



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

MR. JIM HOLSTEGE

“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” (Proverbs 27:1).

Our all wise, and tender Father has placed us in His special classroom these past weeks and months to instruct us about His will. As our teacher, He has not needed to use packets, or Zoom, or Google Classroom. He has not found it necessary to employ the many amazing online tools available in our tech savvy society. Rather, He has brought us before His Word. He has provided us powerful teaching tools - visuals - to assist us in gaining a deeper understanding. A marvelous blessing it is, to be seated in this classroom!

God's will. Now here is a subject that comes with a heavy curriculum. Let's take a short glimpse at some of its scope.

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” (Isaiah 46:9-10).

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” (Revelation 4:11).

“The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will.” (Proverbs 21:1).

What is God teaching us? He is certainly reminding us that His ways are so much higher than our ways. That He relies on no one to accomplish His will. He is teaching us about the futility of our own wills, and the uncertainty of our own plans. Suddenly, our schedules and calendars carry a renewed meaning. This is something we have learned before, right? Is this a refresher course?

“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” (James 4:14-15).

Our Teacher Sovereign also instructs us regarding another aspect of His will.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:15-17).

“Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” (Philippians 2:2-4).

Sometimes the teacher brings out the practical application of a lesson by means of a lab or a field trip...something visual and hands on. Our Lord has always instructed us to dwell with one another in love. He has taught us to place all our trust in Him. These lessons have been put to the practical test, have they not? Are we getting high grades? A passing grade? I believe that by His grace, we are!

Much good has come from this experience. As parents, we have gained an insight into our children's learning and their learning capabilities. As teachers and students, we have discovered technology and modern tools that are most helpful, even when we return to normalcy. We have experienced the flexibility advantages of being a small school. We have grown together and in our appreciation for one another!

From my lone perspective, as I reflect on this year now complete, I am thankful. God has tested us, and has taught us many things about ourselves, about our own families, and about our school family. Words such as priority, devotion, and dedication come to mind. Other words such as harmony, cooperation, and support. Still others, such as patience, contentment, and understanding. God has also taught us about Himself, that His grace is sufficient and new every morning. How great is His faithfulness!

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” (1 Peter 5:7).



EASTSIDE ASSOCIATION SCHOOL BOARD SECRETARY REPORT

BRIAN BALDWIN

As we approach the end of another year of instruction and look ahead to the next season, we must again confess God's faithfulness to us. And perhaps more than any year in recent memory, we still say this with confidence. At the beginning of the school year, we had decided on a theme: **What is your 2020 vision? "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law (Psalm 119:18)."** Yet in God's providence, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted, up-ended, and altered our own visions beyond anything we would have anticipated. Its effects have spread and impacted our personal lives, church life, work and of course also our school. But we are assured that these events will ultimately be for our good.

Our teachers and staff were quick to take action upon first learning of our Governor's executive orders to shut down schools for three weeks. Take-home packets consisting of lesson plans and assignments were assembled by each teacher for parents to pick-up on Monday. Following this, the Board, Teachers, Staff, Education and Technology Committees developed some preliminary plans for remote learning to cover this three-week shut-down period. Education would be done in the home via the physical take-home packets each week, plus a mix of remote learning technologies including Google Classroom, video conferencing/recording, IXL, and other online tools. Eventually, the order came to extend the shut-down for the duration of the school year, which for Eastside will come to a completion on May 22nd.

From a financial standpoint, all teachers and staff will be compensated their normal wages as planned for in the budget. Families were thus advised to continue making tuition payments as normal, and the Operating Fund Drive would remain as well. The mandated school shut-down has additionally impacted other events which we often take for granted. Field trips and concerts would have to be cancelled or at best postponed. The annual graduation ceremony became a question and decision yet to make. Spring Break however remained as scheduled, giving our families and teaching staff some much-needed time off.

This all has come with a steep learning curve, and several adjustments have been needed along the way. Communication and transparency amongst all those impacted throughout this process has been a key component. We express our deepest appreciation to all the teachers, staff and parents who have patiently and willingly adapted for the unusual circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The other big event of this past school year has been long-range planning. We are happy to report that Eastside has experienced steady growth and Lord-willing will continue to grow in the coming years. This year sixty-three students are currently enrolled at Eastside representing twenty-three families, and next year we anticipate as many as sixty-eight enrolled students. This brings a new set of unique but welcomed challenges to work through, including consideration for staffing, physical space and financial needs.

Therefore the Board has determined for next school year to split up the classrooms into two grades each: Pre-K and Kindergarten (Mrs. Hulst), 1st and 2nd (Mrs. Haak), 3rd and 4th (Mrs. Thompson), 5th and 6th (Mr. DeVries), 7th and 8th (Mr. Kuiper). This may result in reduced workload for some teachers yet add more for others. The Board hopes this configuration will evenly spread out everyone's duties without having to create a new classroom. We appreciate the flexibility of all our teaching staff for making this a viable option. With that said, there will be a need to hire at least one classroom aide for the upcoming school year.

Physical space in the building will also need to be put to its most efficient use. Adding on to the building is not yet seen as needed, thus creative use of our existing spaces will be the solution. Additional lockers, desks, and storage solutions are also being looked into.

The Board is happy to report our faculty and staff continue to exhibit enthusiasm and dedication in all of their labors. It is always apparent that Eastside's mission to nurture and educate our covenant children to reflect the mind of Christ is being applied each day.

Mr. Jim Holstege has transitioned nicely into his dual role as Principal and Director of Development. Jim has taken on this new Principal role with much devotion and has proven himself to be a capable leader. This transition has officially alleviated the Principal duties for Mr. Pete Adams, a long-time champion and face of Eastside for so many years. We cannot express enough thanks to Pete for all his dedication and positive impact upon so many of our students.

Mrs. Lydya Hulst continues to take on the Pre-K and Kindergarten teaching duties, effectively laying a solid foundation for years to come. This classroom is again filled with many students, pointing to further long-term growth for the school. Lydya demonstrates

every day her commitment and great ability to make these early years a wonderful experience for new students and parents.

Mrs. Anita Haak's 1st grade class focuses especially on the fundamentals such as reading, math, and Bible lessons. As a seasoned and well-experienced teacher, Anita's caring and disciplined approach has proven itself effective during her time at Eastside. We appreciate her ability to prepare all her students for advancing to the next grades.

Mrs. Kristi Thompson stays very busy with teaching and managing both the 2nd and 3rd grades. One of our longest-standing teachers, Kristi continues to be respected and loved by her students and exhibits a passion for education. The creative environment she designs each year in her classroom is a great help to making each year memorable for the students.

Mr. Tyler DeVries as 4th, 5th and 6th grade teacher has perhaps the biggest challenge. This is not only a large classroom with more students than most, but also covers a wider range of grades. Tyler is in his first full year at Eastside, having taken on this position upon Mrs. Amanda Klamer's departure mid-way through last year. As still the newest teacher, Tyler is acclimating himself well into Eastside and all the demands of teaching a multi-grade classroom. His effectiveness in teaching a variety of subjects for so many students during these important and formative years is very much appreciated.

Mr. Andy Kuiper is once again teaching both the 7th and 8th grades. His sincerity and energy shows itself in how he instructs each day, and the students enjoy having him as their teacher. Also appreciated is his assistance with robotics, technology needs, and other areas of the school. Most importantly, Andy effectively prepares all his students for the transition to high school.

Orchestra has been taught again by Mr. and Mrs. Eric and Crista Phelps, and Choir by Mrs. Michelle Pipe. Music instruction at Eastside has been one of our niche strengths over the years, and we are thankful that this has continued. Although some of this year's concerts have been cancelled, we look forward to when we can again hear the students perform and sing what they have learned. Mrs. Kim Kuiper has again very capably taken on Art instruction for the students, keeping them busy with many creative projects. We are grateful for the enrichment this adds to student life at the school.

Eastside would not be where it is today without the help of our long-time volunteers. Mrs. Anne Miedema and Heidi VanBaren have always found ways to be helpful in the classroom, managing some of the day to day activities, and facilitating much of the online testing.

Mrs. Karen Ophoff continues as school secretary, taking ownership of any number of miscellaneous tasks. Of significant note, this also includes tutoring and management of our school library. We acknowledge all the good work she does each day and for being a friendly face at the school. Mr. Tim Thompson has been filling the role of janitor, helping with maintenance of the facilities where needed. We appreciate all the years of service he has dedicated to the school.

It should always be remembered that our teachers and staff often take on other work outside their normal classroom duties. So we recognize all the extra gaps they fill in to make our small school function well. You may be certain it does not go unnoticed!

Under the direction of the Board, all our various committees have had a lot on their plate this past year. Ongoing maintenance of the building, addressing curriculum and staffing needs, implementing technology solutions, ensuring stable finances, and more. A special thanks also to our Promoters who has funded many special projects and other needs of the school. With that said, there is no shortage of opportunity to serve and volunteer. We are indebted to all those who have given of their time and resources, and encourage those who are perhaps seeking ways to contribute.

Financially, Eastside is in a stable position and has been provided for abundantly. The school is not burdened with debt, and we are in the midst of another successful Operating Fund Drive having so far received nearly the full amount of our \$135,000 stated goal. The ECS Foundation has been of great help, gifting significant funds to supplement the cost of operating the school. Additionally, the Foundation has again provided financial assistance to families via its tuition reimbursement program.

Overall, God's blessing upon Eastside continues to be clearly evident. We are very thankful to everyone involved in our Eastside community. Let us continue to pray for wisdom and guidance for this important calling and to the glory of His name.



CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA INSTRUCTOR BIOS

At Eastside we are very thankful for our four music teachers who provide instruction for our 4th-8th grade choir and orchestra programs. We have asked each instructor to write a short bio of his/her life, as their diverse backgrounds have led to a love of and desire to teach our students the proper role of music in the life of a Reformed believer.

MICHELLE PIPE | CHOIR TEACHER

I was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota to Ron and Carol Streyle. My love of music began at an early age. I began playing piano by ear at 3 years old and learned to play flute, piano and organ. We attended Doon Protestant Reformed Church in Doon, Iowa which was about an hour drive each way. We would eat lunch in the church basement and wait around until the afternoon service, which gave me many hours to play piano and organ! I attended Sioux Falls Christian from kindergarten thru 10th grade in a class of about 30 and



then Washington High School (the same school as Eric Phelps!) for my junior and senior year in a class of about 500! This is when my music life really began to develop! I accompanied the choirs and sang in the upper choir and a small ensemble choir where we traveled and performed throughout the state! I had the privilege of singing "Keep Your Lamps" in the All-State choir under the direction of Andre Thomas, who was also the composer. That was a moment I'll never forget! My senior year of high school I began working at Dakotabilities - a place similar to Hope Network here. This is where my desire to become an Occupational Therapist began. I was awarded both voice and piano scholarships to Augustana College, where I began my college career. My intent was to major in science and minor in music but to never really use that music degree, but here I am teaching choir for going on 8 years! God has blessed me with a loving husband Tyler and 5 wonderful children: Joshua who is going to school to be an electrician, Jordan who will be attending Grand Valley this fall for engineering, Marisa will be a sophomore at Covenant, Evan will be an 8th grader at Adams and Vanessa who will be in 6th grade at Adams this fall. God has placed many opportunities and people in my path throughout my life that has allowed me to use music to glorify Him. I look forward to the day that I can sing with your children again; I miss this time in choir dearly. I pray that your children develop a true love for singing God's praises.

SCHOOL FROM HOME - ONE WAY TO PASS THE TIME

Like was the case for many others in the West Michigan area, the Ice Bucket Challenge made the rounds in the Eastside community during the time of the stay-at-home order. Probably because life was moving at a slower pace for many of us, there were few in the Eastside community who escaped being nominated. Many were good sports and accepted the challenge to dump a bucket of cold water over their head and film it. Students (of course!) but also teachers, our Principal Jim Holsteg and Assistant Principal Pete Adams, parents, alumni parents, the minister, the retired minister, and even grandparents. It seemed like there was no limit on who one could nominate and still remain within the bounds of what was considered socially acceptable. The nominations eventually ran dry when the only remaining people within the Eastside community had either done a great job of hiding in the shadows unnoticed, or were the staunch no-nonsense types who were content to observe but felt no social obligation to take part in this "fun."



FINDING THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

My story starts in Cuba where I was born to missionary parents who were doing orphanage work. Cuban children were my playmates, so I spoke Spanish better than English at first. From an early age, I was interested in spiritual things.

When I was seven, my parents were asked to begin a new orphanage in neighboring Haiti. (By this time all my older siblings had left to attend boarding high school in Alberta, Canada.) I loved Haiti from the first. My new language was Creole, which I learned from my Haitian "brothers" that came into our orphanage. The orphanage was next to a larger mission compound with a missionary kids' school of about 18 students, grades 1 - 8. I attended there until enrolling in correspondence courses for 9th grade.

During those elementary years I read every book available and took piano lessons, playing for church at age 12. Running the controls of our mission radio station two evenings a week was a great experience. (All of the young teen missionary kids did this.)

At 14, I left for Alberta with my parents for their furlough year and began grade 10 at the Christian high school where my siblings had gone. That boarding school became my home a year later when my parents returned to Haiti. Favorite subjects (music, English, and French) received plenty of attention, whereas fear and dislike fueled my neglect of math and sciences. God had to teach me the hard way that running away from what is difficult has bad consequences.

There followed a second year of grade 12, living with an aunt and uncle in another part of Alberta. Then a ten-month practical nursing course made sense in order to be able to earn my way through Bible college and more music training. Upon graduating, I stayed on to teach piano half-time for the college and to complete my piano teacher's diploma from the Western Board of Music. More significantly, that diploma represented a huge lesson in my learning to trust God.

At this point I went to Haiti to fill in for the music secretary at the same radio station where I had worked as a teen. When the secretary did not return, I agreed to stay a second year. That year I married Robert (Pete) Adams, who worked in the engineering department. We had come to Haiti as "short-term" volunteers and now were asked to stay on as career missionaries for the radio station. But God had other plans.



Returning to the Washington, D.C. area after completing our two-year assignments, Peter and I worked for his mission organization for 3 months. Then God gave Pete teaching jobs in two Baptist Christian schools, and he began taking education courses at the University of Virginia.

My parents had retired in British Columbia. Peter's parents had moved to California. We decided we had better get to the west coast; and God opened a job for Pete at another Baptist school in Sequim, Washington. It was there that God caused us to hear the radio broadcast of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church. Growing spiritual hunger, prayer, reading Reformed theology, and listening to sermon tapes brought us to the point where we knew we had to move to attend that church for ourselves and for our two-year-old daughter.

At last in Lynden, we could soak in the Reformed teaching and grow in our understanding of the truth. How we praise God for directing our paths to find this pearl of great price!

Seventeen years later, we and three daughters moved again - this time to Grand Rapids, Michigan so Pete could teach at Eastside Christian School which was just opening its doors. It has been wonderful for our family to be able to belong to Eastside from its beginning and to work shoulder-to-shoulder with many others to serve God here. A special gift to me from the Lord has been the opportunity to accompany our choir. I have enjoyed and profited from this so much. All glory be to our sovereign God. He has done great things for us, and we are glad!

CRISTA PHELPS | ORCHESTRA TEACHER

I was born in Edgerton, Minnesota as the fifth child to Rev. James and Joan Slopsema. When I was almost four years old, my family moved to Randolph, Wisconsin, where we stayed for four years. Although I don't remember Edgerton, some of my best childhood memories came from Randolph. Randolph is a small, Midwest town where life moves at an easy pace. There was lots of time for socializing, exploring the neighborhood, and riding bikes to the community pool in the summer.

Halfway through second grade, my family moved to Hope PR Church in Walker. Our family attended Hope School, which was right next to our house. During these childhood years, one of my main activities was playing our old, upright piano. It was an ongoing fight among my sisters over whose turn it was to play the piano. We all loved music and piano, even though most of us never took any kind of formal piano lessons.

In 5th grade, I started playing the clarinet in our school band. Band was, by far, my favorite class ever. I was always thankful for Mr. Andy Kamper, our patient and kind band teacher. I looked forward to band all day and was always sad when the class was finished.

In tenth grade, my family moved to First PRC. This move was a smaller move than my previous moves (from Walker to SE Grand Rapids, where First Church's parsonage was located at the time). After a few short years, I was a student at Grand Valley State University, hoping to study music. However, one cannot just declare him/herself a music major; there is an audition process where one must prove a background in music and a certain amount of music training and competency. This is where my lack of teacher-directed training was a problem; and I had no idea where to start my training.

Providentially, shortly after my family moved to First PRC, Pete and Marilyn Adams arrived to teach at Eastside Christian School. Marilyn, an experienced piano teacher, agreed to take me on as a piano student. I took lessons for about 1.5 years from Marilyn, and in that time, she whipped me into shape. I learned how to hold my arms, hands, and shoulders while playing. I learned scales, arpeggios, and music theory. Marilyn's strength of meticulousness in piano techniques and theory was a perfect complement to the skill set I had developed on my own.

After one year of taking prerequisite college courses, I auditioned for the music program and was happy to be accepted as a music major. I considered piano to be my secondary instrument, with my primary instrument being clarinet.

Studying music at GVSU was an exciting, stimulating, sometimes overwhelming time for me. I began as a Music Education major but, after a couple years, I switched to a Bachelor of Arts in Music so I could focus on composition.

Composing music in college was such an exciting adventure for me. One amazing part of composing in a college music program is that there is an unlimited number of trained musicians available to perform your music! Essentially, I could select whichever musician or group of musicians whose playing I liked, ask them if they would be willing to perform a piece I'd written for them (the answer was always yes!), and get started writing. The sky was the limit and I learned there were few things that were quite as thrilling as creating a whole piece of music, working to perfect it with the musicians, and hearing the performance. (One of my favorite parts of teaching music at Eastside is our composition project; the students are able to experience the same thrill of creating a piece of music and hearing the orchestra perform it.)

I had many good friends in GVSU's music department, both students and professors. And I felt that they were like family to me, in many ways. However, the longer I studied music with them, the more I felt the emptiness of being the sole Reformed Christian in the group. It was around this time that I met my husband, Eric, at a young adults' retreat in Wyckoff, New Jersey. It was very exciting for me to meet someone who had devoted his life to study classical music but was also a solidly Reformed Christian. We ended up dating for two years and getting married in 2003.

Since we met, Eric and I have spent a lot of time working together on different music projects. At first, our main musical interaction was being a cello/piano duo. We performed for events like weddings, parties, and church functions and made recordings of music I had written. Being together working on music is one of our favorite ways to spend our time.



Although I loved writing and performing music, I had never really seriously considered being an educator. This changed when, in 2009, Hope PR School reached out to Eric to ask him to teach their bands. Eric accepted and taught for two years at Hope School, and I (having been a band student and having taken music education courses at Grand Valley), helped him in this endeavour. This experience, as well as having our own children, sparked a desire to help others develop in the same musical principles that I had learned.

In 2012, Eric and I were involved in founding an extra-curricular orchestra comprised of students from all of the area PR schools (Protestant Reformed Student Orchestra - PRSO). This orchestra just finished its 8th season; it's very rewarding to see the growth in the students and the group each season, including expanding our outreach performances and collaborations with the Covenant Choirs. In January of 2014, Eastside began offering orchestra with Eric as the teacher (I have worked with Eric as an aide since then). We both love being able to use our training to be able to work with the orchestra students. It is clear that God directed our paths in each and every aspect of our lives.

Most of Eric's and my music education was from secular sources. We have gained a lot of musical knowledge, and this education was amazing in so many ways. However, we have spent a lot of time and energy working to develop a solid, Reformed view of music and how we, as professing Christians, should use it. We have a strong desire to use our education to influence children and young people, while promoting a spiritual, God-centered focus. And, we believe that developing a healthy, informed view of music is very important in the life of a believer. Our goal in all of our teaching of music is to set up each student with the ability to use music that is intellectually stimulating, and also glorifying to our God.

ERIC PHELPS | ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

I was born in Omaha, Nebraska. My father was a Presbyterian (USA) pastor of a small church in Essex, Iowa at the time. I was the middle child between one older brother, and one younger sister. Our mother primarily stayed home with us, but was trained as a teacher and did have teaching jobs during certain periods of my childhood.



While I was still small, we moved to Langdon, North Dakota near the Canadian border. I have memories of my brother and I taking turns riding in the basket on our father's bicycle as he rode us around the block near our house - the gravelly sound of the bicycle tires turning over the road. For some reason that memory always stays with me, along with memories related to the winters when we would get snow drifts that would go all the way up to the top of the garage!

Derby, Kansas, a small town near Wichita, was where we moved next. It was here that I spent all of my years of elementary school, and where I discovered the cello and began to play. The public elementary school we attended started band and orchestra in 5th grade. My brother was one year ahead of me in school. When it came time for him to be able to try out and pick an instrument to learn, I was still in 4th grade. I followed along and made my own assessments. When I saw the cello, I knew right away what instrument I would choose when my turn came around. The next year I began playing the cello in the school orchestra program.

After I finished 6th grade we moved to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I attended Edison Junior High and Washington High School. For those that know Sioux Falls, my class ('92) was the last class to graduate from the old Washington HS building. There were many opportunities in music for me while in Sioux Falls. During these years I primarily took cello lessons from the professor of cello at the University of SD, Vermillion. We would make the hour trip for lessons every week. I am thankful that my parents were willing to put in that kind of effort to support my cello studies. Orchestra class and time with my cello was where I felt most at home during these years of school. It was in high school that I taught my first cello lessons to a classmate during lunch period (off the record). I was always a member of the Jr. High and HS school orchestras, but I was also a member of Sioux Empire Youth Symphony, and selected by audition to participate in the SD All-State and Honors Orchestras.

There were several paid orchestra job opportunities in the region for me to participate in as well. This included the professional orchestra in Sioux Falls, the South Dakota Symphony, which I auditioned to become a member of in 9th grade, and was a member from grades 9-12.

My family and I both left Sioux Falls after I graduated from HS. They spent some time in California then moved to Manistique, MI, and I went to the Oberlin Conservatory of Music to begin my years of college training in Cello Performance. After earning my undergraduate degree I pursued and completed graduate work at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where I was a Teaching Assistant to the cello professor, and the Mannes College of Music in New York City.

Throughout the course of my education, I had many wonderful musical experiences as a student, performer and a teacher. I was able to attend music festivals during the summer months, including many summers at the Aspen Music Festival and School in Aspen, Colorado. Aspen has a special spot in my life for its beauty and for the quality of musical experiences I had there. I was able to live and learn in the mountains with highly dedicated, talented and internationally recognized musicians much better than myself. This was a great opportunity for growth for me. I studied under and observed teachers and guest artists that I would not normally have had access to as a student. It is here, too, that I had most of my exposure to performing under well known conductors, which did much to form my understanding of the relationship between musician, ensemble, and conductor. For some of my summers in Aspen, I also worked at the T-Lazy-7 Ranch as a ranch hand. It was while working at the ranch that I met a guest staying at the ranch who turned out to be the owner of an instrument making shop in Chicago, which led to an opportunity to obtain the cello that I still play on today. Equally important to my growth as a musician and seeing other ways of approaching music, though shorter and less frequent, were the festivals in Canada, Germany, France, and Austria I participated in during my later years of development. I love the food and coffee from all of these places too, of course.

I first attended a Protestant Reformed Church while a graduate student at CU, Boulder. By this time in my life I had a desire for Calvinistic and Reformed teaching, which I was having a hard time finding in a church. My search led to the website of the PR Church in Loveland, CO. Rev. Gise VanBaren was the pastor at the time. I joined the PR church in Loveland, CO shortly before he retired. When I moved to continue my studies in New York City, I was a member of the PR church in Wyckoff, NJ. Rev. Martin VanderWal was the pastor at the time. It was during this time in New Jersey that I first met my wife, Crista, at a PR Young Adults Retreat.

I had a great uncle who was concertmaster (first violin) of the Grand Rapids Symphony for a time. While growing up, I remember coming to Grand Rapids to visit him and my great aunt, but it never crossed my mind that I would live here myself. I moved to Grand Rapids, MI when I got married to Crista in 2003. She, like her family, was already a member of First PRC at the time. I joined First PRC as well, and that is where we have stayed since then. We now have 5 children who do or will attend Eastside Christian School. Our oldest daughter will be going to Covenant Christian High School next year! Wow, time flies.

There would have been many obstacles for me to overcome to follow through with my plans to become a professional cellist full-time. Besides the highly competitive audition process and Sunday performance issues, I would likely have had to move away from the PR churches for the job. For a time I did look for jobs that might work with church and family life, but doors did not open for this to come together for me. I have worked full-time at Meyer Music since 2004. I started teaching cello lessons there part-time when I moved to Grand Rapids in 2003. My current position is as an Educational Representative servicing orchestra programs and teachers throughout West Michigan. I am a former member of West Michigan Symphony in Muskegon, and a substitute cellist for Grand Rapids Symphony. These days most of my time making music is spent performing with Crista or directing student string groups from Eastside or the PRSO (Protestant Reformed Student Orchestra).

Being able to incorporate my training in music into my family life and the church community has been very rewarding for me, and I am grateful for the support I have been shown by others in this work. I look forward to all the concerts and programs we work hard to put together. This spring, the Eastside Orchestra missed sharing our music with all of you at our annual All-School Program. How disappointing! I can't wait for the opportunity for us to play for all of you again next year, D.V.



SKI TRIP | 4TH-8TH GRADES

Every year (weather permitting) the 4th-8th graders go to Cannonsburg Ski area for a day in January. Some of the 4th and 5th graders agreed to weigh in on their experience.

"On January 28 us 4th-8th grades went on a ski trip. There were some falls but we are all great! Some of us started on the bunny hill and moved on to more challenging hills, but others went right over jumps and skied very well. My (and I think alot of others') favorite was going fast and having fun! I hope the 8th graders had a great last ski trip." - **Leah Pastoor, 5th**

"I enjoyed taking the lessons to learn. But my favorite thing is the big hills that have the ski lifts and bring you up the hill you slide down a ramp and go zooming down the hill. I had a lot of fun. I went up with Leah and every time we got off and slid down the ramp our sticks woud get stuck! But it was fun. My dad came for the first half of the day, so I got to go down the Blue the first time and I wiped out twice on the way down and the ski went flying. We had a lot of fun and I am very excited to go next year!" - **Salem Griess, 5th**

WHAT I LIKED:

I liked talking with Mr. Holstege on the trip. - **Eric Phelps, 5th**

I liked when I almost rolled under a conveyor belt. - **Jimmy Whiteley, 4th**

I liked when I was racing Drew, and Drew went too fast and wiped out. I said, "Slow and steady wins the race." - **Tyler Tanis, 4th**

I liked when my dad did a yard sale. - **Seth Kleyn, 5th**

OTHER EXCITEMENT:

On my last go down I got air and landed it! - **Stephen Kuiper, 5th**

I lost count of how many times I wiped out. - **Simeon Griess, 5th**

When I went on the magic carpet it felt amazing. - **Eli Dykstra, 5th**



VETERANS' VISIT | 3RD GRADE ESSAYS



Elizabeth Kuiper: On Wednesday, January 29,2020 we had veterans come over to the third grade classroom. They gave us a dictionary and two bookmarks. They told us what they did in the war, and the dictionary had the longest word in the English language. It was 1,909 letters long! And it has American sign language, Braille, Roman Numerals from 1 to 100,000! There are maps of the world, and all the states were talked about in the USA! I was expecting all men, but two were women and four were men. I liked best that the dictionary had a lot of things.

Chloe Kuiper: Last Wednesday some veterans came to our 3rd grade class. They talked to us about dictionaries, and they gave us our own dictionary! It is a student dictionary. It has a lot of different kinds of languages, like sign language and Braille. It also tells about different planets. I think it is the coolest dictionary ever! It talks about different states in the United States. It even has the longest word in the English language. Using this dictionary, I was able to write my name in Braille. On the bottom of the Braille page is says, "There is a wonder in reading Braille that the sighted word will never know: to touch words and have them touch you back."

PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN FAVORITES

The pre-k and kindergarteners weighed in on what they like best about school.

KINDERGARTENERS:

Davis Schimmel - helping and being with my friends when they need help

Rhys Hayes - playing outside at recess

Owen Pols - prizes

Noah Tanis - inside recess

Carter Pastoor - coloring

Zeph Mahtani - playing games with friends

Caroline Monsma- prizes for reading

Lilee Verstrate- doing arts and crafts

Natalie Beckwith- doing a "bunch" of crafts

Remi Pipe- gym class

Alaina Pastoor- coloring

Mrs. Hulst - reading books, teaching and listening to the kids read

PRESCHOOL:

Charissa Griess - messy art!

Henry Kuiper - art

Ian Tanis - inside recess

Olivia Pastoor - Bible stories

Jenna Kleyn - letter crafts - turning each letter into an animal

Mrs. Hulst - messy art, reading books, calendar time and zoo phonics animal book



DRIVE-THRU GOODBYES

Instead of our usual year-end picnic, the last day of school looked a little different this year. The teachers held a drive-thru event for the students, where they turned in their books and were able to say goodbye for the summer.



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!

Graduation was held in the afternoon on Tuesday, June 2. To comply with the limits of the Stay-At-Home order, there were 10 people in attendance. The ceremony was live streamed for families and friends of the graduates and other interested supporters.

EXCERPT FROM GABRIELLE PHELPS'S SPEECH

"Mr. Kuiper, you prepared us for highschool. This might have been difficult considering you had to teach us Algebra, complicated science, and Latin. You also kept us updated on the latest politics, used corny dad and teacher jokes, and allowed us to have open discussions about things that are educational, spiritual or sometimes even random topics. Besides just teaching us educational things, you also led us spiritually and taught us how to become thinking, discerning individuals. I think I can say that was a goal for all the teachers that we've had.

... We have all had a positive experience at Eastside. We will definitely miss our little school even though we are looking forward to Covenant. We have all grown physically, academically, and most importantly, spiritually. We first came to Eastside as wide-eyed, little kindergarteners who were learning how to write letters and just beginning to read. Now we are 8th graders who still have room to grow, but have come a long way since we started school. I think we are all excited to go to high school." ...

EXCERPT FROM OWEN HAYES'S SPEECH

"Gabrielle, Tanner, and I are very happy and thankful to be here. We are especially thankful to God for putting many kind and helpful adults and students along our path. My parents and teachers have helped me learn and grow in many ways, but the biggest and most important way they helped me was by strengthening my faith and helping me grow closer to God.

First and foremost, I am very thankful to my parents for everything they have done. And that's a lot. They have put me through Christian schooling, taught me many life lessons, and helped me every time I needed it. They work hard every day to provide me with everything I need and still find time to do the things that they want to do. I am very grateful to the teachers we have had by our side for being very dedicated to their work. No matter how they did it, they all showed and continue to show their love for teaching and their love for students."

CLASS OF 2020 | TANNER, OWEN, GABRIELLE

