolio defining my reformed worldview. This will be something I will always keep close, as a reminder of who I am in Christ and of everything I have learned throughout high school.

Covenant Christian High School is a place with christian students and teachers who care about each other. It is a place that strengthened my faith and prepared me for my place in the church. It is a place where I made many new friendships and grew in unity with my classmates. This school is a wonderful gift from God, and I will cherish the memories of it in my heart forever.

Taylor Schwarz
Senior Writing
Ms. Haak

“Words - so innocent and powerless as they are ... how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them.”

Nathaniel Hawthorne

As She Sits Upon This Chair

It starts when she comes into the raw world,
A voiceless vessel in a nameless town.
A life, a breath, once silent, now unfurled
So unaware of seas in which she'll drown.

Pugnacious, restless, tries to break their trust,
The ones who for her their entire lives waived,
When did her parents' teachings turn to dust?
She'll take her heart of ardor to the grave.

Her heart as fire will turn to one of grace
Her calling was to raise her children well
Assured with each and every warm embrace
She feels her being and her spirit swell.

The days have come where she is worn and old
Her offspring has now moved away and gone
She sits in hospice, her estate is sold.
Her life is a show: the curtains close to drawn.

Taylor Kuiper

English 10
Ms. Haak

*“Literature is as old as speech.
It grew out of human need for it,
and it has not changed except to
become more needed.”*

John Steinbeck

Modern Culture and the Devaluing of Life

The modern culture of today has made many steps towards continuing to devalue and disrespect life. This is seen in many different areas, but especially with the normalization of euthanasia and abortion. It is easy for the child of God to become scared and uneasy about the direction that the world is going with regard to the value of life. Yet, God has given His people comfort in this dark world.

The comfort that we receive in the midst of the uncertainty and fear of the increasingly wicked world is found in Scripture. Matthew 10:29-30 show that God's providence is holding all things. There we read, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The comfort that is seen here is that not even a hair can fall from our head without it being controlled by God, therefore the trends of the world today are held by His sovereignty as well.

Also, we are consoled by the fact that this world is not our home. God has a place waiting for His people where life is valued beyond all else because it is being in the presence of the Savior. Hebrews 13:14-15 show this when it says, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." There will be no killing and no devaluing of life. As Christians, we have that to look forward to and are comforted by the assurance of salvation and everlasting life in heaven.

We will continue to see an increase in wickedness and in the devaluing of life as we come closer to the end of time. We take comfort in the fact that we look for a time when all will be made new. We are placed in a world where it is easy to be overcome by fear, but our God has provided unspeakable consolation in the fact that He is governing all things, and that this world is not our home.

Caitlyn DeVries

Global Issues
Mrs. Van Overloop

A Botanical Bond

Ever since I can remember, I have loved to be outdoors. When I was younger, all I wanted to do was play outside. As soon as I had emptied my breakfast plate, I would burst out the back door and bound out into the yard, wriggling my bare toes in the cool, wet grass still sparkling with the jewels of dew that twinkled in the warm beams of sunlight. Once I had escaped the confinement of the house, I could entertain myself for hours on end, returning inside only after I had worked up a voracious appetite and felt it was time for a short lunch break. I was endlessly amused by the games I invented in my head, prancing about on my imaginary racehorse, waving to the imaginary crowd that clapped and cheered for me. I played until the sun sank below the horizon and the sky filled with the color of sunset. Having exhausted myself, I reluctantly obeyed my mother's beckoning to come inside and get ready for bed. Before my tired, four-year-old head hit the pillow and I fell fast asleep, I thought about what a great day it had been. I couldn't wait to do it all over again the next day.

This insatiable love of mine for nature and anything outdoors explains why I was ecstatic when, one morning at breakfast, Dad suggested that we plant a tree together. I couldn't contain my excitement. I waited all day in eager anticipation for the time when he would return home from work. After what felt like years, he finally did, and after supper we headed off to pick out the seeds. The moment our vehicle rolled back into our driveway, I insisted we get right to work. After scoping out the perfect spot in the backyard, Dad helped me plant the seeds. I got right down on my hands and knees beside him, digging a hole in the earth, placing the seeds in it, and gently covering them again with the warm dirt. As I worked, I listened intently to the stories Dad told as he reminisced on memories of his favorite childhood tree and soaked up every bit of instruction he gave on how to properly care for my precious plant.

The way I saw it, this was my tree, and I was going to do everything in my power to make it grow into the greatest, strongest tree ever. I spent the next days diligently watering that patch of earth with just the exact amount of water, waiting impatiently for the first signs of life. Dad had warned me that it would take some time for the seed to sprout, but nothing could have prepared me for the agonizing wait I faced, yearning for the appearance of my beloved plant.

After spending two whole days staring intently at the circle of bare dirt in my backyard for any sign of green, I just couldn't wait anymore. The third morning, before I would even consider eating breakfast, I burst out the back door with eager anticipation, only to find a still bare patch of brown earth. My little heart sank, my head dropped to my chest, and I turned around and trudged back up the steps into the house with drooping shoulders. Large tears welled up in my eyes as my mother met me in the kitchen, and they began pouring down my face as she knelt down and gathered me in her arms, soothing me until the sobbing subsided. Then she began to teach me about patience and how some things in life you just can't rush. That tree would sprout just as soon as it wanted to, and not a moment before, she said. So I was best off focusing on other things as I waited.

And that's exactly what I did. I went my way and soon became preoccupied with the same games I had been entertained by just days before. But every night after dinner, I would venture out into the backyard with Dad to check on our tree. And every morning before breakfast, I would skip outside into the brisk morning air and search for even the smallest sign of life. Then one morning, I saw something! It was only the smallest green sprout, but I was ecstatic! I cared for that little sprout with the whole of my being, nurturing it into a flourishing sapling with buds protruding from its thin, flimsy branches. Somewhere during my unending care for that plant, I created a unique bond with my beloved tree, until I considered



it to be almost a botanical friend. A faithful friend with deep roots and strong, comforting arms that was there to stay.

That was back when I was a young kid whose biggest care in the world was a little seed sprout. Soon it was time for me to go to school, so one day I trotted off to kindergarten, leaving my tree behind. Days passed, and the days turned into years. Before I knew it, I was getting ready to graduate from high school. Every year, the cares of a four-year-old were replaced by bigger, more important things. No longer did I have all the time in the world to ride imaginary horses in the backyard. Instead, it seemed like all my time and energy was consumed by my school work, my part-time job, and maintaining relationships. I had bigger things to worry about than a little seed sprouting up from a bare patch of dirt; I had big life decisions to make.

There were some nights when I would become overwhelmed by the pressing choices and important responsibilities that seemed to pile up on me like an unbearable mountain. On those nights, I would venture outside and find refuge on the swing that hung from the strong arms of the tree I had planted years ago. I would curl up in a blanket to protect myself from the cool night breeze and swing gently, allowing the methodical movement to soothe my mind. I would tilt my head back slightly, gazing up into the expanse of the dark night sky, illuminated by the smiling face of the moon and speckled with twinkling stars that seemed to reassure me that everything would be okay. I would remain this way, swinging silently, soaking in the calm of the night, until my anxious mind had been relieved before heading back into the house to face reality.

Everything did turn out okay. I successfully accepted my high school diploma, then went on to earn a college degree, all while growing in a steady relationship with the man I knew I would marry. Eventually the knee dropped, the ring was presented, and the question was asked. The wedding was planned and the joyous occasion came and went. We moved to a quaint little farmhouse in the country that we were to make our home. Soon came the announcement that we would be joined by a sweet little newcomer and many tearful hugs were exchanged. Upon his arrival, our energetic bundle of joy demanded every spare minute of my time and filled my days with the unspeakable joys of motherhood. I tirelessly changed his innumerable dirty diapers, held his hand as he learned to walk, cleaned up his messes, soothed

his innocent fears, and sang him to sleep at night. Finally the day came when I decided he was old enough. I brought him outside and patiently helped him plant his own tree. I watched with joy as he slowly dug a hole, placed the seeds in the bottom, and carefully brushed the soil back over them. As I watched him work, I recounted old memories of my favorite tree and taught him all the things my dad had taught me years ago. I smiled as I peered out the kitchen window and found him lying in the grass, watching intently for the appearance of a sprout. I watched him wait in anticipation for the coming of his beloved plant and taught him the same lesson of patience my own mother had taught me as a child. And when the plant finally made its appearance, I watched with joy as my son nurtured and cared for his botanical friend with the same love I had poured into mine.

One day, the phone rang, so I picked it up, listening to the distressed voice on the other end. Something was wrong. It was my mother; she was not well. In fact, she was expected to die soon. I called my husband, buckled my son into the car, and drove to her house immediately. When I arrived, I found that my whole family was there, hustling and bustling about in a chaotic frenzy. The news had come as a complete surprise to everyone and no one knew what to do. There were children tearing around and adults yelling at each other; I needed to get out of there. I exited the house as quietly and unobtrusively as possible, slipping silently out the back door as I had done so many times before. I shut the door, closing out the chaos behind me, and stepped out into the peaceful calm of nature. Not knowing what to do, I meandered through the yard until I stopped abruptly in front of my tree. I peered up at the sturdy branches that reached upward, supporting the thick canopy of green foliage that sheltered me from the scorching rays of the blazing sun. I took a step forward, wrapping my arms around the rough bark of the trunk, closed my eyes, breathing in the fresh outdoors smell, and let the memories come flooding back. I remained there for a few minutes, allowing the memories to wash over me like a refreshing waterfall, calming me with an intense sense of peace. Presently, I stepped away from the comforting tree. This was just what I needed. I knew it was all going to be okay. I was going to make it. I took one last glance at my tree friend before turning and walking back to the house.

Anna Langerak
Senior Writing
Ms. Knott

STUDENT *Life*



Career Day

Every other year we invite experts in their field to speak to our students about career choices. This enables them to make decisions regarding future educational needs.



Physics Fun





**Junior/
Senior Banquet**



**Students and staff
took advantage
of the beautiful
Spring to engage
in a Spikeball
tournament!**





Caitlyn De Vries

On behalf of the Class of 2017, thank you all for coming and sharing this special event with us. We've finally finished four years of high school, and now, looking back, I'd like to share some of our fondest memories and greatest accomplishments. Let's start back when we were freshman. There was that one day in health class that Grant broke Mr. Kuiper's expensive mounted fish, and there were many memorable walks through the rainy or snowy courtyard to get to class. Sophomore year brought hundreds of PE days and the dreaded Mile Monday. Junior year had its fair share of challenges, including homecoming with a slightly one-sided tug of war game. But, we regathered for senior year, and finished off with an amazing homecoming win, two enormous power puff and powder puff victories, and memories to last a lifetime. There was the advanced bio class trip, the physics trip, and our senior class trip to West Virginia. We bonded as a class, and many new friendships were formed and old ones grew.

All long-lasting victories aside, we also got to enjoy the popular fad of Nelson and Jimmy's hair, along with a proper "Thank you for coming, please be seated." in my dad's class. Other memorable things include the ever present "stay out of the staysh" phrase, and "name that freshman" Kahoots.

There is an unending amount of memories that could be shared, but, as we reflect on our time at Covenant, we should look at some accomplishments as well. God has gifted every member of this class, and the fruits of these gifts can be seen in what we have succeeded in throughout high school. Just in this past year, our boy's soccer team made it to regionals, girl's volleyball won districts, and the robotic's team competed in the Ohio state competition. In the winter, the boy's basketball team made it to state for the first time since 1994, and girl's basketball made it to regionals. Also, girl's soccer, softball, and baseball have more accomplishments yet to come. The choir and the band accomplished a lot, performing many concerts and both taking trips out of state.

Not only have we experienced many successes in athletics, academics, and fine arts, but we also grew spiritually. As freshman, we were young people who were not very developed in our faith, and everything that we have learned at CCHS has strengthened our beliefs and our worldview. We listened to class

lectures that were distinctly Reformed and applicable to our lives as Christian students. We made godly friends who encouraged us and helped us in the ways of the God we share. We made choices amidst the heat of peer pressure to follow His commands and stay close to our Father. We experienced heartache, loss, anxiety, depression, and doubt, but now, as we graduate, we see how all of this made us

stronger and developed our worldview. We are now able to go forward with clear evidence of God's faithfulness and the knowledge that His plan is good. We have a renewed perspective from when we entered Covenant. This education that we have received is an incredible tool that we have been given to serve Him in the rest of our lives.



Anna Langerak

Having paused at this crossroad in our lives to reflect back on our journey thus far, we would like to take some time to thank those who have helped and supported us along the way.

First we would like to acknowledge the team of solidly reformed, godly teachers who have instructed us throughout the last four years of our education. You teachers have demonstrated your deep love and care for us and exhibited a genuine concern for our futures, not only mentally, physically, and academically, but especially spiritually. You have faithfully led us in daily devotions, served as godly examples for our lives, and taught us to see God's hand in everything we have learned. You have used the many tests, papers, and projects that we have so readily complained about to challenge us to work our hardest and to prepare us for what comes next in our lives. But even more importantly, you have taken every opportunity to equip us with everything we will need to fight the spiritual battles we will face in the future.

So thank you, teachers. Thank you for patiently dealing with us all the way from obnoxious freshman to boisterous seniors. Thank you for your energy and enthusiasm for teaching in the face of blank looks coming from yawning students fighting to stay awake. For the hours of preparation you have put in to give us such a high quality education. And a personal thank you to those of you who share my especially dry sense of humor (as teachers are wont to do) - thanks for bringing extra joy and laughter to the halls of CCHS. Thank you

Covenant Christian High School was blessed with four Valedictorians in the graduating Class of 2017. We thank these talented young people for their years of dedication and sharing with us excerpts from their speeches.



for not just being our teachers but becoming our spiritual mentors, advisors, and friends. Thank you for taking the time to create relationships with us, whether by simply talking to us in the halls, giving some friendly advice, or helping us through personal difficulties. Thank you

for the countless prayers you have silently offered for us on a daily basis without our knowledge. And thank you most of all for dedicating your lives to giving us a distinctively reformed education and teaching us in the ways of the Lord.

In addition to our hardworking teachers, we would also like to thank our parents. You have made an enormous sacrifice to send us to Covenant Christian High School for these past four years. You have given so much of your time, money, and energy to ensure that we would be surrounded by God-fearing friends and teachers during the time of our lives when we would be shaped, molded, and changed the most. By this great sacrifice, you have demonstrated the deepest, most genuine kind of love for us.

So thank you, parents. Thank you for everything you have ever done for us. From the seemingly small things like waking up a groggy teen after several failed attempts by the alarm clock to those more significant events, like providing words of comfort and advice in uncertain and hurting times. Thank you for bringing us to and from school and practice when we were young freshmen and for your patience in dealing with us as stressed seniors trying to juggle the weight of school, work, sports, and relationships. But most of all thank you for your godly examples, for the many prayers you have prayed for us and our futures, and for providing us with this invaluable gift of reformed education we have received.

Above all, thanks be to the One who has provided us with these precious parents and teachers. God has remained faithful through many generations and led our parents to recognize the immeasurable value of the distinctively reformed education we have received. And He has provided this school with well-equipped, godly teachers to teach His covenant children. Through the variability and countless changes life has brought, God has remained changeless and faithful through it all. He has comforted through shifting friendships, family troubles, broken relationships, sickness, and tears

and has seen us through to the moments of joy, excitement, and laughter. He is the One who has made our education possible and has blessed the efforts of our parents and the instruction of the teachers at this school. And for that, we thank Him.

Finally, "thank you" to all those who have been with us and supported us throughout our journey thus far - parents, teachers, staff members, counsellors, school board members, coaches, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends, and others. You are the reason we are here today, and without you, none of this would have been possible.

Thank you.

Rebecca Boeve

Congratulations to my fellow graduates of the class of 2017. This is a moment that we have all been looking forward to for many years. Now, with diplomas in hand, we continue on in our life's journey. These diplomas represent the education that we have received. It was an education that taught us what we need to live this earthly life, and also what we need to have a strong relationship



with God, our Heavenly Father. Our Christian education also strengthened our spiritual life and prepared us for the spiritual battles that we will have to face in the future. That aspect is a reason why it was so important for us to attend Christian schools. Christian education is essential in the raising up of the future Church. We are the next generation of the Church. Parents and loved ones sacrificed so much to keep us in the Christian schools because they know the great necessity. We must remember the education that we have received because it is a strong foundation upon which to continue to build up our faith.

As young people who had only ever received Christian education, we often took for granted the incredible blessing that we had at Covenant. We sometimes complained about the heavy workload given by teachers instead of being thankful for the care and

love that they had for us. The education that they gave us prepared us for our future, no matter what our plans may be. Even if this marks the end of our schooling, the education that we received at CCHS will not be wasted or lost. We learned about God and, through that, grew closer to Him. That knowledge of God will never fade away. All the important truths of God and His Word that were taught to us are extremely valuable in the rest of our lives. We cannot forget them. They will help lead us down the path of life that is according to God's Word.

For many of us, though, receiving our high school diploma is simply another mile marker in our schooling. This fall, we will attend college and, for the first time, we will not be receiving distinctively Reformed education. Especially then, we will know how blessed we were to have received Reformed education. We will finally realize that in everything that the teachers made us do while at CCHS, they were preparing us for college and the real world.

Our education has equipped us with important knowledge and skills that will be needed in college and in daily life, but most importantly, we have been equipped with the Truths of God and His Word. That is why learning in Christian schools is so important. Along with the home and church, the school is a place where we learn about our Creator and Savior. At CCHS, we were taught about our Church's history from Christ's death to today, we were prepared to defend our faith against wicked cults and false religions, and we were given guidance in the defining of our own personal worldview. We have also been given spiritual knowledge in our other classes, whether it was a math, english, or science course. The spiritual instruction that we have received at Covenant is what distinguishes our Christian education from that of the world. This is something to be truly thankful for.

Even if our formal schooling is finished, we cannot stop learning. We must continually seek to learn and grow in the knowledge of God. When we seek and desire to gain knowledge, we seek God and grow closer to Him. That must be the single most important desire of our life. In the future, we might not remember what the Quadratic Formula is or what all the names of the muscles in the body are, but we must never forget our God or the spiritual lessons that we have learned in our time at Covenant.

Jeremy Van Baren

I would like to reflect on our experience of the last four years using Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The first part of this verse addresses the education that we have received up to tonight. I would like to thank those who provided this education - our cherished parents, the conscientious School Board, and most of all, the faithful teachers who have dedicated their time to instructing us and greatly impacting our lives.

The second part of the verse is what I would like to focus on, that is, not departing from it. We have received this Christian education, and now we will live it out. We have been taught in the way of the Lord our entire life, and now we will not depart from it, we will not forget it. What we will do is return to it. While I was writing this speech, being the nerd that I am, I found myself thinking about SpaceX's reusable

first stage rocket. Rockets and speeches are two very different things, but bear with me and I'll reveal that there is a connection. Our education is our launch pad to new things, whether it is college, going straight to work, or other things. However, this education is not a one-use launch pad for what we see in the immediate future. We, like the rocket, will return to this launch pad and reuse it throughout our lives. We will use it to remember God's faithfulness, to see God's works throughout the creation, and to gain a greater understanding of God's will in our lives. And using this, we will be ready to launch again into more parts of our lives. This isn't to say that there won't be any issues along the way. There will be. Sometimes a rocket undergoes "rapid unscheduled disassembly," or in layman's terms "it blows up." But when these problems occur, our education will help us through. It will help guide us in the right direction.

Now, I must abandon my analogy of rockets and launch pads. Our education has been so much more than something that helps guide us at specific points in time through our life as the analogy suggested. Our Biblical Reformed education has provided us with a Biblical Reformed worldview. This worldview affects our whole lives, from now until we die, because it affects how we act and what values we hold. The Biblical Reformed worldview given to us throughout our years in all the schools we have graduated from, whether it was Adam's, Hope, Heritage, Eastside, and now Covenant, gives us the ability to see what is in God's will for us, and to honor Him in all that we do.

So I will end with this. Class of 2017, let's use this Christian education to the utmost of our ability. Let's never depart from it, but always remember it. This education will help us as we grow in our relationship with God throughout our lives. It is a great gift to be brought up in the way of the Lord.

Thank you.



Can you tell us a little about your background and how long have you been a teacher at Covenant Christian High School?

I was born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan. My parents left the CRC churches back when I was 8 years old. My parents are Melvin and Marion VanDyk. Even though we did not have a Protestant Reformed School in Kalamazoo, my parents made sure that I received a Christian education at the local Christian school. I graduated from Kalamazoo Christian High School in 1993 and enrolled in Western Michigan University planning on studying Elementary Education.

Four years into my studies God made it plain to me that this is not where he wanted me to be. So I was at a crossroads for the first time in my life. I really did not have a clue what I was going to do. I had been planning on being a teacher since the 5th grade, what was I going to do now? I was persuaded by a former teacher to take a career test that may give me insight into a career path based on who I was and what I was good at. I sat down with a counsellor from WMU and was given the results. Well, a teacher is right up your ally but so is being an engineer. I wasn't great at math and I thought God was calling me out of education. The counsellor asked me if I ever considered merging the two together and become a "Shop" teacher. I had taken a Woods class and an Auto class in high school and enjoyed them very much. So after prayerful consideration and talking with family, friends and former teachers I decided to continue at WMU and enroll in the Industrial Arts program. I graduated in 1999 and my first job was with my former High School teaching Woods, Drafting and Auto Mechanics.

I continued to teach there for 12 years teaching subjects such as Manufacturing, Architectural Drafting, Mechanical Drafting, Algebra, Business Math and Applied Math. Before I was released in 2011 due to falling enrollment, I was called to serve as Assistant Principal, head of maintenance, and a Junior high teacher teaching Algebra and Bible. In 2012 I accepted a teaching job at Illiana Christian High School teaching Metals, Auto Mechanics, General Technology and Electronics. I only had this job for one year. In 2013 I was called to serve here at Covenant Christian High School with the addition of the ninth grade. This had been my third attempt at getting hired here. For the past five years I have taught Computer Applications, Cults and Non-Christian Religions, Drafting, Geometry Skills and Concepts, and Applied Science.

I have been a member at Kalamazoo PRC and Peace PRC. I am currently a member at Providence

***Teacher Profile
Mr. Jon Van Dyk***



PRC and am serving as elder. The Lord has blessed my wife Janis (VanBaren) and me with 4 children: Riley, Ayden, Keegan, and Kialynn. We live in Hudsonville and the children attend Heritage Christian School.

What advice would you give to incoming teachers?

My advice to new teachers: don't smile till teacher's convention and on your first day slam your fingers in your classroom door before you greet the kids.

What noteworthy experiences helped shape you as a teacher? Is there a special moment or event that stands out as especially important?

I actually got paid to do my student teaching. In the State of Michigan, while I was in college, there was a shortage of Industrial Arts teachers. When it came time to do my student teaching, WMU allowed me to be used as a full time teacher at any school that had been without a "shop" teacher for at least one year. My alma mater, Kalamazoo Christian, had a vacancy that had gone unfilled. So the school hired me to do my student teaching with them and gave me a full teacher's load. I had five classes and a study hall. I did this without a supervising teacher. Talk about trial by fire. My college supervisor as well as KCHS had great confidence in me that I could handle it. I spent a lot of time as well talking with experienced teachers that I looked up to. I learned a lot about myself and how to listen and gain wisdom from my colleagues.

What do you think is the greatest challenge facing students today?

Each generation that comes through our schools will always have new challenges. If I look back over the generations of my own family and compare school life and what society was like, you really can't compare. Today students have so much exposure to technology. Not only is this technology ever changing in how we teach our curriculum but how students access or use it at home. The way we work, the way we study, and the way we interact with each other, all is affected by technology.

FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
Travis Van Bommel



The close of each school year brings the opportunity to look back at the completed sports seasons. In 2016-17, over 150 of our young people got the opportunity to represent Covenant Christian in Athletics. They put in hours of practice, extra practice, and game preparation each week, as

well as studying for tests, completing projects, and studying for each class they take. In this article, we recap the winter and spring sports teams.

The Girls Basketball team, under first year Varsity Coach Jeff Baatenburg, captured the MHSAA District Championship, to advance to the Regional round, where they fell to Pewamo-Westphalia. The girls played a very difficult schedule during the season, which helped them prepare for tournament play. Congratulations to the team for their outstanding season!



The Boys Basketball team, ended their season at the Breslin Center in East Lansing, falling to Flint Beecher in the State Finals. It was an amazing run that, for many, brought back memories of 1993 and 1994. The road to the Finals saw some very tightly contested games in front of huge crowds of Covenant fans. In the Regionals, the boys needed double overtime to defeat Pewamo-Westphalia, and a bucket with 3 seconds left to defeat Muskegon Heights. Congratulations to Coach Tyler Schimmel and the team for their outstanding efforts in 2016-17.

The Spring Sports have wrapped up as well. The golf team ended their season at Regionals. The Baseball and Softball teams bowed out of the tournament with close games in the District Semifinals. The Girls Soccer team won its first District Championship since 2003. They were defeated by Kalamazoo Christian at the Regional. Thank you to all of the coaches and players for being outstanding representatives of Covenant Christian.

I would like to remind everyone of the constant need for coaches here at Covenant. We need good quality coaches to help these young people to not only learn the game, but also to teach and reinforce to them the requirement to conduct



themselves as godly young people. Not an easy task. Coaching involves hard work, organization, time, effort, enthusiasm, and a desire to work with young people. You need the ability to manage competition, egos, parents, fans, and athletes. We have a lot of coaches in the bleachers, but very few on the sidelines. It is easy to criticize from the 50 yard line, but difficult to take on the role of a coach. As our school grows, we, as parents and fans, need to realize that not everyone can be the star, not everyone will play in every game, and some will not make the team. Let's remember to support, not only our athletes, but our coaches as well. They give of their time each school year, and are a very important part of our school.

