



# EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

SCHOOL BOARD  
NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2023

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mr. Jim Holstege

We, who are appointed by God to be the guardians of His precious heritage, both teachers and parents, must face the question: are we living up to our school theme? Nurturing covenant children to reflect the mind of Christ. Are we doing this? Do we reflect the mind of Christ? Do we, by our example, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves"? (Phil. 2:3). Thankfully, humbly, by God's grace and through His given means of the threefold cord of Home, Church, and School, we can joyfully say, yes! Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

One small thing (that is actually a big thing) is to teach our young men to give honor and respect to the young women. The students know the routine every morning as they stand in line, waiting to be let into school to start the day: ladies first! While this exercise is a work in progress, I am pleased to see some good results with eighth graders, Eric Phelps and Eli Dykstra, showing themselves to be good examples and the fine gentlemen that they are. Every morning, even on the coldest wintry day, Eric and Eli waited until everyone else was inside before coming in to school. Often, they needed to stand and watch latecomers being dropped off and slowly make their way through the door. Good work, men!

I asked them to help me by contributing to this article. What follows are their answers to my questions. What does it mean to you to be a gentleman? "Being a gentleman means helping others out, putting people before yourself, standing outside waiting for everyone else to go in before you go in, respecting your elders." How do you show yourself to be a gentleman? "By being kind and helping out." "By helping out classmates, holding doors for people, behaving in class (most of the time), spending more time listening than talking, and respecting teachers." Do you have a message to pass along to younger students as you graduate and move on to high school? "It's better to be a gentleman sooner than later!" "It allows people to trust you, rely on you, and you can set a godly example for those around you." "Being a gentleman can be challenging, but once you are one it can be fun!"

To the Class of 2023: Congratulations! Our prayers are with you, and may you continue forevermore to reflect the mind of Christ, your Lord and Savior.

## CONGRATULATION CLASS OF 2023



Eastside congratulates nine graduates this year - our largest class to date! Graduation was held Wednesday, May 31 at 2 PM, with Prof. Cory Griess addressing the Class of 2023 using their class text of I John 5:4: *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world. even our faith."*

**BACK ROW:** Leah Pastoor, Chase VanPutten, Seth Kleyn, Eric Phelps, Eli Dykstra **FRONT ROW:** Jacob Hop, JohnOwen Griess, Simeon Griess, Stephen Kuiper



Welcome, and thank you for coming together tonight on behalf of Eastside Christian School. I want to begin first with Proverbs 22:6 where it says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Also from Ephesians 6:4, "and, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." What a high and serious calling we have as parents, grandparents and association members. A high calling because it is none other than Jehovah God that calls each one of us to this important work. It comes from His infallible Word which is always true and provides for us a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. This calling is also serious because our God is pleased to use us, weak means, to accomplish His will. It is both amazing and humbling that our Heavenly Father uses our feeble efforts as parents and as a Christian school to train His children to walk uprightly, develop their gifts and abilities, and prepare them for their place in life according to His purpose. One area of preparation that Eastside Christian School has focused on is found in the theme that was taken for this school year, Managing God's Gifts. Our teachers have been using this theme to teach the students that everything we have and everything we are, materially and spiritually, has been given us for the sake of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as grateful servants, we are to use these gifts as good stewards, in loving service to God and to one another. Working to accomplish all of this as a Christian school, especially in the midst of a wicked world, is an impossible task of ourselves. We continually seek wisdom and grace from God in order to furnish our children with all that they need to serve and glorify Him. In His mercy, He continues to provide for all our needs and blesses the work of our hands. As the end of another school year approaches, we give thanks to God for His covenant faithfulness to Eastside Christian School.

**NEW FAMILIES:** This year we welcomed two new families into the Eastside community. Matthew and Theresa Vail enrolled their daughter Maddie into first grade with Mrs. Haak. Rev. Joohyung Lee and his wife Jihye Hyun enrolled their son Siwan into Kindergarten with Mrs. Hulst. Along with three other new students, we began the 2022-23 school year with 74 students.

**TEACHERS AND STAFF:** God has blessed us with a dedicated and godly staff here at Eastside Christian School. We see daily evidence of men and women who love the Lord and their students. They demonstrate that love in their teaching and instructing our children in a way that is biblically reformed in both content and

perspective. With gratitude to God, we can report that all of our teachers and staff have signed contracts for the 2023-24 school year with the exception of our Choir Director, Michelle Pipe. We want to express our appreciation for her work as she completes her 11th year at Eastside.

Mrs. Lydya Hulst continues to guide and instruct our Kindergarten and Pre-K students. She has a more manageable class this year as there are 2 students in pre-K and 6 students in Kindergarten. Year after year she does a remarkable job of not only teaching the basics of reading and writing, but also equipping these children with new skills throughout the year. Her godly care and commitment help to ensure a comfortable, stimulating learning environment during these formative years.

Mrs. Anita Haak capably leads the 1st and 2nd grade classes. She is a seasoned teacher that has a gentle, caring approach and yet maintains good order and discipline. She works diligently to give her students a solid foundation both academically and spiritually. This is quite a task with 13 First graders and 6 Second graders. However, by the end of the school season, her students will no doubt be well equipped for the grade that comes next.

Our 3rd and 4th graders are once again led by Mrs. Kristi Thompson. She also has a full classroom with 9 Third graders and 9 Fourth graders. 18 total students is challenging but Kristi does an amazing job of keeping them under control and engaged at the same time. Every time I visit her classroom I am struck by how efficiently she teaches and her strong desire to infuse godly instruction into all her subjects. Her students greatly benefit from Kristi's many years of teaching experience.

Mr. Tyler DeVries teaches our 5th and 6th graders with a combined total of 16 students. Tyler is in his 4th full year and we see steady progress being made in his classroom. One thing that is clearly evident is his love for Eastside and for teaching his students in light of God's Word. He works hard to create a fun learning environment and endeavors to get better at his craft year after year.

Our students finish their last two years under the guidance of Mr. Andy Kuiper. With enthusiasm that is contagious, he teaches our 7th and 8th graders and effectively prepares them for High School. His students often remark about his ability to teach in a



positive and energetic way. Mr. Kuiper leads by example and has good command of his classroom. Oh yea ... if you want a good laugh to start the week, just read his Monday note.

Mrs. Kim Kuiper continues to teach Art class at Eastside. We greatly appreciate her time spent in introducing, encouraging and teaching this subject to all of our student body.

Orchestra is once again taught by Eric & Crista Phelps and our Choir is led by Michelle Pipe. For many years, music instruction has been a staple of our school. We are thankful to God for the gift of music, especially as our children learn more and more of how to use this gift to the praise & glory of His Name.

Debbie Baldwin and Lorelei Thompson continue to share the responsibility of school secretary. They do a wonderful job of keeping the school moving in the right direction by performing many meaningful tasks that often go unnoticed. Liz Thompson is our Curriculum Track Coordinator and is tasked with supporting and assisting our teachers with making steady progress in curriculum mapping. Anne Meidema continues to provide academic support in the way of evaluating, testing, tutoring & communicating with teachers where additional assistance may be needed. Mike and Heather Pols stay busy providing janitorial services so that a healthy, clean working environment is maintained.

Mr. Jim Holstege carries on in his dual role as Principal and Director of Development. The demands of this work can be quite challenging but as Jim often communicates to the board, they can be very rewarding. His positive energy and enthusiasm are infectious to all those around him. We are thankful for his sound leadership demonstrated once again this year.

Eastside would not be the school it is today without the help of our volunteers. As classroom aides, Heidi VanBaren and Lori Pastoor provide invaluable assistance, especially to our lower grade

teachers. Then we have so many others, especially mothers, who give their time and energy in so many ways to ensure that instruction and the day-to-day operation of Eastside Christian School runs as smoothly and effectively as possible. To them, a heartfelt Thank You!

**FINANCES & PROMOTERS:** Financially speaking, Eastside is in a stable position and continues to be abundantly blessed with the necessary resources for maintaining the school. This is due in part to the hard work and sacrifices of our parents to meet their tuition obligations. We also are currently in the midst of another successful Operating Fund Drive and well on our way to achieving our goal of \$140,000. We are grateful for the work of the Eastside Foundation that generously provides gifts directly toward the operating budget & also by way of tuition reimbursement. We also want to thank the Promoters group who help promote Eastside and raise funds to assist the teachers and the school with financial needs.

**SUMMATION:** Finally, the Board expresses its gratitude for you and the whole Eastside Community. We are thankful for evidence of unity in our spiritual goals for both the school and her students. We encourage you to continue in your financial support for Eastside, but most importantly, we covet your prayers. Pray for our teachers and encourage them when given the opportunity. Pray for our administrator, our staff and our board. May God grant us wisdom and strength to persevere in the important calling of Christian education and to confess together the comforting words of I Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

In Christ's service,  
Brad Duistermars, ECS Board Secretary

## ALL SCHOOL PROGRAM

Eastside's All School Program was held Friday, April 21. Notable to mention is that it was our last program under the leadership of **Mrs. Michelle Pipe**. Michelle has directed 4th-8th grade choir for the past eleven years, and is well-loved by the students. We are sad to see her go, but thankful for her time with us and her dedication to our school for all those years!





## A TALE OF TWO SCHOOLS

**Rev. Carl Haak**

*Rev. Haak gave a speech for a combined chapel of Eastside and Redeemer PR Schools on March 29, 2023. We asked Rev. Haak to provide his speech for us in written form for our newsletter. The Chapel began with prayer for the Covenant Christian School of Nashville Tennessee, where earlier that week three students, two teachers, and the janitor were killed in an act of hatred aimed at the Christian principles taught in the school. We saw this as a sign of the lawless times in which we are called to train our covenant children. We prayed for the children, families, teachers, aids, and supporters of the school. The prayer was guided by Psalm 91:1.*

Our chapel today is unique. Often the students of our schools get together for sports events, band concerts, science fairs, etc. These are special times allowing us to get to know each other, see each other's schools, and enjoy friendship in our Lord. But today your two schools gather for a chapel, a time to unite and lift up your souls to God in worship. Worship lies at the heart of the reason for the existence of your two schools, indeed the reason for all education. Your parents believe that the goal of all education is worship. Worship is more than Sunday services. Worship is to bow down in awe before God and from your souls magnify Him as God alone. Your life is to be a living sacrifice of praise. (See, Romans 12:1, 2). For two schools to make the worship of the only true God the goal of a child's life, and then to meet together in the activity of worship, is very remarkable thing in the anti-Christian age in which we live.

This chapel is special for yet another reason. Your two schools are the smallest of the PR schools in western Michigan. Your classmates are fewer in number. This brings a unique feature to your schools. You have multi grades in one classroom and have fewer teachers who teach many subjects. Your classes are held in the same room with other grades. A variety of subjects are being studied at the same time in your room. At times 2 or 3 grades are taught the same subject. You interact all day with children of different ages than your own.

A disadvantage you say? Well, it is a necessity for now, but not necessarily a disadvantage. My friends and I were schooled from first to ninth grade with three grades in one room and one teacher for three grades. And while we would not pass ourselves off as the most glowing products of education, some of us became bankers, nurses, lawyers, elders, deacons, teachers, successful business owners, and a few, preachers. But you notice I called them my friends, and they are still my friends. We learned to focus friendships not on the same age,

but the same truth. Our parents would have liked to provide more choices in the curriculum and more educational experiences. But the school God gave them was blessed to our hearts. When you see in your life what looks like disadvantage, take a closer look and you will see special blessings. Lifelong bonds are built in your school, and life giving truths are taught. Your eye is being trained to see God in all things through your education. And a multi-grade classroom wets your appetite for what is coming next year.

This makes your schools special. It gets at the answer to a question often asked. Is it possible for covenant parents to provide all that is needed for the education of our children in the 21st-century; the facilities, the staff, the resources, the curriculum? Your schools give a clear and courageous answer, yes! Yes, if there is also imagination, cooperation, unity of purpose, enthusiasm, love, and commitment.

Many hands are necessary to make your schools work. Not only trained teachers, but each person of the school association, each family, and each parent must throw in their time and talent given by the Lord. All are needed; all can contribute. And so while it is true that your schools want to grow and expand in number and resources, yet the Lord has already blessed them! Still more, your parents do not just send you off school, but they love and are involved in these schools. It is a great blessing to you when you see your parents working together for your good! This will make you see school as your own!

But while Eastside and Redeemer may be accounted small, they have been established on BIG principles. And it is here that we come to see how important and precious your schools are. A principle is a truth taught in the Word of God determining how we are to act and serving as the motivation for what we do. There are at least three principles which give



the answer for why your parents formed your schools and what motivates them to sacrifice for them.

First, the Scripture teaches that the education of the children of believers is the calling their parents. This truth is found everywhere in the Bible. (Isaiah 38: 19, Genesis 18:19, Ephesians 6:4). Your parents do not use the public school, for many reasons, but mainly because they do not believe it is the responsibility of the state to educate you. Your church has not opened a church operated school (parochial school) because, while your church leaps to their calling to feed the lambs in their catechism classes, they believe it is your parent's calling to join in zeal and wisdom to equip and train you for your earthly calling. You parents have not joined with other parents in the community to form a charter school due to the failure and evil influences of the public school. But your parents have formed Parental Schools, because they believe God has given them the responsibility to educate you in the light of the timeless truths of God's Word. They want an education controlled by the light of our God in Christ, not by the darkness of the world. They have formed a society, elected school board members, and hired teachers who are like minded with them in the truth of God's Word. Education is a parental responsibility, one day your responsibility when God makes you a parent.

The second principle, is that education must be given in the light of the truth of God, and His word (II Timothy 3:14, 15). Education must

not be founded on lies, but truth. God is truth; God's Word is truth. Your education seeks to shine the wisdom of God upon all created subjects so that you know not only the subject but also the truth of God revealed in the subject. Without the light of God shining on all we are taught, no matter how educated and knowledgeable we become, we would be fools.

The third principle on which your schools were founded is that education must always be aimed at excellence. This means that each child must be taught to develop their own gifts, abilities, and talents given of God. These gifts, whatever they be, however great or small, may not lie fallow. You gifts must be sharpened and used to God's glory. Whatever God calls you to know, he calls you to learn it to the utmost of your ability. Whatever gifts God bestows, He calls you to use them skillfully and with all your heart to the Lord.

A great treasure has been given to the students of Eastside and Redeemer Schools gathered in this chapel. The education you are receiving is something no bullet can take, no evil can destroy, no demon can undo. Your schools are God's instrument to bring you up in the wisdom of Christ. They are His means to equip you to walk with Him in whatever calling He gives you in His kingdom. Your schools are truly unique, special, and priceless. Thank God for them.

## FEBRUARY | READING MONTH







## PROMOTERS UPDATE

Bryan Pastoor | Promoters President

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Promoters, it is a group of parents who organize fundraisers. The money raised typically funds special projects & specific requests from teachers.

This year's fundraisers included:

TRIP (Tuition Reduction Incentive Program)

Banket (the most delicious of the fundraisers)

Online Auction

These fundraisers combined to bring in over \$22,000 to the school this year. A huge thank you to all the parents (mainly mothers) for their many hours of hard work and all of our supporters who donated and purchased items!

Two projects are being funded by Promoters this year. Inside the building, the resource room is receiving some much needed renovation, creating a more usable space for Anne Miedema. The countertops and sink were also replaced in the kitchen. Outside, plans have been made for a renovation to the playground. An opportunity arose to reuse play equipment that is being removed from another school. Installation of the new play equipment is scheduled for later this year and will include a new-to-us play structure (geared to younger children), swings (set of 6), a tire swing, and several spinners.

## BASKETBALL AND VOLLEYBALL TEAMS



An exciting development around school this winter was the forming of a boys basketball and girls volleyball team. It has been over a decade since this has been possible at Eastside; the school had a boys basketball team from 2002-2010 and a girls volleyball team from 2007-2011.

This year was meant to be a building year to learn the fundamentals. The 5th-8th grade boys basketball team met for six weeks in the winter under Coach Dave Monsma. At the end of the season, the team scrimmaged Hope School's 7th grade team.

The 5th-8th grade girls volleyball team also met for six weeks in the winter under Coaches Lydia Monsma and Jamie DeVries. At the end of the season, the team scrimmaged Hope School's 7th grade team.