

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mr. Pete Adams

Greetings. Not to induce sentimentality, but this appears to be my last official writing for Eastside's Newsletters. It is fitting that I relate something of my teaching history: even in high school, I thought that I would like to be a teacher; I imagined myself in front of the classroom, in charge of adoring students who thought I was just the greatest ever, as yet another scintillating and brilliant presentation was in progress. Yes, it was all about me at that time in my life. However, that was not "cool" with my peers, so I went on to college to be a high-paid electrical engineer. By the time I was ready to graduate I was strongly thinking that I should have pursued that degree in education. What reinforced this thought was how, as a senior doing some experimental project, I blew the main breakers in the circuit lab building. Once was not enough, so yea twice.

Only after we were securely married, did I casually inform my dear wife that her husband might not be the engineer of her dreams, but a humble yet noble teacher. Characteristically her first response was polite silence. However, she proved to be stalwart in being the helpmate to keep me going during the rough times. I started mid-year in a small Christian school where if there could have been an opposite image of my performance, I would have been terrific. Scintillation and brilliance were lacking.

As we moved on in life both in location and in development, I was forced to learn that the essential part of what makes a good, enjoyable, profitable Christian learning environment was proper relationships, both among students and especially between students and teacher. Indeed, I realized that this idea of fellowship was the key to all of life, both earthly and

eternal. So when we came in contact with the Reformed understanding of the Covenant, which is all about Relationship, we had to become members of our Churches.

For a while I taught basic science courses at the local community college, where I needed to understand and communicate what was the essence of science in order to not only teach truthfully in this secular environment, but also to not violate my Christian beliefs. The result was further appreciation of how in actuality all things truly do consist and make sense in Him, Who is the center point of His creation (Colossians 1). This carried over into what I have tried to instill in our students in our Covenant classrooms.

I take this opportunity to be able to express thankfulness to all the students that I have had. Thankfulness for their ability and willingness to endure my shortcomings, and in spite of everything seemingly to be able to come out being able to continue on academically and especially spiritually. Staff, thank you for bearing with my obvious weaknesses as your Principal. Your unfailing co-operation and support has been much appreciated. Board, thank you for your labors. I have been able to see first-hand, during long evenings, the devotion required to successfully operate even a small school such as ours. Parents, you are behind all of the above. Keep on working and praying and giving, as you have done so faithfully in the past.

Eastside is in good hands as we go forward, but better to express and pray that we are in His good hands, to be used by Him to further His Kingdom.

As a school we say goodbye to Anne Miedema, our well-loved first grade teacher for the past five years. Anne has been a valuable part of Eastside for years and involved with our school from the very beginning; first as a parent, and then helping out as an aide before coming on as teacher. Throughout the years she has volunteered for countless fundraisers and school projects and for the past few years has taught yearbook and art in addition to first grade. We will miss her calm presence and careful guidance of the students.



REJOICE. PRAY. GIVE THANKS.

It seems like just yesterday when Mr. Adams approached me about the principal position at Eastside. As he is known to do, he began informally waxing eloquent about Latin words (*ad ministro*), and he then proceeded to convey to me that the position of principal or administrator is really a further opportunity to serve the parents, students, and teachers. He was *really* trying to motivate me to pursue the position, but we must note our gratefulness to him for serving the Eastside community these many years. Thank you, Mr. Adams, for serving me as co-worker, principal, mentor, and friend. I am grateful for your humble, godly example and wisdom. It is difficult to imagine an Eastside without you.

While on the theme of thanksgiving, we ought to frequently express gratitude to the board and faculty of Eastside as well. Saying thanks to them cannot be repeated too often. They sacrifice a lot of time and energy to make this school run well. Thank you, board members and teachers, for encouraging me and giving me confidence that another successful school year lies ahead.

FROM THE FOUNDATION

Gerald VanBaren

The Eastside Foundation will celebrate its twelfth anniversary at the end of this year.

The Foundation is governed by six Board members who are elected for a three year term on a rotating basis (two new members every year), plus a Eastside Christian School Board member who is appointed by the School Board and serves as a liaison between the Foundation and the School Board. The current Foundation Board members are Tom Newhof, Lori Pastoor, Jerry Van Baren, Betsy Boelema, Jim Holstege, and Judy Schimmel, with Brad Pastoor as the Board representative for this past year.

The primary mandate of the Foundation is to promote Eastside Christian School's wellbeing. The most visible manifestation of this mandate is the donation of funds to the operating fund, helping keep the school on a

Finally, I want to express thanks to you as an everyday Eastside supporter. You are the parent or grandparent from the small pool of Eastside families that regularly volunteers to help out. You are part of the alumni group that still looks out for ways to show love and support. And many of you, though distantly connected to the school, still decide to sacrificially give to God's work here at Eastside. Thank you.

Continue to give thanks with me for Eastside, but also, please do one more thing for it: pray. Your fervent prayers are truly powerful and effective (James 5:16). Next year brings many changes along with new teachers and young leaders. Let us together express our reliance on God frequently and fervently. Let us pray for good communication between parents and teachers. Let us ask God for faithfulness and wisdom among teachers and students. Let us pray that our children will truly be nurtured to reflect Christ's mind.

Rejoicing evermore,
Mr. David Mahtani

sound financial basis. In recent years the Foundation has also taken up the challenge to keep tuition affordable by providing a per-student tuition assistance.

Over the years the Foundation has donated over a half a million dollars to the school! We are very thankful to see the evidence of God's blessing on Eastside Christian School through these means.

The Foundation has built up its assets primarily through generous gifts. Please remember the Eastside Foundation when you plan your charitable contributions and in your estate planning. The gifts to the Foundation are not hidden in the ground, but put to work to give a return that keeps Eastside Christian School the vibrant community that we all love.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Education Committee is responsible for overseeing the educational activities of the school. This can involve staffing, curriculum, and a number of other matters relating to the instruction of our children. Following is a summary of some of the things on which the Education Committee has been working this year:

* Dave Mahtani has served as assistant principal to Pete Adams over the past school year, as he transitions into the full-time principal role next year. As such, he has become a valued member of the Education Committee. We welcome him into this role!

* Interviewing and making hiring recommendations to the Board has been an important activity of the committee over the past year. During that time, the committee has been actively involved in helping to fill the junior high teaching position held by Pete Adams, the pre-K/K teaching position held by Amy Van Putten, and the 1st grade teaching position held by Anne Miedema. We had the privilege to interview a number of very qualified candidates for each of these positions and were encouraged by the quality of teachers available to our schools. We are thankful that the Lord

has blessed us with Andy Kuiper, Lydya Hulst, and Anita Haak to fill these openings. Andy and Lydya have been teaching for several months now and are fitting in well. We look forward to Anita starting next fall. Thanks to Pete, Amy, and Anne for their years of wonderful service to Eastside! We are thankful that the Lord continues to provide for the needs of our school – this time in providing excellent teaching replacements.

* This year we expanded Latin instruction from being a junior high subject to also incorporate 5th and 6th grades. Going forward, we intend to teach Latin in alternating years – Latin I to 5th/6th grades and Latin II to 7th/8th grades, enabling all students to receive 2 years of Latin instruction while at Eastside.

* Beginning this year, we also made orchestra a mandatory part of the curriculum for all students in grades 4-8. There are numerous educational benefits to orchestra and, under the excellent leadership of Eric Phelps, we have been very pleased to have this as part of our curriculum.

* A committee comprised of Pete Adams, Kristi Thompson, Dave Mahtani, and Mary Kortz has been reviewing and updating the language arts portion of our curriculum guide. It has been a number of years since the curriculum guide was developed, and we have since made a significant change in our reading program. We are looking forward to the results of work being done by the Federation of PR Schools as it works on a writing curriculum which could be used by all of our schools. This committee will continue to work over the summer on this important part of our curriculum.

* We continue to be thankful for the services and advice we receive from the Christian Learning Center. The CLC has been a great resource to our teachers and families as they work with students who need extra assistance.

We are thankful for the teachers and resources we need to provide quality, Christ-centered education to our children and for all those who support our work at Eastside!

INTRODUCING MYSELF

MRS. ANITA HAAK - NEW FIRST GRADE TEACHER

I grew up on a vegetable farm in Lansing, Illinois. My parents, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur De Jong, had ten sons and six daughters. I am their eleventh child. Coming from a large family, as you can imagine there were always children in my life, and I loved being with them! However, growing up I did not like school and was never going to be a teacher. I only wanted to be a wife and mother. The Lord, however, had other plans for me. Not a wife until later, not a mother at all, but a teacher!

I was the youngest in my high school graduating class – I didn't turn 18 until my December birthday. Then, after working for my father for five years on

our family farm, I was contacted by Mr. Joel Sugg of Katy, Texas who had noticed my love of children. He was in need of someone to work with his "illiterates" in his little Christian school (a school that he and his wife owned and operated).

Our families knew each other well, having interacted together for several years. I had also spent a couple of several-week vacations in their home and I felt very comfortable there. Mr. Sugg convinced me this arrangement was often done in the past. He said teachers learned to be teachers by working under master teachers. He said he and his wife felt that I was teacher

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ALPHABET PARADE & 100 DAY

The Pre-K and Kindergarten classes had fun with letters in their second-annual Alphabet Parade. Each child dressed up as a character promoting a letter of the alphabet. They chose characters such as Molly the Magnificent Multitasking Mom, Betsy the Beautiful Baker, Freddie the Fisherman, Penny and Penelope a Pair of Pretty Princesses, and more. The rest of the school and parents were invited to watch and cheer the procession. A few weeks later on the last day of PreK, the class celebrated 100 day, with some of the students dressing up like 100-year-olds.



material and they were willing to teach me how to teach!

I knew I loved children, but had no idea how to teach them. I felt this would be good experience if God ever gave me children of my own, so I accepted his invitation. I went to Texas and lived with the Suggs for two school years. I remember how strange it felt to ask for my church membership to be transferred to our Houston church (as it was the first time I ever did that), but I enjoyed being a member there.

It was from the Suggs that I learned phonics and the basics of the English language. After two years in Houston, I decided to move back home and go to college. I thought that if I could handle college perhaps I could become a real teacher!

College went extremely well. (It is amazing how well one can do when one makes up one's mind to do their best!) I ran into things which I disagreed with, but overall I loved my college years and soaked up the things I was taught. I am very thankful for the pastor I had for he patiently helped me, answering my many questions and strengthening me in our Protestant Reformed faith.

I graduated from Trinity Christian College in the spring of 1987 and moved to Iowa to teach at our Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School. I taught there for two years. I felt that perhaps I would have more success in dating if I moved to Michigan, so I applied for different positions in Michigan and was offered a position at Hope Christian School. I loved teaching there, but nothing promising was happening on the social scene!

This moved me to apply at our Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School, in Loveland, Colorado. Loveland appealed because my dear sister,

Esther, and her husband live there. Loveland hired me and I taught there for three years. It was during my last year there that my husband, Don, came into my life.

Don was from South Holland, Illinois, and we had a whirlwind romance. We were married in July of 2005. With my marriage to Don I moved back to Illinois! I loved being a wife, but I continued to apply for teaching positions. In May of 2014 I responded to Free Christian School's appeal for a teacher and was hired. When I got back into the classroom in Edgerton I realized all over again how much I loved teaching.

I love being with students. They can be challenging at times, but they are so full of life and fun!

We enjoyed living in nice, safe, rural Edgerton, but we didn't like the great distance from our families. This moved us to have me apply for jobs closer to Illinois. I applied here at Eastside, was hired, and now I am here and hopefully will here remain.

Throughout my teaching years I have enjoyed teaching in schools that have the Reformed creeds as the basis for education. In fact, I am convinced it is the only system in which I can work. Further, it has been a source of real joy to me to work in environments where one works in the place of covenant, Christian parents, training children in the fear of the Lord.

The children I have taught have become my children, and I look forward to continuing working like that here at Eastside. It is my desire that I may be used of God to teach, as our Eastside motto states, "covenant children to reflect the mind of Christ."

EASTSIDE EXPERIENCES

Elizabeth Kortz - 8th Grade Graduate

I started Kindergarten at Eastside in 2007. Since then, I have experienced many changes at the school. When I started Kindergarten, my teacher was Mrs. Dekryger. When she left, there was no Kindergarten for a year, and then Mrs. VanPutten became the preK/K teacher. While she was here, Mrs. VanPutten started the Eastside running club, which I appreciate. Now Kindergarten is taught by Mrs. Hulst, who started shortly before Mrs. VanPutten had her baby last winter.

When I was in the 1st through 3rd grade, Miss Nelson was the teacher, and she became Mrs. Hartman when she got married. When I was in the 3rd grade, Mrs. Thompson took the place of Mrs. Hartman.

In my 4th grade year Mr. Mahtani came to the school as a new teacher. He replaced Mrs. Feenstra as the 4-5 teacher, and 6th grade was added to these, and shortly after this, the 9th grade was moved to Covenant.

Next, I had Mr. Adams for 7th-8th grades, which switched to Mr. Kuiper for several subjects halfway through this year. Mr. Adams has been with Eastside since it began in 1997, so this is a big change for 7-8th grades!

Also since I've been at Eastside, Mrs. Miedema started out as an aide, then became the part-time 1st grade teacher. Mrs. Furrow was secretary, then Mrs. Ophoff took over. For choir, I had Miss Noble, and now Mrs. Pipe. And when I was in 6th grade, Eastside started the orchestra with Mr. Phelps teaching. Learning to play the cello has been a highlight of Eastside for me.



Congratulations to Elizabeth on her graduation from Eastside!

On the principal side, Miss Lubbers was the principal for my first year at Eastside, then Mrs. Feenstra, and then Mr. Adams, followed by Mr. Adams and Mr. Mahtani sharing the role.

When I started Eastside, I had one classmate with me in Kindergarten. For a couple of years at Eastside I had 2 classmates, but now I am the only one left in my graduating class. As for Eastside as a whole, the number of students has ranged from about 28 to 45 while I've been here.

So you can see there have been many changes during my 9 years at Eastside. I am looking forward to the next changes in life after graduation as well.

FROM EGG TO BUTTERFLY

Mrs. Lydya Hulst

The life cycle of the butterfly is an amazing work of our Creator. What a transformation the caterpillar goes through before it can spread its wings and fly away. Much like the butterfly, students go through a transformation from the beginning of the school year to the end. At the end of their stage in kindergarten they are reading words, writing sentences with illustrations, adding/subtracting simple math problems, and so much more. In the 6 months that I have been here at Eastside, the kids (K and pre-K) in my room have grown so much and are ready for their next stage at school; first grade or Kindergarten!

In our recent short study about butterflies, we read lots of books about butterflies, observed them at the Frederick Meijer Gardens field trip (K), and created art projects. Before we started our symmetrical butterfly art project, I asked the kids what they remembered about our studies. This is what they shared in their own words.

Kindergarten Class:

Drew Pols– The life cycle is egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly and repeat.

Jimmy Whiteley – The butterfly emerges from the chrysalis.

Tyler Tanis – Butterflies come from chrysalis and moths come from cocoons.

Jimmy and Drew – Butterflies lay their eggs on green leaves and then they die.

Tyler Tanis – There are many different kinds of butterflies and they are in many different places.

Preschool Class:

Josh Baldwin – Caterpillars turn into butterflies.

Lizzie Kuiper – They drink nectar.

Amber Kortz – They lay eggs.

Chloe Kuiper- They have different colors on their wings.

Myra Mahtani– Each butterfly has different colors.

Tyler Kleyn – Butterflies fly.

Dorothy Phelps– They drink from flowers.

May we continued to be amazed at the life cycle and transformation of a butterfly, and the growth that our children have made in one school year! What an awesome God we serve.



EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL 2014-15 Financial Statement

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income			
Foundation Contributions	50,000.00	60,000.00	-10,000.00
Special Education Funding	812.30	750.00	62.30
Church Collections	13,160.32	14,000.00	-839.68
Interest & Miscellaneous	6,825.14	7,000.00	-174.86
Operating Fund Drive	129,285.67	148,000.00	-18,714.33
Tuition Income	<u>105,870.00</u>	<u>101,160.00</u>	<u>4,710.00</u>
Total Income	305,953.43	330,910.00	-24,956.57
Expense			
Education Expenses			
Christmas Gifts - Staff & Volun	0.00	400.00	-400.00
Orchestra Instructor	4,800.00	4,800.00	0.00
Ed Materials	11,038.97	6,000.00	5,038.97
Association Dues	196.74	1,000.00	-803.26
CLC	5,226.00	4,500.00	726.00
Substitute Teacher	0.00	750.00	-750.00
Salaries	207,159.84	205,052.00	2,107.84
Choir Instructor	2,945.00	3,200.00	-255.00
FICA-Company	16,323.94	15,686.00	637.94
Teacher Development	108.12	1,000.00	-891.88
Retirement Fund	6,447.25	6,152.00	295.25
Medical Insurance	1,522.62	36,720.00	-35,197.38
Worker's Comp. Insurance	<u>1,336.00</u>	<u>1,500.00</u>	<u>-164.00</u>
Total Education Expenses	257,104.48	286,760.00	-29,655.52
Miscellaneous Expense	1,617.45	1,500.00	117.45
Occupancy Expenses			
Building Maint / Repairs	7,483.99	5,000.00	2,483.99
Custodial Salary	2,700.00	3,700.00	-1,000.00
Custodial Supplies	904.10	1,000.00	-95.90
Grounds Maintenance	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00
Insurance	5,565.00	5,000.00	565.00
Trash Disposal	1,828.60	1,400.00	428.60
Utilities	<u>16,292.37</u>	<u>18,000.00</u>	<u>-1,707.63</u>
Total Occupancy Expenses	34,774.06	35,100.00	-325.94
Office and Other Expenses			
Copier Service	2,256.74	2,200.00	56.74
Office Supplies	650.27	1,000.00	-349.73
Postage	203.28	600.00	-396.72
Professional Fees	3,508.33	2,800.00	708.33
Telephone & ISP	<u>769.93</u>	<u>800.00</u>	<u>-30.07</u>
Total Office and Other Expenses	7,388.55	7,400.00	-11.45
Total Operating Expense	300,884.54	330,760.00	-29,875.46

REFLECTION | Mr. Andy Kuiper

In my “extensive” teaching experience, I have found that reflection is a vital part of the process. I take time at the end of each day (and sometimes in the middle of it) to think about whether the objectives of the day’s lessons were accomplished, what I think the students learned, how I can improve, what went well and what did not, whether or not I handled conflicts that arose during the day in the right manner, etc. I am taking the time right now to put down on paper some thoughts and impressions I have about Eastside as a whole over the last four months that I have been here.

First of all, I would like to give some of my impressions concerning the students here. Much to my delight, I have found that most of the reports I heard during the interviews last summer with the Board and Education Committees seem to be true. During these talks, it was stated that the students will often get together as a whole school to take part in games or activities during recess times. I took that declaration with a grain of salt, thinking that junior high students would not willingly mix with the “little” kid to play a game. However, this has been true in my experience. Certainly there are times when situations arise and the older kids want some separation from others, but overall I have seen that willingness to include all ages so that a game is able to be played and all are included.

As for academics: they are eager to learn. Of course, there are times when it is a struggle, but it does me good to remember that we are all human, and each of us has to fight the old man of sin every moment of every day. When the students are actively engaged in a lesson, I love all of the (relevant) questions I get from a group of students, whether it is in grades 1-3, 4-6, or the junior high girls. I plan for the whole period, but I often find that I did not leave enough time for all of the questions and discussions we have on a topic. Personally, I would much rather not get everything covered in a period than finish a lesson and have too much time left over.

It is also a huge relief for me to be able to address discipline in the light of God’s Word and to be able to actively use the guidelines He has given us as parents and teachers. Having students who have been brought up to follow the commandments of our Lord is invaluable as a teacher. Having spent quite a bit of time in public schools during my training, I have seen the futility of trying to reason with a child who is bullying another, or is not putting forth the effort she is capable of, or whatever the case may be. Then the child goes home and his parents get an email or a phone call, and more often than not, there is an attitude of indifference from the parent. I am beyond grateful for the support and understanding I have received from parents in matters of discipline regarding the students. As a parent, I know how tempting it is to just shrug off a report of whatever happened at school. I also welcome questions and feedback from parents. This goes back to my opening paragraph concerning reflection. I’m not perfect, and it could be a simple question that will guide me to handling a situation more effectively or getting through to the heart of a student.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the support I have experienced from my fellow teachers. The advice and support (and even the “volunteering”) I have received (been subjected to) is greatly appreciated. One of the things I have reflected on is that I have not always asked others for advice when I should have. I am trying to ask for advice more often, and my colleagues are always willing to listen and offer it.

The school (half) year has been everything I hoped it would be and more. I am looking forward to this summer and being able to spend time solidifying a science curriculum, among other things. The Lord willing, I look forward to many more years of working with our covenant youth here at Eastside.

MOTHER'S DAY TEA PARTY

In what has become a treasured Eastside tradition, the students in grades Pre-K through 3rd invited their mothers to a tea party, hosted by Karen Ophoff, Lydya Hulst, Anne Miedema and Kristi Thompson. Moms were encouraged to dress up and wear hats, and enjoyed tea, lemonade and snacks as well as performances by the students. Special thanks to the teachers for the work that went in to this memorable event!



WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO BE #BLESSED?

Article by Vaneetha Rendall Risner

Feeling blessed is in vogue.

A quick look at Facebook and Twitter shows how many people today feel #blessed. In our social-media world, saying you're blessed can be a way of boasting while trying to sound humble.

College scholarship? #Blessed. Unexpected raise? #Blessed. Wonderful family? #Blessed.

As Christians we use that term too, of course. We pray God will bless our family. We attribute our undeserved gifts to "God's blessings." We talk about ministries being blessed. But what does it really mean? How should we understand the blessing of God?

The Good Life

For believers, is the blessed life synonymous with the successful life? Is it the Christian version of the good life? A loving marriage, obedient children, a vibrant ministry, a healthy body, a successful career, trusted friends, financial abundance — if these are the characteristics of a blessed life, then having all of them should translate into an extraordinarily blessed life.

But does it? If someone had all those things, would they be extraordinarily blessed?

Rather than turning to God, they might feel self-sufficient and proud. Perhaps a bit smug and self-righteous. After all, their hard work would be yielding good fruit.

Moreover, they wouldn't need to cry out to God for deliverance; everything would already be perfect. They wouldn't need to trust God; they could trust in themselves. They wouldn't need God to fill them; they would already be satisfied.

God's Richest Blessings

My desire for God is greatly fueled by my need. And it is in the areas of loss where I feel my need most intensely. Unmet desires keep me on my knees. Deepen my prayer life. Make me ransack the Bible for God's promises.

Earthly blessings are temporary; they can all be taken away. Job's blessings all disappeared in one fateful day. I, too, had a comfortable life that was stripped away within a span of weeks. My marriage dissolved. My children rebelled. My health spiraled downward. My family fell apart. My dreams were shattered.

And yet, in the midst of those painful events, I experienced God's richest blessings. A stronger faith than I had experienced before. A deeper love than I had ever known. A more intimate walk than I could explain. My trials grounded my faith in ways that prosperity and abundance never could.

While my trials were not blessings in themselves, they were channels for them. As Laura Story asks in her song "Blessings," "What if your blessings come through rain drops? What if trials of this life — the rain, the storms, the hardest nights — are your mercies in disguise?"

The following article is reprinted with permission from DesiringGod.org

This revolutionary idea of blessing is also firmly established in Scripture.

The Common Thread

One translation of the New Testament (ESV) has 112 references with the words bless, blessing, or blessed, none of which connect blessing to material prosperity. Consider these passages:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . Blessed are those who mourn . . . Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake . . . Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you." (Matthew 5:3–11)

"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28)

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven. (Romans 4:7; quoting Psalm 32:1)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial. (James 1:12)

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. . . . Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Revelation 14:13, 19:9)

There is no hint of material prosperity or perfect circumstances in any New Testament reference. On the contrary, blessing is typically connected with either poverty and trial or the spiritual benefits of being joined by faith to Jesus.

According to the Key-Word Study Bible, "The Greek word translated blessed in these passages is makarioi which means to be fully satisfied. It refers to those receiving God's favor, regardless of the circumstances" (emphasis added).

What is blessing, then? Scripture shows that blessing is anything God gives that makes us fully satisfied in him. Anything that draws us closer to Jesus. Anything that helps us relinquish the temporal and hold on more tightly to the eternal. And often it is the struggles and trials, the aching disappointments and the unfulfilled longings that best enable us to do that.

Truly Blessed

Pain and loss transform us. While they sometimes unravel us, they can also push us to a deeper life with God than we ever thought possible. They make us rest in God alone. Not what we can do or achieve for him. And not what he can do or achieve for us.

In pain and loss, we long for Presence. We long to know that God is for us and with us and in us. Great families, financial wealth, and good health are all wonderful gifts we can thank God for, but they are not his greatest blessings. They may make us delight, not in God, but in his gifts.

God's greatest blessing always rests in God himself. When we have that, we are truly #blessed.

To have both teaching that is distinct
And humor that is dry
And to teach for forty years
Takes a very special guy.

From Virginia to Washington
And then in this state,
He's taught many places
And made his classes great.

His students will remember
His whistling through the halls,
And the special way his sneezes
Would echo through the walls.

He couldn't go without
His morning coffee brew,
And would drive everyday
In his trusty Subaru.

Although he wouldn't say it,
('Cuz he's never one to brag)
He's really good at frisbee,
Ping pong, golf, and tag.

He has this funny thing
Where he won't eat fuzzy fruit.
And he responds to every joke
With "Haha...that's cute."

He prided himself in
His canjo made from home,
And his flawless natural hair,
Which always needed a comb.

But aside from all of this,
For his students he truly cared,
From the classes that he taught,
To the memories that he shared.

He's one of the most friendly
And Godly teachers you've met.
And he certainly is a teacher
We never will forget.

by Madalyn Monsma
Eastside graduate of 2015

THANK-YOU MR. ADAMS FOR 19 YEARS!

