



EASTSIDE

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

SCHOOL BOARD
NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2023

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mr. Jim Holstege

During this school year, we have been discussing God's gifts. Gifts, in all forms that come down to us in rich abundance, ever flowing, always good. God calls us to use His gifts wisely, to be good stewards of those gifts. And, not as any kind of steward, but as Christian stewards; as those who have received the greatest gift ever, the gift of God incarnate, our Lord, Jesus Christ. In Him, we have been redeemed from our sins and guilt, and in Him we are renewed by His Spirit. He has made us into able and willing stewards...Christian stewards...of all that He gives to us. Whether we are an eighty-five year old great-grandparent, or a four year old pre-school student within our Eastside community, this is our confession. Praise God for His greatest gift!

As we live with one another, in our family, church, or school, may we recognize God's many wonderful and amazing gifts that He bestows to those who surround us. And may we recognize these gifts within ourselves, too. May we readily, cheerfully, and prayerfully give of ourselves to one another, as the Heidelberg instructs us as to our duty (Q&A 55).

Throughout the school year, the teachers and I take turns leading the all-school devotions on Friday morning. My month is coming up soon and my comments here serve as a preview of what I intend to talk about. Perhaps you might consider asking your children about these devotions when the time comes and discuss this in your home as well.

The Western society in which we find ourselves is becoming more and more anti-Christian. The devil, who is a wrecker and a divider, is going about doing just that throughout our nation and the world. He most certainly has the realm of Christianity, including us on his radar. May God help us to see the peace and unity, and the communion of the saints that we continue to experience, as most precious gifts. May He grant us courage and strength to be stalwart stewards!

GRANDPARENTS DAY





A REFLECTION

By Daniel Schimmel

As I reflect on the last 3 years as a school board member I am struck by many things. More so than anything else I am overwhelmed with gratitude and appreciation.

I spent 3rd through 9th Grade at Eastside as a student. As I write this I have a 3rd grader enrolled at Eastside. My first year at Eastside I had no idea the amount of effort that had gone into starting a new school. What I knew was that my neighborhood friends and I now had a school that was on our side of town. Not only did I not have to spend an hour on the bus everyday, but I could bike to school. I only noticed the positive changes and did not recognize the undertaking that the parents and supporters had taken on to make this school a reality. I am thankful, now more than ever for the work they did, and continue to do for this school. I see it as my privilege to continue in that work and build upon the firm foundation that was set by so many parents and supporters before me.

Often we talk about and reference our faith being continued in generations. I don't spend enough time appreciating that fact, or the work this school plays in accomplishing that mission. Deuteronomy 7:8-9 is one of my favorite wordings of God's Covenant promise: "But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations;" God grants us this privilege and asks us to love Him and keep His commandments. Our children see that love and obedience and learn from it. The students at Eastside are witness

to this love everyday at school. I was witness to it as a student at Eastside but could not fully appreciate it until more recently.

There is something unique and wonderful about a small parental school. Our children get to see their parents involved in their education, whether it be classroom volunteering, recess monitoring, fundraising, committees or any other involvement. They see that this school is important to us as parents and supporters. They may not understand it yet, as I know I didn't at that time, but they will grow to understand. It joys me to see my children learning and playing with the children of my classmates at this school. It is encouraging to see that this school means so much to many others.

Starting my term as a board member I had no idea what I was getting into. I think it may have been one of the most unique years this school has seen with the onset of a global pandemic. Eastside's size made it more adaptable to the situation. Eastside's faculty and parents made it possible. It is so wonderful to see God's hand in a situation like that. Many hours were spent to deal with the mandates set by the state, and still more debating whether or not we were called to comply or as a private Christian school if we could refuse. I am thankful for those meetings and the knowledge and growth I gained from them. Opinions often varied, but we had the advantage of working toward a common goal: Nurturing covenant children to reflect the mind of Christ.

I am thankful to the association that elected me for giving me this opportunity. I am grateful for the board members past and present that started this school and have kept it going. I look forward to serving this school again in the future as a board member if it be God's will.

CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA CONCERT

The Eastside Choir and Orchestra concert was held Tuesday evening, December 13. Students in grades 4-8 all participated in choir (38 total students), and the 29 fifth-eighth graders played in the orchestra. It was an enjoyable evening of Christmas and classical music!





OUR VOLUNTEERS AND SUBSTITUTES

By Debbie Baldwin

One thing that the last few years have highlighted to the staff is how thankful we are for our regular volunteers and substitute staff. Eastside is blessed to have a good sized pool of Eastside parents and former Eastside parents who are willing to put their education and skills to use for our school.

The majority of the school volunteers and substitutes are utilized in the lower classroom. In fact, there is a team that has a hand in educating the 1st and 2nd graders - all under the careful lead and consistent watch of Anita Haak. The move to a combined 1st/2nd grade classroom three years ago created a need for additional dedicated, quality teacher aides who can manage a group of students independently. Heidi Van Baren, who has aided in the 1st grade classroom for years, stepped up to help, along with Lori Pastoor. Heidi and Lori are instrumental in making our multi-grade classroom set up work effectively. With our larger class sizes, some subjects need to be taught separately (and in a separate space) to each grade for most effective learning and to keep classroom order. Heidi works four mornings a week, mostly with the second graders on math, spelling, and reading. She also teaches IEW to first grade and keyboarding to grades 1-4. Lori Pastoor works with the second grade on Fridays, and also comes in at other points on the week to teach music to PreK-3rd.

Anne Miedema is at Eastside two days a week working as the Special Needs Coordinator, but also helps with AIMSWeb testing and the A-Z Reading program in the lower grades. She is also quick to fill in for the 1st and 2nd grades as needs arise. Anne has a good handle on the needs of this age group, as she was the former Eastside 1st grade teacher.

Because of the number of teachers and staff involved in the education of the lower grades, there also has been a fairly consistent need for substitute teachers in these grades. Our substitute teachers were invaluable these last few years as varying events and illnesses providentially kept teachers and staff away from the classroom, sometimes for weeks at a time; COVID, losing a spouse, need for surgery, etc.

We are thankful to have four Eastside moms who are former teachers, and who have been filling in as substitutes these past few years. Kristin Kleyn, Liz Thompson, Abby Thompson and Lael Griess have all been willing to rearrange their schedules to cover classrooms as needed. At a time when substitute teachers are scarce, the school has been able to consistently keep classrooms open due to the help of these four Eastside moms. They have stepped up not just to fill in as teachers on short notice, but also

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REFORMATION DAY FEAST



The Reformation Day book challenge and feast was a highlight around Eastside this past October. Sponsored by the Library Committee, the challenge was for students in grades 3-8 to read a book on a Reformer and then write a report on the book. All students who completed the challenge were treated to a German feast on Reformation Day, consisting of brats, soft pretzels, streussel cakes, apple cider, and more.

watch each other's kids when one of them is substituting in the classroom. To Kristin, Liz, Abby and Lael - thank you! We know the mornings are early and hectic, and getting to school ready to teach is difficult, but we really appreciate your work and help!

Despite the number of people involved in the 1st and 2nd grade classroom, the staff does a tremendous job of keeping consistency and continuity in the classroom. Heidi and Lori work closely with Anita, and all four of the substitutes have children in the lower grades, so they not only know the students but are familiar with the daily routine that Anita has set for the kids.

In the upper grades, Jill Hop volunteers for two mornings each week, helping tutor the 5th-8th graders in math. Andy Kuiper is responsible for teaching multiple math lessons to multiple grades in one class period, and so Jill's help has been invaluable for assisting students who are struggling or students who just need a question answered.

We are thankful for the work and dedication of these women to serve Eastside with their time and talents. *1 Peter 4:10 "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

WINTER FUNDRAISERS

Our winter fundraisers were a big success! The 7th and 8th graders raised \$1700 with their TakeOut Pizza night on February 4, and the money will go towards their class trip and class gifts. Our largest fundraiser of the year - the online auction - was held February 8 and raised \$15,000 for our playground and school. The school would like to thank the many people involved in the auction fundraiser - the committee (Kristen Schimmel, Nicky Pastoor, Andrea Ver Strate), the many individuals and businesses who donated to our auction, and the people from inside and outside the immediate Eastside community who bid generously. We appreciate your work and support!

COMBINED CHAPEL | REDEEMER CHRISTIAN

Eastside had the pleasure of visiting Redeemer Christian School in November for a combined Thanksgiving chapel. Hope PR School provided one of their buses to transport many of the Eastside students, which was a huge hit with the student body. After touring Redeemer School and gathering for chapel, Redeemer treated students and staff from both schools with a full Thanksgiving meal! Their generosity and hospitality was truly appreciated, and for the first time ever, Eastside students felt like they were from the "big school." Students and staff from Redeemer will come to Eastside in March for another combined chapel.

