

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mr. Pete Adams

Each month I make a report to the board and include a summation of how things are going at Eastside from my perspective. People are the most important “things” that we have here, so I tackle that task by dividing them into 3 groups – students, parents, and staff.

Using some of the notes from our last meeting I described the student situation as “Overall, the student attitudes and behaviors are good. We are keeping our theme for the year (Joyfully United) before them in devotions and conversations.” And as a matter of fact, I needed to call a short informal assembly of the students just this past week to remind them of our theme and how that applies to break-time attitudes and actions. They could still recite our theme and Scriptural reference by heart, and received and understood what I was saying.

The parental side of things was presented this way: “Again, overall there has been positive feedback and attitudes. This viewpoint can be verified by the support given at Stop-n-Shop and other events. Also, Parent-Teacher conferences were well attended.”

One of my most positive interactions with a parent recently occurred when there was a forthright expression of displeasure to me (no anger) regarding a certain matter. After listening, I had to agree with the position of the parent. I learned a few things, and most importantly, even in a potentially negative interchange, we left on good terms, joyfully united.

Regarding the staff there was this: “We have positive attitudes amongst ourselves, with everyone willing to help out the other as needs arise.” This may come across as sugar-coating (I’m good at that) but I believe it is a fundamentally valid statement.

So, it is a great blessing to be able to say every month that things are going well, even when the unavoidable challenges and issues arise. Everyone is on the same page, or better, everyone is reading out of and applying the same Book.

Regards,  
Mr. Pete Adams

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## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Tim Hop

“Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war...” How often has this song echoed down the halls of Christian schools? In some ways, Christian schools are akin to boot camps for our little soldiers. We may not shave their heads, line them up for excruciating exercises, or scream at them, but boot camp is a fitting comparison nonetheless.

As Christians, we are constantly engaged in battle against the wickedness of the world. In order to survive, the modern world demands citizens be well taught in the various academic subjects. We must prepare our children for this battleground with weapons that are secure in Biblical truths. This is because science studied without acknowledging the Creator is a bent rifle that will

never have accuracy. History remembered without understanding our God’s sovereignty is a combat drill with no drill sergeant. Math examined without glorifying the Mastermind is a campaign with no banner to fly. Therefore, we must send our soldiers into the world with a battle cry that exemplifies the virtues of our Lord.

As a nation, twenty percent of everything we spend goes to our defense budget. How much of our own budgets are we willing to spend towards the training of our Christian soldiers? **Remember, this is a war that demands our support and a war in which we are guaranteed victory “with the cross of Jesus going on before.”**

## FACES OF EASTSIDE - PAST AND PRESENT

We are grateful for seventeen years of God's covenant faithfulness to our little school, and recognize that God has provided support from many people to make our school a possibility. In the next few newsletters we will hear from some of the teachers, volunteers and former students about their history, role or experience at Eastside.

### ONCE UPON A TIME

by Kristi Thompson | 2nd-3rd Grade Teacher

Once upon a time not too, too long ago on the 25th of June in a place not so very far away, a little baby girl was born in Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The third daughter born to Dr. John and Evelyn Peters, she and her two older sisters Cheryl and Debbie would be getting a baby brother John two years later. What follows are a few moments caught in time to illustrate the unfolding of God's plan for this little baby girl, Kristi Erin Peters, namely me.

I spent my first two years in the tiny mountain town of Norwood, Colorado. My family then moved to California for a little while and finally made our way back to Grand Rapids when I was six years old.

I grew up in the midst of a family who loved to laugh. One of the fondest memories I have of my mother, who passed away from cancer several years ago now, is her beautiful smile and ready laugh. As a child, I was a part of a large and caring extended family - lots of cousins, uncles, and aunts, and my strict but sweet Grandma Doezema. I have wonderful memories from my childhood - summers spent going to my cousins' cottage on Lake Michigan, yearly train trips to California to visit Grandpa and Grandma Peters in Monrovia, sliding down the steep hills at Mulick Park, summer birthday parties with cousins, riding bikes all over the place with my cousins Linda and Beth, getting sick after challenging my cousin Beth to see who could eat the most sour green apples, and so much more!

I have always loved music! When I entered 5th grade, my mom asked me if I would like to play in the school band. My mom thought I might like the clarinet, which was the instrument she had played in school, but when I saw the sleek, shiny silver flute, I was hooked, and there was no turning back. I took flute lessons from 5th grade through my two years of college, playing in the school bands and joining a flute choir while in college. I occasionally teach flute lessons and enjoy playing at home for fun and at special events.

I have been a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids since the first grade. I went to Adams Christian School from 1st - 9th grades and then to Covenant Christian High School.

After graduating from Covenant, I attended Calvin College for two years. My first thoughts were to go into nursing, then I became interested in special education and social work, but I finally decided to major in elementary education.

And then...

... A unique opportunity came along. A doctor I babysat for was just starting his practice, and he asked me if I would be interested in working for him as his assistant. Thoughts of my earlier nursing aspirations were resuscitated, and I jumped at the chance to go into the medical field. I spent the next 15 years working full-time, then part-time, and finally from my home for Dr. Barak, an ENT doctor.

In the meantime (my last year of high school actually), I met a handsome young man named Timothy Thompson, who swept me off my feet. Two years later, I married Tim, had four strapping boys, and accumulated more wonderful memories with my amazing husband and sons Tim, Kyle (now married to Rachel and going to college in Oregon), Jeff (now married to Abby, a first grade teacher at Heritage Christian), and Alex. We added our beloved Siberian husky Keisha, who passed away a few years ago, to our family in the late 1990's. Fond family memories include trips down to the Carolinas to visit Tim's family there - bless their hearts! - and many quick but long day-trips to Mackinaw Island to ride bikes around and through the island, piling everyone (often including my trooper of a mom) into the minivan and loading the bikes onto a small home-made trailer. Trips out West and especially to the Rocky Mountains in Colorado soon became a family favorite, and we traveled there quite often, managing to get at least a taste throughout the years of all four seasons in this amazing part of the country. Time was spent driving through the park to see the wild animals, skiing, hiking, playing ball at the city park. A current favorite activity is playing disc golf in the mountains. Tim and I and as many of our children who can, still go out to Estes Park about at least once a year, if possible.

I truly thought that my life would continue to be filled with children, the children Tim and I would have together. Being a wife and mother are two of the most wonderful gifts God has given to me. I hoped and prayed that Tim and I would have more children. God answered my prayers, but not at all in the way that I was

expecting. After being blessed with four healthy sons, Tim and I lost three babies to still births because of a rare blood disorder I have during pregnancy. I was deeply saddened by what I thought was God's answer to my prayer for children - a resounding and repeated, "No!"

#### And then...

...A wonderful opportunity came along. I received a phone call from my all-time favorite grade school teacher. Miss Ruth Dykstra needed an aid for her classroom. She had been assigned to teach a combined 2nd/3rd grade classroom of 30 students at Adams Christian School. She wondered if I would be interested in the position. It just so happened that my youngest son Alex was going to be in Miss Dykstra's second grade class that year. And so, my earlier aspiration to work with school children was reignited, and I jumped at the chance to aid in the classroom. It was amazing and exhausting and wonderful all at the same time.

#### And then...

...Yet another opportunity came along. Adams Christian School decided to sell their building. The association then voted to move the school to the west, and Eastside Christian School was born! I was the first employee of the school, hired to work as secretary and teacher aid. After working in this capacity for several years, my husband and others urged me to finish my schooling to become a teacher. And so, while continuing to work at the school, I began taking classes at Calvin College. Three years later, and with the much-appreciated support of my husband, family, friends, and administrator and staff at Eastside, I walked down the aisle as a college graduate. The following year I officially began my teaching career as the 6th/7th grade teacher at Eastside Christian School. I love what I do, and I am thankful to God for commending to me this joyful Kingdom work.

And the rest, as they say, is history. What is yet to come? I am content knowing that God knows and that His plans for me give me "Hope and a Future."

For I know the  
*Plans*  
I have for you,  
declares the *Lord*  
Plans to *Prosper* you  
and not to harm you  
Plans to give you  
*Hope and a Future*  
-Jeremiah 29:11



Double rainbow in Southwestern Colorado.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Save the date for **What Wondrous Love**, an Easter Concert featuring Eric & Crista Phelps (cello/piano) and Jared Langerak (organ), with Michelle Pipe (voice).

The concert, originally scheduled to take place in the spring of 2013, was cancelled last year due to pregnancy complications for the Phelps; after three months of bedrest for Crista, God provided a safe delivery of their daughter, Kate Annetta. So with gratitude, **the concert is rescheduled D.V. for Saturday, March 29 2014** at 7 pm at First PRC in Grand Rapids MI.

EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL PRESENTS

*What Wondrous Love*

COMMEMORATING THE PASSION, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION  
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



## BUILDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. Erin Windemuller**

**BREAKING NEWS!!!!!! The NEW Playground is up!!!!!!**

Two years ago the building committee saw a need for a new playground set for the growing and active children of Eastside Christian School. Through the Promoters fundraising group of Eastside, a playground committee was formed. They set out to come up with a plan for a new play area, and with money from the Promoters they set that plan in action. The old playground has stood since the school was established. It was still standing and served a purpose, but the new playground serves as a structure that allows all the children to be able to enjoy it all at once.

The new play structure came to us from a family that did not need it anymore, since their children were older and no longer played on it. It had to be removed from the old site and that site cleared. It was then transferred to the school where it sat for a year before the real work began.

The new area will be more useful and safe for the children. The committee and volunteers cleared trees to open up the area. The ground was then leveled and prepared for the play surface. Six inches of play mulch was spread to give the area plenty of cushion for the play structure and those who play around it. Finally the structure was erected and secured. The play set has swings, slides, and climbing structures. In the spring there will be new additions added, and the play set will be powerwashed and sealed to make it last many years to come. You may have noticed the blue picnic tables have been removed; they will be reset in another area to be used again.

In closing there were MANY volunteers who worked and lent their talents in various roles to make this a possibility. The playground committee consisted of Brad Pastoor, Erin Windemuller, Phil Kleyn, and Ben Kortz. Along with these men a large group showed up to help: Tom Barnhill, Bruce Miedema, Jim Schimmel, Vance Hayes (and his boys), Tom Newhof, Dan Monsma, Pete Adams, Theordes Angebay, Ryan Roth of Roth Construction, and if we missed your name we appreciate your willingness to help and give of your time.

**Below: Tom Barnhill and Erin Windemuller hard at work.**



**Many volunteers showed up on a cold, snowy Saturday morning to help finish the project.**



**The end result!**

## INDIAN PASTOR VISITS EASTSIDE

Mr. Bruce Miedema

Eastside Christian School had a very special visitor from Vellore, India at school on Monday, November 11. His name is Pastor Paulraj, and he spoke at a school assembly and then he was given a tour of the school and FPRC. While he was in Grand Rapids Paulraj visited all of the area PR schools to personally thank some of these schools for various ways they have given support to the Grace Foster Home orphans. Paulraj also observed well established clearly Reformed education in these schools. He often spoke about developing this type of Christian school education for the orphan children in Vellore.

Paulraj is the founder of the Reformed Christian Church of Vellore (RCCV). However, long before this, in the 1990s, Paulraj was befriended by Rev. Kortering through the Asian Reformed Theological Seminary (ARTS) and he was led by God's grace to the Reformed faith through this association. In 2001 Paulraj was married to Kashturi; they have a son and a daughter. (You can read more about Paulraj, Kashturi and their work in India in the student letter below and in links in the electronic version of this newsletter at the Eastside website. You can also visit the Georgetown PRC website and click on the India Mission link under Outreach).

Rev. Kortering introduced Paulraj to Georgetown PRC in 2007, helping to develop a relationship that has grown in amazing ways since. Every week Paulraj and Georgetown PRC pastor, elders, retired ministers and sometimes other guests engage in a 1.5 hr meeting via skype. The subjects discussed include Reformed doctrine, church polity, liturgy, and other helpful topics for a newly formed church and ordained pastor.

Paulraj was in Grand Rapids from November 8–18. In keeping with his level of energy, Paulraj was kept very busy. Along with visiting area PR schools Paulraj even taught a section on India at Covenant High School. Paulraj had lunch one day and spent that afternoon in classes and fellowship at the PR Seminary. He attended Bible Studies and Catechism classes and he attended one of the Georgetown PRC consistory meetings. He enjoyed breakfasts, dinners and suppers at the homes of many families joyfully receiving American cuisine and Christian hospitality. Paulraj was hosted by Rev. and Mrs Haak but spent little of his waking hours there. Paulraj was also part of seven committee meetings having to do with Grace Foster Home and India Mission related matters.

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### **EASTSIDE TIMES ARTICLE ABOUT PAULRAJ**

**By Olivia Miedema, 8th Grade**

There are about 1.2 million people in Vellore India. This crowded city is known for its large Christian Medical College and Hospital with 1400 beds and 20,000 students. It's also known for their Golden Hindu Temple. But in this big city, there is also a little Protestant Reformed Christian Orphanage called Grace Foster Home. It's run by Pastor Paulraj and his wife Kasthuri. With the help of our Protestant Reformed schools and churches in America, they provide a home and schooling for children who have no one else to care for them.

The Grace Foster Home has been in need of a building of their own. They have been constantly moving from rental building to rental building because of overcrowding. But there is a piece of land that they own called Eden which they are hoping to build their own orphanage building on someday.

We learned a lot about Pastor Paulraj's work in India and really enjoyed having him come talk to us. We have been reminded once again how well off we are and how thankful we must be for that. Our prayers are with Pastor Paulraj and God's people in Vellore, India.

**2013 Operating Fund Drive Update:** As of December 1st, we have received approximately \$26,000 in gifts and pledges towards our goal of \$110,000. We encourage you to continue to pray for the financial needs of Eastside and give as you are able. Your support of Christian education is sincerely appreciated.

## EXCITED FOR CHRISTMAS

Mrs. VanPutten's Class | Pre-K and Kindergarten

**What is your favorite thing about Christmas?**

**Levi Baldwin** - "To get presents"

**Isaiah Kortz** - "Putting the train around the Christmas tree"

**Eric Phelps** - "Eating candy"

**Bailey Dykstra** - "Putting the Christmas tree up"

**Vanessa Pipe** - "Building snowmen"

**Zechariah Byker** - "Putting up the Christmas tree, and putting ornaments on it"

**Chase VanPutten** - "Putting up the Christmas tree"

**Leah Pastoor** - "Making igloos and snowmen"

**Ethan Kleyn** - "The Christmas tree with all different kinds of ornaments"

**Trevor Hayes** - "Playing in the snow"

**Seth Kleyn** - "Decorating the Christmas tree"

**Simon Windemuller** - "The Christmas trees"

**Mrs. VanPutten** - "Spending time with her family, and singing songs about Christ's birth"

### Mrs. Thompson's Class | 2nd-3rd

#### Zoe – A Christmas Song

##### Christmas Is So Fun

Christmas is time for fun,  
for having presents.

But most important of all,

Jesus was born on Christmas Day!

Chorus: Christmas is the day that Jesus was born!

#### Gabrielle – Christmas Memories

Every year at Christmas my family goes to a party where my great-grandpa and great-grandma gave parents money so they can buy presents. After parents buy presents we go to the party. Then people put the presents in the middle. Then somebody (which is usually Grandpa) will say a letter out loud. Then anybody whose name starts with the letter that Grandpa calls out will go get a present. The present is always a surprise! There is no name tag on any of the presents.

But before presents and all those other fun stuff we say prayers and eat dinner – tacos, pop, and dessert. Then after all that stuff we trade presents, play, and then we go. But...Christmas is mostly about Jesus Christ who was born on this special holiday!

#### Tanner – Christmas Day and Christmas Break

On Christmas day, Jesus Christ was born. His mother was Mary and his father was Joseph. He was God's only son.

On Christmas day I am going to open all my presents, and then I'll play with them. And I will not trade them to my brothers. I will just trade them when I don't play with them at all.

After Christmas day, I am going to Traverse City, and Zoe is going, too. And we are going to a water park. And we are going sledding.

#### Owen – Christmas and Family

I like going with my dad to get presents for my family. It is very hard to choose what to get for them, and it is also hard to not rip open my presents before Christmas! I like having my cousins over at my house for Christmas. It is a lot of fun!

I especially like going to church and hearing the preacher preach about the birth of Jesus! And I like the glowing light on the Christmas tree and the ornaments on it!

#### Isaac Byker – A Thanksgiving Memory

One time, well, I was at my Grandma Byker's house for Thanksgiving. I went out sledding and snowboarding with my cousins Justis, Eligah, Jerad, Mary, JuJu, my brother Ben, and my sister Sammy, and we went on the snowboard really fast and crashed almost every time. We went backwards with two sleds. One time we did that and then I got a black eye when I did that. The end.

#### Christmas Haiku

Jesus Christ is born

Christmas is my favorite day

I love God so much

#### Eyael – Christmas Thoughts

Part 1: Christmas is fun! I'm not talking about presents, goodies, and snowball fights. I am talking about the love of Christ. He was born on Christmas day. You could hang out with your friends and families and sing carols, pick out a tree, and bake Christmas cookies.

Part 2: Santa is not true. Many people believe that he will stop by their houses with his reindeer and throw lots of presents inside their chimney.



## STRAIGHT FROM THE TIMES - 2nd and 3rd Grade Name Poems

After a few years hiatus, the junior high girls restarted publication of the *Eastside Times*, the school newspaper. Below is a submission from the 2nd and 3rd grade class for the Thanksgiving edition.

### Isaac

It means happy, funny  
It is the number 3  
It is like a bottle of ketchup  
It is digging a snow fort or tunnel  
It is the memory of my Grandma  
Who taught me to be graceful  
When she had chemo therapy  
My name is Isaac.  
It means God cares for me!

### Tanner

It means happy, smart, loving.  
It is the number 7.  
It is like the summer sky.  
It is digging tunnels in the sand.  
It is the memory of my dad,  
Who taught me to sit still during church,  
When he was giving me spankings.  
My name is Tanner.  
It means wonderful.

### Eyael Hailmariam

It means silly, awesome, cool  
It is the number 16  
It is a bright, big heart  
It is jumping in leaf piles  
It is the memory of my dad  
Who taught me math  
When I was sick  
My name is Eyael  
It means to be kind.

### Gabby

It means happy, smart, excited.  
It is the number 16.  
It is like the bright sun in the sky.  
It is hiking at the sanddunes.  
It is the memory of Grandma Phelps,  
who taught me to give hugs  
When she came to our house for the first time.  
My name is Gabrielle.  
It means to be Smart.  
It means to be kind.

### Zachary

It means adventure, happy, and smart  
It is the number 7012.  
It is like the deep ocean.  
It is visiting Grandma and Grandpa Brands.  
It is the memory of Frisky,  
Who taught me not to go near the road  
When she got run over.  
My name is Zachary.  
It means to be thankful.

### Zoe

It means funny, ticklish, tant trums  
It is like the number 14  
It is like a wild sea on a windy day  
It is going on a roller coaster at Michigan Adventure  
It is the memory of my dad  
Who taught me to be brave  
When he taught me to ride my bike by myself.  
My name is Zoe.  
It means trust in God.

### Owen

It means crazy, funny, awesome  
It is the number 7  
It is like a sunset on a summer night  
It is going camping at Buckley  
It is the memory of my dad and me  
Who taught me to golf  
When he took me out to A.J.  
My name is Owen  
It means I Love God!

### Isaac

It means cool, sporty, awesome.  
It is the number 17.  
It is like a fresh leaf on a tree,  
It is like riding on a roller coaster ride.  
It is the memory of my Great Grandpa,  
Who taught me to help out.  
When he helped out my Grandma  
My name is Isaac.  
It means to be kind.

## FROM THE 4TH-6TH GRADE

Mr. Mahtani's classroom took a trip to Lansing and visited the Michigan Historical Museum, the State Capitol, and Clara's Lansing Station.



Congratulations to Dave and Madri Mahtani, who welcomed a baby boy this fall. Zephaniah Jai joins older sisters Myra and Selah.

## TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**Mr. Brian Baldwin**

The technology committee has been working on a few upgrades for the school. Thanks to funds provided by the Promoters, we were able to install projectors in all the classrooms. The committee is also researching the possibility of tablets and how they can be used to enhance the educational experience of the students.

Another recent project is a new website for the school, which went live last month. The new website features a sleek, clean design that incorporates elements of bulletin board artwork taken from the halls of Eastside in past and present years. Check it out at [www.eastsidechr.org](http://www.eastsidechr.org) and see if you recognize anything!

## FACES OF EASTSIDE - PAST AND PRESENT

We are grateful for seventeen years of God's covenant faithfulness to our little school, and recognize that God has provided support from many people to make our school a possibility. In the next few newsletters we will hear from some of the teachers, volunteers and former students about their history, role or experience at Eastside.

### Joe Holstege - 2006 Graduate

When I received a call from an Eastside School Board member asking me to submit some comments on my education at Eastside School I thought the timing could not have been any more perfect. Just a few days preceding I had gone on a trip down memory lane that lasted an hour or two when my wife and I discovered and eagerly tore through a box of my old grade school things which had been preserved by my mother. It was truly thrilling to read through everything from papers to poems I had written for assignments, as well as the accompanying teacher's comments. After having attended college for several years, where it was rare for a class to begin with prayer, and God was more often the object of academic analysis or a God stripped of His holiness in the name of tolerance and love, it was refreshing to see the tender care my heart and mind had received in my earliest days to ground me in the sound truth of sovereign particular grace and the unconditional covenant established by Jehovah God. I will leave you with a prayer I was induced to write under the guidance of my teacher from grades 1-3, Ms. Ruth Dykstra, grammar and spelling mistakes included:

"O Lord, I pray thee! I love thy word I love thee and thy son. Thou art holy and thy sun. I love thee with all my harte. Thou created the earth and all that is in it O God of my selvaitain."

## FIRE SAFETY



The Pre-K and Kindergarten class donned red shirts for a trip to the Leonard Street fire station. They received fire safety instruction from a firefighter and toured the station.