



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mr. Jim Holstege

“For who hath despised the day of small things?” (Zechariah 4:10a). We who have been around Eastside Christian School know a thing or two about small things, don't we? If numbers matter, and sometimes perhaps they do, then we could be tempted to be discouraged by our graduation photos over the years, as many reveal only two or three...sometimes one graduate. This has been the case for the past nine years. We have to return to the year 2012 in order to see a class of seven graduates, the largest graduating class in our twenty-five year history.

It is also true, however, that we have been blessed every year, for twenty five years, with students spanning from younger grades to older grades. It has been necessary every single year to have a graduation! In this, our twenty-fifth year as a Christian school in the Grand Rapids area, we celebrate our twenty-fifth graduation ceremony and our six young people who walk across the podium to receive their diploma. If numbers do matter, we celebrate our largest graduating class since 2012. At Eastside Christian School, let us not despise the day of small things. Rather, let us rejoice in the Lord for all the great things He has done!

GETTING TO KNOW OUR 2022 GRADUATES

I recently sat down for some enjoyable visits with our eighth grade students and asked them to reflect on their experiences at Eastside. Of course, one would expect Ethan, Trevor, and Levi to have many more memories, since they began together already in Kindergarten, with Mrs. Amy VanPutten. Do they remember Kindergarten? Oh yes...naptime! Memorable- so they say. Do they remember hiding behind the beanbags in Mrs. Miedema's classroom? Maybe? Exploring the furnace room with Mrs. Klammer and having classroom lock-ins with Mr. DeVries? Interesting and fun. Mr. DeVries, do you remember your first day as a teacher at Eastside? So do they! Not an easy way to start, to be sure. Coming fresh off from your college graduation, being inserted into the middle of an existing school year, and having three grade levels (fourth, fifth, and sixth) assigned to your first classroom is memorable to you, Mr. DeVries, and your students. But let's not forget Anna, Kaylee, & Kelsey, who also claim great memories, if only for one year. The bike hike, participating in orchestra and choir during the Christmas concert and the All-School program are wonderful events to remember and cling to.

2022 GRADUATES

... continued on page 2



Eastside has six graduates this year:

BACK ROW: Levi Baldwin, Trevor Hayes, Ethan Kleyn **FRONT ROW:** Anna Kamps, Kaylee VonDoloski, Kelsey VonDoloski.

Graduation is planned for Wednesday afternoon, June 1.

CLASS TEXT | *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

- 1 Timothy 4:12.

I asked them, do you think Eastside has changed during your years here? Interestingly, they have taken notice of a couple things. They commented, for example, that Eastside has become larger with more students. In fact, since their Kindergarten year Eastside has grown from thirty-one to eighty-two students. They have also taken notice, along with Mr. Kuiper, that their own classroom has filled up since last year, jumping from six to fifteen students. More students...and more new students, including Anna, Kaylee, and Kelsey! What a fun and enjoyable year to have the girls join Mr. Kuiper's classroom (right, Leah?) It has been good!

Getting serious, I asked them: How has Eastside helped you grow in your faith and in your walk with Christ? Here are their answers, answers that came quickly and energetically. Being able to be a part of the Choir and Orchestra; singing from and learning the Psalter; taking turns leading devotions in class; learning about selflessness and putting others first; and studying the Old Testament prophecies in Mr. Kuiper's Bible class. Praise God for the labors of our teachers! Teachers, be encouraged! Your patient labors bear fruit!

Anna, Kaylee, Kelsey, Ethan, Trevor, & Levi- we love you and thank God for you. May He be your guide as you move forward into high school and beyond. Prayerfully live out your class text every day: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Timothy 4:12). May the friendships formed while at Eastside be lasting. Come back to say hello, please!



TREASURER'S REPORT

Phil Kleyn | Board Treasurer

It has been privilege to serve as treasurer for Eastside once again. It is humbling and overwhelming to see the support that Eastside receives from the parents, grandparents and other supporters of our school. As a parent I know the commitment it takes to make that monthly tuition payment and I am deeply grateful to our Eastside families as they continue to support the school by making their tuition payments a priority. I am also struck by the constant flow of gifts that we have received toward our fund drive, all the gifts both large and small are recognized and appreciated. On behalf of the school board I am happy to announce that we have met the goal for our fund drive for the current school year.

During this year we also received an estate gift that was designated for Special Education. This money will be used over the coming years to pay for the services provided by All Belong as well as other needs associated with this area of education at Eastside Christian.

I am grateful to our God for supplying us the financial means to continue to educate our children. As a school board we covet your continued support through your prayers, your time and with your giving.

MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL



Mrs. Thompson hosted a medieval fair for her students to coincide with a book they read set in this time period.

The students played medieval games and then enjoyed a lunch of pottage, wheat bread, apples, cheese and honey.



SCHOOL BOARD SECRETARY REPORT

Brian Baldwin | Board Secretary

The chosen theme for this past school year has been “Walking in the Way of Love” based on 1 Corinthians 16:14 which exhorts us to “Let all your things be done with charity”. Elsewhere in the book of I Corinthians, we read to continue in patience, kindness, humility, and rejoicing in the truth, amongst other admonitions. These themes became the foundation for many of the school chapels during the school year. How important this reminder was to all of us, surrounded by what at times seemed like upheaval both in the world at large and events near to us. Throughout those challenges, these scriptures remind us that we are always called to live as those who confess the love of Christ. For that, we give great thanks as this confession has been evident in the way our school community worked together.

We were also pleased to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Eastside Christian School. Many thanks to the Foundation for sponsoring a wonderful event and program that made for a very enjoyable evening, reflecting especially on God's faithfulness and goodness to us over these many years.

COVID PANDEMIC

We were happy to see many of the COVID-19 protocols and rules become more relaxed. This was a welcome return to a sense of normalcy compared to the previous two or so years. Being able to see the students' unmasked faces again was a good reminder of the need to interact with each other and learn in person. We certainly appreciate the patience and understanding from all our staff, committees, and families as we all navigated through that difficult time.

NEW FAMILIES

Eastside welcomed many new families this year. Alex and Dana VanderSchaaf and their daughter Frances for Pre-K, Tim and Liz Thompson and their daughter Lily for Kindergarten, Joseph and Valerie Kamps and their daughter Anna for 8th grade, plus also John and Jessica VonDoloski who enrolled seven children. This brought our student body to over eighty, the largest enrollment for Eastside in its history.

Speaking of enrollment, the Board took a decision to implement certain updates and modifications to our enrollment forms and procedures. These changes were mainly designed to reiterate the Reformed and Covenantal nature of education at Eastside, the qualifications for enrollment, and to clarify the Board's processes for enrollment decisions. This was done in conjunction with our other area PR schools who also realized a need to make various updates to their enrollment documentation.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING

The long-range planning actions taken last year proved to be helpful for day-to-day classroom management and accommodating the overall growth of Eastside. That being said, we are indeed maximizing the available space but so far have been able to avoid any major renovation or building projects. We anticipate this to be the status quo for the next upcoming years as enrollment figures are projected to level off.

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ALL SCHOOL PROGRAM

Eastside's All-School Program was held Friday, April 29 and centered around the 2021-22 school theme: **WALKING IN THE WAY OF LOVE**



TEACHERS & STAFF

The Board is very pleased to report that all our teaching staff have gladly signed their contracts and plan to return next school year. This is especially good news in light of the great need for teachers across so many of our schools.

Mrs. Lydya Hulst continues with the Pre-K and Kindergarten teaching duties. She has had a full and busy classroom, another encouraging sign for the future of Eastside. Lydya very capably introduces the basics, including the ability to read by the time students enter 1st grade.

Mrs. Anita Haak covers both the 1st and 2nd grade classes. Her seasoned and disciplined approach to education has proven to be invaluable, laying down a solid foundation for the students to build upon.

Mrs. Kristi Thompson is again the 3rd and 4th grade teacher this year. A very lively and energetic classroom of students, Kristi manages to keep them well-engaged and learning.

Mr. Tyler DeVries leads the 5th and 6th grade classroom, and does a wonderful job introducing his students to more advanced concepts and subjects.

7th and 8th grade students are again taught by Mr. Andy Kuiper, who eagerly prepares them for high school during these last formative years at Eastside.

Mrs. Kim Kuiper teaches the Art curriculum, a valuable asset for introducing and encouraging students to discover their creative abilities.

Eastside's music programs are led by Michelle Pipe for Choir, and Eric and Crista Phelps for Orchestra. These continue to be a great benefit to our school, an important component of student development, and a means of learning how to use the gift of music.

Heidi VanBaren and Lori Pastoor as classroom Aides are incredibly valuable to our Teaching staff, especially as the number of students has grown in recent years. Anne Miedema brings great abilities to her role of Educational Support, helping to assess and meet special needs of our students.

Debbie Baldwin and Lorelei Thompson now share the responsibility of school secretary, having taken over the role after Karen Ophoff's retirement. Liz Thompson fills the role of Curriculum Coordinator, a newly created position for this school year.

Mr. Jim Holstege continues as both Principal and Director of Development. This is often a very demanding role, having to be ready for anything and be involved in so many aspects of the school. We appreciate his capable leadership and enthusiasm for Eastside.

The daily contributions of our teachers and staff are truly innumerable. They faithfully carry out their calling to reveal the truths of God's creation through daily classroom instruction. We thank them again for the significant investments they make into our students and families, and the building up of our school community.

FINANCES & PROMOTERS

Financially, the school is well-provided for and continues to be blessed with the necessary resources for maintaining the school. We again express our appreciation for the labors and sacrifices of our parents in order to meet their tuition requirements.

In addition, we express our gratitude to those who support the school through financial giving and volunteering, and especially ask that you continue to remember Eastside's needs in your prayers.

The Foundation generously gifts to the school each year, both directly to the operating budget and indirectly by means of the tuition reimbursement program for our families.

Thanks also to the Promoters for the fundraising events that fill so many miscellaneous needs that might fall outside the normal budget. We certainly appreciate their continued efforts and successful fundraising activities.

Finally, we as the Board express our thanks for the whole of our Eastside community, who works together for a common goal. By God's grace, we have been provided with many blessings and gifts in the talents and resources of our Eastside supporters. We appreciate all your help, and look forward to the coming years.



INTERVIEW WITH KRISTI THOMPSON

Jim Holstege

With twenty-five years now concluded, one more trip down memory lane is fitting, this time with Mrs. Kristi Thompson. Kristi has served us at Eastside this entire stretch.

What were your life circumstances around the time that Eastside was coming into existence?

I was a paid teacher's aide at Adams Christian School, helping Miss Ruth Dykstra in the lower grades. In the very early days of Eastside, Roland Petersen was called in as acting Principal, to help get the school off ground level. When the appeal came out asking for interested teachers and staff, I was the first person to respond. Ruth (Dykstra) followed soon after.

You started as the school secretary? How did that come to be?

I wrote a letter to the committee expressing that I wanted to help in some way. I had long before always had the desire to work in a school, had been interested in education. I had previously worked in a doctor's office in a secretarial role, and so I offered the knowledge and skills that I learned from that job. I also expressed my interest to help with aiding in any area that might become necessary, along with being the secretary.

Talk about the very beginning years of your role. What were some of your responsibilities?

I wore many different hats. I served as an administrator's assistant to Agatha (Lubbers). I did a lot of aiding all through the school. I taught Music class to all the grade levels, K-9, helping the students learn pitch and the notes. Roland (Petersen) helped me get started with this. At the same time, Lori Pastoor taught choir. We went on several field trips during the early days. I worked on exploring and setting those up.

Miss Agatha Lubbers was our first Principal, as you mentioned.

Describe more about working with her.

That was awesome- she was an amazing lady to work with! She had the personality to forge ahead, handle things right now. Because of our unique situation- we were small- we were different- we could make new trails. She used to say, "We do not have to follow how the other schools do things!" I had to learn to look up when I needed to find something, because she was taller than I, and she was always organizing and putting things away!

Tell me a little about our first teachers.

Agatha taught Latin and Logic. Kathi (Holstege) taught Art, grades four through nine. She would also do all-school projects which was so much fun. Ruth (Dykstra) was of course a veteran. Mark (Ondersma) was a well-loved teacher. He was energetic, knew his stuff, and made learning fun. Pete (Adams) came to us from a different perspective and history than most teachers in our schools. He valued the Reformed faith and showed a zeal for the truth. He was very smart in math and science and had a unique way of explaining things. I helped aide with Pete's math students, who all worked at their own level and pace. Vicky (DeKryger) did a fantastic job teaching our PreK and K students. She was a smart lady, very eloquent.

You went back to college to become a teacher. Did you stop working at Eastside for a time?

No, I always kept working while going to college. I took night classes and summer classes. Because of my involvement as an aide, I was encouraged to get my degree. Dawn (Young) started helping in the office and I helped train her, but I kept working as an aide while pursuing my degree. Those were challenging times- not easy. I could never have done it without Tim (my husband) helping me.

EASTSIDE
FACT FROM THE PAST

Most of us remember Agatha Lubbers as the first Principal of Eastside. However, when Eastside was being organized, Mr. Roland Petersen (former Principal at Covenant and teacher at Adams and Hope) offered his knowledge and support to help select a curriculum and lay the groundwork before Agatha Lubbers accepted the position as Administrator.

Jim Holstege

What changes have you noticed over the twenty five years?

Whenever something new begins, there is that honeymoon type of excitement. That early excitement has kind of died down. At the beginning, we had gaps, especially in the upper grades that needed to be worked out. We always had a choir, but over the years we have developed a very important music program that is so necessary. We are more like any other school now, than we were in the early years. At the beginning, I wanted Eastside to be more like a school...now that we are...I sort of miss some of what we had!

What grades have you taught?

I started out (2006-07) with the sixth and seventh grades. That was so enjoyable! I really loved teaching those grades. Over the years I have been the homeroom teacher from second through seventh grade. I have had second through fourth in my classroom before, which is a difficult spread to teach together. My current assignment, third and fourth grade, I really enjoy. I also like teaching the Language Arts to the older students and having that connection with them.

Here we are, twenty five years after we started! Has Eastside become what you imagined it would be?

I am so grateful for the years we have had here. I personally was never concerned with high expectations of large growth or of the need to impress anyone. I have always loved who we are, whether in lean years or the increases we have recently been experiencing. We have some amazing experiences and memories. As far as where we are today- we do have noticeably more students now! With more students, we have less and less space in the classroom. With more students, we who are teachers feel the heavier workload. I have said to myself often: 'let's just focus on the work at hand'. I would not want to take anything away.

Kristi, on behalf of all of us at Eastside Christian School...parents, students, staff members, and supporters...past and present...thank you! Your dedication to our school, your level-headed compassion, and the special God-given abilities that you have poured out into your labors have left their imprint on every student. Yours is a labor of love.



"On Tuesday, March 8, 2022, God gathered to Himself His beloved saint, Donald Haak, 82 years." Don was the beloved husband of Anita Haak, our 1st-2nd grade teacher. Don's funeral was held in Crete, IL but Anita's students along with the rest of the Eastside school community watched the livestream of his funeral at First PRC with others from the Grand Rapid area, and then gathered for food in the basement.

Don's cousin Rev. Carl Haak officiated at the Crete, IL service and Rev. Rodney Kleyn spoke additional age-appropriate words to the Eastside students gathered in Grand Rapids.

We continue to pray for Anita as she goes through this life without Don. **Deuteronomy 31: 6 ... the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.**



THIRD-FOURTH GRADERS' SPRING POEMS

Mrs. Kristi Thompson | Teacher

Spring Signs - by Kate Phelps

The rabbits hop and dance in the flowerbed,
The rainbow celebrates the coming of spring,
The foxes splash in the puddles,
The robins dance while singing in the sunlight,
The kites flutter in the sky,
The humming birds hum a sweet melody,
Spring is the best

Signs of Spring - By Harrison Monsma

Behind the gray winter clouds, spring peaks out.
The buds awaken under the spring sunshine.
A smiling rainbow shimmers over the calm lake,
The yellow daffodils shoot out of the soft ground in spring
The robins joyfully sing to greet the day.

Spring - By Dillon Hop

When spring arrives Thunderstorms follow
Animals shiver in an old tree hollow
Harsh Rainy blast
And wet muddy grass
But finally the Sun smiles at last
The Birds Begin to sing
What joys will this season bring
The flowers start to sprout
The pedals come out
God's Beautiful creation
Spreads over the nation

Signs of spring - by Sam Roth

The robins prance in the morning sun
Big black ants march out of their piles
Right onto your kitchen tiles.
The puddles splash onto my brand new shoes.
The spiders weave webs that glimmer in the sunlight.
The dirt flies as the groundhogs dig holes in my yard.
Spring is messy, but summer is rushing in.

Signs of Spring - by Addisyn Hayes

Blue butterflies are joyfully clapping among the flowers
Red robins are singing a happy melody
Daffodils are dancing in the breezy meadow
The sun is smiling down on the gorgeous flowers
Rain splashes on my head

SPRING - By Annica Kleyn

Come out to run in Spring,
And hear the birds sweetly sing.
Every child comes out to play,
And all the children laugh with gay.
They look at every smiling bud,
Near the puddles of sober mud.

Oh How I Love Spring! - By Margaux Duistermars

Back behind the winter clouds of gloom
All the flowers start to bloom!
The Bunnies all laugh and play,
And the critters tell the rain to go away.
The sunshine is bright as can be
God is amazing can't you see?
God made all —
Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall!

SIGNS OF SPRING - By Luke Baldwin

Behind the winter clouds, spring peaks out.
The buds awaken under the sunshine.
The robins sweetly sing to greet the day.
The galoshes stomped in the puddle.
The sticky mud paints the ground,
The bright sunshine smiles on the flowers
Spring is fun!

Spring Poem - By Asher VonDoloski

Tiny ants hopping on the dirt
Bluebirds waddling threw the grass
Monarch butterflies flying through the air
Pesty moles digging under ground making the grass lumpy
And the bright yellow sun smiling between the clouds ...
Then the rain pours, splashing down the gutter
Making swimming pools for the frogs

Pictures of Spring - By Joab VonDoloski

The sun smiled at the moon and said hello
The flowers burst out laughing
The fluffy clouds fly across the
sky over the fields of flowers
The wind likes to whisper to the wispy clouds
The sky says hello to us with sprinkling rain.

Signs of Spring - By Micah Dykstra

The birds are humming a sweet spring tune.
The sun beams on the field of tulips.
The buds awaken under the spring sunshine.
A rainbow colors the shining sky.
Galoshes stomp in the rain puddles.
The trees are waving in the wind.

Signs of Spring - By Amelia Tanis

Back behind the winter snow
the sun shines down on the spring buds.
The rain feeds the spring flowers,
and the butterflies flutter in the air.
The rabbits play tag in the morning dew.
The colorful tulips dance in the wind,
and tiny buds burst into apple blossoms.

Spring Time - By Deakin Pipe

The clouds are weeping while the wind whispers the
sun to shine.
The sun smiles down on the magnolia
blooms as the teardrops dry.
The robins perch in the tree singing
duets to God most high.
The leaves and flowers unfold with
a story yet to be told.
The trickling stream weaves it's way.
Finally the month of May!
New life and renewed life.
The whole creation mighty and majestic.
God be magnified!
All creation will glorify!

Signs of Spring - By Lena Griess

It cannot be mistaken
That in spring the buds awaken
The red robins sweetly sing
As pretty as a diamond ring
No more snow piles
Creation smiles
With a smile of delight
The sun makes the day bright
The rain pelts jump
and we go bump
The flowers celebrate
as we commemorate
The tulips burst with cheer
for spring is here!

Hooray! The Spring has Come!

- By Gabriel Holstege

The black puppies sneeze
in the whistling breeze.
The beautiful cardinals rejoice
Because the sun has made a choice
To smile today!
The robins sing
because the spring
has pushed the winter away!

Spring Has Come - By Micah Beckwith

The trees are waving in the wind,
And meadows burst with beautiful colors
Behind the winter clouds spring awakes
The Sun burst through the clouds
The wildflowers in the field dance in the wind
Spring is a wonderful season

The Spring Party! - By Tyler Nathan Kleyn

The puddles bounce with excitement
As the rain splashes down into their midst,
To decorate the field with a colorful rainbow!
The meadow opens it's gifts, which are uncountable flowers,
The butterflies clap their hands with joy,
As the birds begin a birthday chorus.

Signs of Spring - by Blake Pols

The rain dances on the sprouting grass.
After the rain, the sun bursts through and draws a rainbow.
Galoshes jump into puddles, creating quite a splash.
The bright tulips awaken under the shining sun.
They joyfully dance in the soft green grass.
Creation happily celebrates that spring is here.



FROM THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Lael Griess

In the summer of 2020, ECS's library space was revamped to function as both a library and a "flex" classroom area. Since this involved installing new book shelves and rearranging the area, it was a good time to do a little purging and reorganizing.

With this in mind, the Education Committee appointed a committee of Kristin Kleyn, Lael Griess, Stephanie Adams, and Lorelei Thompson to oversee the library. The Library Committee's responsibilities include determining and communicating to the board a written library policy to guide the materials permitted in the library, purchasing new books for the library, and keeping the library organized. In our second year as a committee, we have settled into comfortable roles to divvy up the workload. Kristin and Lael take care of book purchases and the creative efforts like the displays and the reading incentives. Lorelei is present in the school on library days, directing students' attention to new or different books and keeping the shelves organized. Stephanie has been a big help with the work of labeling new books and adding them to our electronic catalogue system.

EASTSIDE
FACT FROM THE PAST

Kristin Kleyn is well-known at Eastside as a long-time involved parent, but her history with the school started long before she had children here. Kristin (then Kristin Brands) was hired out of Dort College to teach 1st-3rd grades when Mrs. Ruth Dykstra retired in 2000. While teaching, she met Phil, got married and then continued to teach until Zachary was born in 2005. Among fulfilling other volunteer roles, Kristin has continued as a long-time valuable member of the Education Committee.

As the committee began adding books to the library and familiarizing ourselves with the library content, we discovered that filling the shelves was one thing, but convincing kids to read the books was another! So, we created a display on the wall in the library area with special shelves to feature books throughout the year. We have tried to change this display with the seasons to keep it fresh and to draw students' attention to books they may not have considered in the past. We also brought in a cart for displaying new book purchases. Last year, the committee provided prizes for students based on the points they earned for reading Accelerated Reader books as well.

The next challenge we addressed was how to get kids reading all the good literature our library has that is not part of the AR system. The committee decided to sponsor a couple of reading

incentives for non-AR books. For example, during the month of October, students in grades 5-8 each read a book about the Reformation and wrote a brief one-page report. The Library Committee created a "Wittenburg Door" in ECS's hallway where students' reports were "nailed up" for all to see. At the end of the month, the students' hard work was rewarded with a Reformation Day feast, provided by the committee and funded by the Promoter's Club. Students enjoyed fun German fare--brats, sauerkraut, chips, apples, cider, and Black Forest cake for dessert.

In February, the Library Committee sponsored a biography reading incentive for the student body in grades 1-8. Any student who read a biography and thoroughly answered a question sheet about their book during the month of February was rewarded with a \$5 gift card to one of the following options: Dollar Tree, 5 Below, Arby's, or McDonald's.

Going forward, the Library Committee hopes to continue adding good literature to the library and thinking of creative ways to encourage kids to read. We welcome any feedback or ideas from ECS parents!