

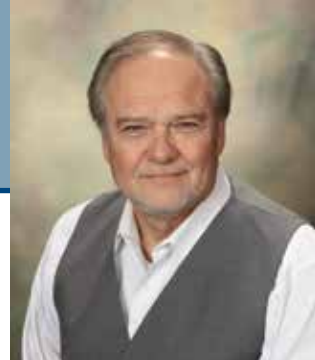
Winter 2021, Volume 33, Issue 1

The Crusader Chronicle



**An Unwavering
Mission**

WHITINSVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



New Captain, Same Mission

A mission statement is defined as an outline, in clear and concise terms, of the purpose for which an organization exists. The success of any organization is invariably tied to the relevance and power of its mission, coupled with the level to which the organization adheres to that mission in all that it does.

When Lee Ann and I were considering whether to come to WCS, we spent time reviewing the mission statement and gathering as much information as we could to determine if the school was shaped and directed by its adherence to the stated mission. Then we had to honestly determine if we could not only commit to the mission, but if I had the God-given abilities and experiences that would assist WCS in fulfilling its mission. When we and the WCS trustees independently came to the conclusion that my skillset and experiences fit the mission of WCS, it confirmed the sense of calling that Lee Ann and I were both feeling.

That was in December of 2019, before a virus began its worldwide travels. It was before societies were locked down, personal contacts were drastically curtailed, and every aspect of our lives was confronted with change. It was before in-person schooling was considered a potentially dangerous activity. It was before we had to greet each other with waves from six feet away and try to recognize one another with just our eyes showing. It was before many school traditions, family activities, and individual routines were dramatically altered and “Zoom” became a verb that began to control our daily lives.

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

-Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Yet, in spite of, and perhaps because of, the many changes confronting WCS, our commitment to our mission has not wavered. In fact, it has proven to be an anchor in a sea of change. Because we are committed to “nurturing the academic, spiritual, personal, social, creative, and physical development of students,” we have focused on retaining in-person instruction. It is increasingly clear that being present together is the most effective way to nurture our students in all of those areas.

Even as health and family issues have caused some unexpected individual departures in our staff here at WCS, our mission has provided clarity on the type of person necessary to successfully fill such openings, and God has provided wonderfully qualified and clearly called individuals to step into those roles. In my experience, when highly-qualified applicants are coming forward and expressing interest in our job openings, it is a strong confirmation from the Lord that we are moving forward within His will. It is always exciting to see God moving in the life of our school and in the lives of our faculty, staff, and students. I believe our situation has actually increased our students’ desires to dig deeper and search more diligently for spiritual truths and a more meaningful relationship with Jesus.

There are three important principles that are addressed in the last part of our mission statement. The first is a powerful acknowledgment that WCS operates “in cooperation” with our parents. The home-school-church partnership is at the heart of our educational model, it is fundamental, and it will never change. This year we heard our parents ask us to please find a way to remain physically open, while safeguarding the health of our WCS family. The Readiness Task Force was formed and our focus has been how to operate safely while retaining our in-person model.

The final two principles of the mission statement are profoundly related to each other. We are pledged to nurture our students so that they are prepared to provide Christ-like service, which in turn requires that they have knowledge and understanding of who Christ is and how it is possible to best know and emulate Him. That quest for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom permeates our curriculum and the lives of our teachers and administrative staff. Writing God’s wisdom on the hearts of each of our students is our daily passion.

Finally, we are committed to helping each of our students see our world as God’s world, created and sustained by Him for His purposes, just as we individually are. Our students must learn to see our entire world as part of God’s creation, fallen but still bearing the mark of its Creator for them to discover and ponder. Creating these lifelong learners and followers of Christ is at the heart of our mission as a school. Although we cannot guarantee the status of individual student hearts, the WCS leadership team and I can tell you that we will continue to work each day to equip our students to pursue and acquire God’s wisdom in their lives, wherever they should go and whatever career or vocation they should choose.

In His Service,
Rick Lukianuk, J.D.

THE MISSION OF
Whitinsville Christian School
IS TO

NURTURE **THE**

ACADEMIC **SOCIAL** **PERSONAL**
SPIRITUAL **PHYSICAL**
CREATIVE development

of students, in cooperation
with their parents, for
Christ-like service
in God's World

Published by Whitinsville
Christian School and the WCS
Advancement Office.

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Rick Lukianuk, Head of School,
Photo Courtesy of Jeff LaBonte
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The Crusader Chronicle

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An Enduring Mission

Erika (Anderson) Johnson (Class of 1996)
Parent, Host Parent, Alumna, and Trustee

I am proud to call Whitinsville Christian my first institutional love. The school has always been a part of my life in some form. I have vivid memories of taking the bus in kindergarten, Miss Tubergen's hug at the end of the long hallway, using one of the school's first computers for Miss Miller's 6th grade castle project, and the shenanigans of Spirit Week and decorating lockers (which in hindsight, was for sure a fire violation)! When oliebollen was being made during Homecoming, I had a flood of memories of collecting my change the night before the Country Fair and playing games with friends. It feels like yesterday! The smell of that yummy treat brought me back 30 years! The memories go on and on, and they are all tucked away deep inside, making me the person I am today.



Erika's 2nd grade school picture

Fast forward many, many years and here I am with children of my own in the school. I've been involved in various ways over the years and witnessed the steadfast support of Whitinsville Christian School. While no institution here on Earth could ever be perfect, I see the leadership unwavering in their commitment to furthering God's kingdom through teaching and instructing children. It is difficult. Mistakes are made. But Kingdom work is often about making mistakes and learning through them. I think anyone who is honest with themselves would realize that and the more invested you become, the



The Johnsons: Margaret, Harry Wang (international student), Ben, and Sam

more you realize that even as adults we are all students in the Kingdom. Learning, reaching, failing, succeeding

Another important aspect of Whitinsville Christian School is the commitment to its mission. Our mission states: *The mission of Whitinsville Christian School is to nurture the academic, spiritual, personal, social, creative and physical development of students, in cooperation with their parents, for Christ-like service in God's World.* We are steadfast in this mission. The Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty, and the staff all support the full development of children with this mission. Leadership within our school will come and go, but the mission does not. Styles change and personalities influence what the delivery looks like, but it is always the same.

It is so important to realize that while every decision may not be perfect, the leaders are God-fearing and striving to hold WCS true to its mission. It is our job to pray for WCS and to support our leadership. I, for one, am incredibly thankful to the Whitinsville Christian School community for loving me and for shaping who I am today.



Erika and Bryan Johnson (Class of 1995)

Members of the Nydam family, a four-generation legacy: Margaret, Erika, Ben, Caleb, Micah, Sam, Elizabeth, Gabe, Marilyn, Jean, and Jim



Guiding & Supporting

Erin Lowery-Corkran, PhD, Director of Guidance

It is easy to see how the WCS mission is implemented by teachers in the classroom. For these words to be more than a goal, to truly be a mission, they must be at the heart of the work done by the entire community.

The Whitinsville Christian High School Guidance Department is blessed to mentor and advise so many wonderful students each year, celebrating their unique gifts and talents. Through intentional efforts to get to know each student personally, we strive to help them develop these characteristics through class selection, career exploration, and the college search and application process.

Our relationship with students and families begins prior to enrollment in high school at WCS. We meet with 8th grade students three times during the second semester to ensure that they feel confident and ready for high school. After evening workshops with students and families to discuss all of the **academic** and **social** opportunities available to students at WCHS, we then meet individually with students to refine their schedules based on their interests, skills, and abilities. It is during these discussions that we begin to get to know students on a **personal** level to help them develop individualized plans for success. While we nurture their **academic** development, this is also the opportunity for us to learn more about their **personal** and **creative** gifts as we explore the variety of course and co-curricular options available throughout the high school journey. For some, a focus on visual and performing arts is a way to combine **personal** and **creative** passions, while others challenge themselves **academically** by enrolling in honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Classes that focus on **spiritual** and **physical** development are also required for all WCSH students.

We guide students as they research potential careers and college majors, providing valuable information used during individual guidance meetings as we consider their **personal**, **spiritual**, and **academic** development. As guidance counselors, we challenge students to think hard about God's plan for them, and how their relationship with Him will guide their future life decisions. During Career Day we welcome former WCS students and community members to discuss their own **academic** and career journeys, while also sharing how their **spiritual** development led them along various life and career paths. It is always fun to hear the stories of our former students and is one of our favorite Guidance events!

Career Day, March 10, 2020



Providing one-on-one counseling

The college application and selection process is a very personal process.

Our mission to partner with families is evident as we discuss personal, spiritual, and academic goals for college selection. We offer summer classes in essay writing and application support, both of which continue into the fall of the senior year as students complete the process. Even more importantly, our team collaborates closely with high school faculty to develop thoughtful and individualized recommendation letters that tell the story of each student's academic and personal achievements, as well as their spiritual and social development at WCS.



“As guidance counselors, we challenge students to think hard about God's plan for them, and how their relationship with Him will guide their future life decisions.”

The class of 2021 has had a challenging college search process. But despite the difficulties, these students rose to the challenge! We could not be more proud of the thoughtful, mature, and forward-thinking nature of the students in the class of 2021. Almost 70% of our seniors submitted at least one Early Action or Early Decision application and as of this writing, we've seen these students accepted to many of their first-choice colleges including Baylor University, Berklee College of Music, Brandeis University, Calvin University, College of the Holy Cross, Gordon College, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences, Providence College, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute!

As a Guidance Department, we begin our mission of supporting students before they become high school students and continue our relationships with them well beyond their college graduation. It is a blessing and an honor to work with so many bright, responsible, Christian leaders, and we look forward to inspiring minds and igniting hearts of all students throughout their WCSH experience.



The STEM of Academics

Miranda Osterman

If you Google “STEM,” the result will yield thousands of articles about the importance of STEM in education today.

STEM is an acronym for *science, technology, engineering, and math* - subjects critical in teaching 21st-century skills. For years, studies have shown that in order to be prepared for future careers, students need to be able to solve problems, find and use evidence, collaborate on projects, and think critically. According to the U. S. Department of Commerce, STEM occupations are growing at a rate of 17% annually, while other occupations are growing at a rate of 9.8% each year.

Education and curriculum are constantly changing, but our mission remains the same; we are preparing students for Christ-like service in God’s world. It is more important than ever that our children are prepared to bring knowledge and skills to solve problems, make sense of information, and know how to gather and evaluate evidence to make decisions.

To give just a few examples, third grade students learn about coding by first using paper and pencil to graph the code, then by coding actual games. Third graders also learn about body systems, adding them to a life-sized model of their own body. In fourth grade, students learn how to wire circuits with real-world



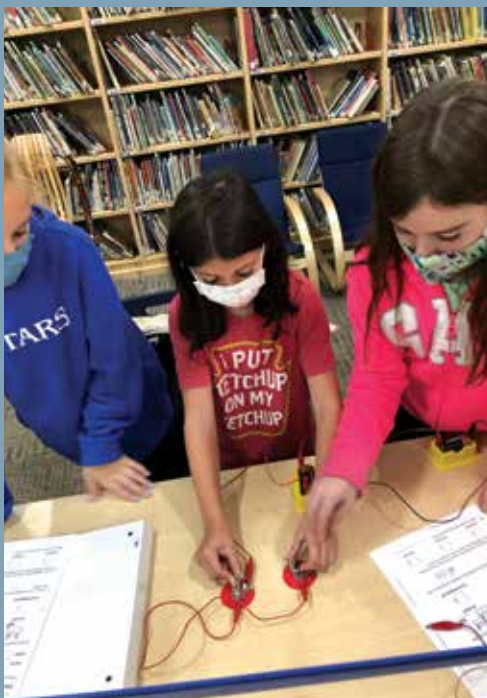
SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY
ENGINEERING
MATH

applications such as providing power to a light source. Through collaboration and trial and error, they learn to successfully wire parallel and series circuits.

These are the kinds of skills that students develop in science, technology, engineering, and math. If we want a nation where our future leaders, neighbors, and workers can understand and solve some of the complex challenges of today and tomorrow, and meet the demands of the dynamic and evolving workforce, then building students’ skills, content knowledge, and fluency in STEM fields is essential.

Our job as educators holds great responsibility. In the elementary years, we are exposing children to all types of learning and ideas and leading alongside God to help guide students to their inspired purpose. It is a complete joy to be exposing students to these skills and watching them grow. For many students, the subjects in STEM are what drives their passion for learning. I am beyond blessed to be a teacher who walks alongside this discovery.

nurture the
ACADEMIC





Student-Led Chapel

Nurturing the spiritual development of our students takes place in and out of the classrooms. Bible classes teach God's Word, morning devotionals teach students to apply Jesus's teachings in our lives, and chapels provide a time for students to gather together for worship. Chapels are student-led, with faculty guidance, through chapel committees, chapel-planning classes, and chapel bands. This year, elementary students continued to gather together for in-person chapel, while middle and high school students view chapel recordings from their lunchrooms.



Although some of the ways we participate have changed, chapel continues to be a time for **our students to live their faith, and share their love of God with each other.**



nurture the
SPIRITUAL

Nurturing the whole student requires that we go beyond providing an education. We must also help students see who God created them to be, and celebrate the uniqueness of others. This happens through building personal and social skills, a major focus for WCS's Health and Wellness Counselor, Emily Paharik, LMHC.



Relationships & Responsibility

Emily Paharik, LMHC

Social and emotional learning (SEL) may be a new phrase for many. SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

The five core competencies include:

- **Self-awareness:** Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.” Identify and achieve personal goals.
- **Self-management:** Effectively manage stress, recognize emotional triggers and utilize coping skills, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.
- **Social awareness:** Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- **Relationship skills:** Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed. Includes cooperation and teamwork.

- **Responsible decision-making:** Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.

There are many ways we build these skills within our students at WCS. Teaching these skills in an age-appropriate manner is key. This year our curriculum has seen a few modifications to address not only the emotional impacts of Covid-19, but also the safety and wellness protections implemented by the school.

Elementary students are taught to THINK in their words and actions. THINK stands for Thoughtful, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, and Kind. They learn about their own strengths, as well as the uniqueness of how God created each and every person. We teach skills such as appreciating diversity, demonstrating kindness and respect, resilience, character development, conflict resolution, coping, and calming techniques.

Middle school students work within leadership modules and focus on the core competencies of character building, resilience, and conflict resolution. They also discuss age-appropriate topics such as social groups and diversity.

High school students are utilizing Habitudes, a leadership curriculum by Tim Elmore. Habitudes combines images, relat-

able stories, and experiences into lessons that resonate with today's young adults, equipping them to navigate through life's challenges and opportunities. Through chapel, small groups, and the Habitudes curriculum, our high school students are developing the character they will need for Christ-like service in God's world.

I have felt privileged and blessed to have so much personal contact with many of our students in 1:1 meetings, small



Lunchroom friends stay connected on remote school days.

groups, and in the classrooms. I have noticed a tremendous amount of resilience, positivity, and enthusiasm from our students, our families, and our teachers and staff. In this year of extraordinary challenges, I am so grateful that WCS has many social and emotional learning skills training and leadership programs within each school.



nurture the PERSONAL & SOCIAL

Middle school students create bouncy balls as they learn about resilience.



Bravo

EXPLORING THE ARTS to Experience Life



"Oscar Mayer"



"Carol"



"Sonny and Cher"



"Rental Car"

"Bravo" was my first word spoken here at WCS as the new Director of Arts. At the end of the WCS Pops Concert on October 30, Rick Lukianuk introduced me as the new Director of Arts, and before I could thank Rick or say "hi" and introduce myself to the audience, I said "Bravo!"

Bravo! It had been almost a year since I had heard LIVE music in-person! Almost a year! I was so moved by the overwhelming talent and beautiful music on stage at the Pops concert, that it only felt natural to first congratulate the students and staff on their performance. Bravo to the talent! Bravo to the teachers and their dedication! Bravo to the staff for their diligence in planning a safe, in-person event. Bravo to our Lord for His protection!

"BRAVO" was also shouted at my computer screen after watching the High School Drama Club's pre-recorded 1970's *Variety Show*. Our Drama Club Director, Mary Dykstra, thought outside-the-

box, making it safe to have a drama production this fall. This Carol Burnett-style variety show with skits and retro TV commercials was unlike anything WCS had done in the past. It was so fun to watch, and Bravo to all involved.

Bravo! Because each week, each day, each class, each moment we can be together to share our gifts is a moment to be celebrated. Performers and audience members tend to think of a performance needing applause, but the victory this year is that each day we are able to nurture our God-given gifts. Here at WCS, we nurture the creative development of students, not because we expect them to become artists or perform their entire lives, but because it is how we connect with one another, crossing boundaries of age, language, race, and more. We connect through art to communicate, rejoice, grieve, relax, and to find beauty, empathy, compassion, goodness, love, comfort, peace, and His presence. We nurture our students' creativity so that they may experience life!

"Bravo" is how I began my journey as Director of Arts, and each and every day I give God the glory! Soli Deo Gloria!

Heather Rufo (Class of 1999)
Director of Arts



"As the Stomach Turns"

nurture the
CREATIVE

Crusader Athletics

While the Athletics program at WCS may appear to focus on nurturing the physical development aspect of our mission, being a Crusader develops the whole student - the central purpose of our mission. As the fall sports season wrapped, with several modifications to soccer, golf, and cross country practices, matches, and meets, Athletic Director Brady Bajema shared his gratitude.



I am thankful for our athletes here at Whitinsville Christian. In a season that was unlike any other, these athletes competed in a God-honoring way. I will never forget the examples of leadership, teamwork, positive mindsets, and overcoming adversity that were demonstrated by our athletes this season.

I am also grateful for a coaching staff that cares greatly for these student-athletes. Despite the challenges they faced this year as coaches, they dedicated themselves to making this season significant for these athletes. They showed up every day because they understand the importance of being a part of something greater than yourself.

I am convinced more than ever that sports play a significant role in the mission of this school. In a season where we had no district or state championships, I saw lessons being learned each and every day within our teams - lessons that will extend far beyond this season. I saw coaches teach the power of positive thinking on a daily basis, greeting their athletes every day with, "It's a great day to play soccer!" I observed senior captains refuse to allow younger teammates to hang their heads or point fingers when challenges arose. I witnessed multiple coaches encourage and teach a young cross country athlete how to respond the next time an opponent tried to block them in on the course. These are lessons that can't be taught in a classroom. They need to be experienced and felt. The 2020 season

will be remembered by our athletes and coaches, and I pray that what is learned through this season will continue to pay dividends years down the road.

I am hopeful for our athletes with seasons yet to come. I pray that there will be an opportunity to play the sports they love in a safe environment. The challenges that come with playing sports during a global pandemic are real. As Athletic Directors, I believe we owe it to our athletes to do everything we can to put safety plans in place and TRY. I became a teacher and coach because I had teachers and coaches that taught me to never shy away from a challenge. The challenges we have faced this year are unlike any challenges we have faced before, but the message I want to convey to our athletes is that no matter the challenge in front of us, we are going to attack it by praying, planning, preparing, and adjusting.

Brady Bajema (Class of 2006)
Athletic Director



nurture the
PHYSICAL

Welcoming our students back on campus for the 2020-2021 school year has required the dedication of faculty and staff, the hard work of our Task Force in developing a Health, Wellness, and Safety Plan, and the cooperation of our students and their parents and guardians. We have asked a lot of our families, and we are forever grateful for your sacrifices and your commitment to Christian education and WCS. Thank you for your grace, your prayers, and your words of encouragement.



These teachers are definitely a blessing to our children and their education! Their true love for what they do is especially shown during times like this.



Our school has educators, and an administration that love our children. They have been working so hard to keep our children healthy and safe.



We are so thankful for all the hard work and dedication the school has had during this time. All the behind-the-scenes preparation to make our children safe is amazing. Thank you!!!



This is truly a very special place for children to learn and grow.



My kids love being part of Whitinsville Christian School. God bless this school.



The kids are happy to arrive at school and come home happy with many stories of their days. Their minds are being inspired with their hearts ignited! They are thriving, and we are excited to be a part of this community and to see what the future holds!



God's ways are so much higher than ours. We have been so blessed by the education and more importantly the love of Jesus displayed by the staff at WCS over the years.

IN COOPERATION
WITH THEIR PARENTS

So many of our favorite events went virtual this year, including Homecoming and Giving Day. This allowed our Homecoming celebration to last all week, and include alumni from across the country. Through our Facebook page, our community shared images from past proms, athletic events, and performances. Since we could not host the WCS Apple Pie Fundraiser, we added the Paying it Forward element to Giving Day. WCS made the commitment to donate 10% of Giving Day proceeds to help our neighbors. We were honored to donate \$11,434, divided between the Northbridge Association of Churches Food Pantry and the Worcester County Food Bank.

HOME COMING 2020



The Princess Bride submitted by Rachael (Marino) England (Class of 2009)



Track and field 1990 submitted by Ruth (Wynja) Gibbons (Class of 1991)



WCS's first volleyball team submitted by Noralee (Van Dyke) Picotte (Class of 1986)



Presentation of gift to the Northbridge Association of Churches Food Pantry with Rick Lukianuk and Erika (Anderson) Johnson



Courtney Frazier (Class of 1997) and Marc Pitts (Class of 1999) at Choir Tour 1997



Godspell 2006 submitted by Amy Partridge (Class of 2006)



The Martinka family participated in our Virtual 5k



Elin Johnson (Class of 1998) at prom 1998



Youth hoops submitted by Nicole Wieggers (Class of 2014)



High school students decorated their lunch rooms

CHRIST-LIKE Service

The end result of our mission is Christ-like service in God's world. This happens in countless ways. From ordained ministry to volunteer work. From missionary work to the quiet counsel of a patient. There is no one path for fulfilling God's purpose for your life; telling the

Jennifer (Grosser) Layte (Class of 1990) followed her path to London and back. As oftentimes happens, that path was not as she had imagined, or planned. It was God's path. It had twists and turns and challenging passes. Through His grace, He never leaves us alone on those paths, and our relationship with Him can be made stronger for it.

After graduating from WCS, Jennifer studied at Wheaton College and earned her bachelor's degree in English. "I will say to English majors out there, it is a very practical degree," said Jennifer. "I use it all the time and I believe it helps me to better read the Bible. There is a difference between truth and fact, but it isn't as easy to parse the difference without knowing how to read for the truth." After graduating, Jennifer worked as a nanny for two years, "with the singular goal of paying off my student loans." In 1996, she moved to London as a missionary to refugees. "My parents were missionaries in Honduras when I was young and my grandparents were also very mission-minded, so that has always been part of the framework of my thinking. I had planned to settle there permanently, but in 2002, following the changes in the world after the events of 9/11 in the U.S., I felt called to return to the States. Unfortunately, once I returned, I felt God had dropped me here with no plan. I admittedly was angry with Him. I never left the church or renounced my faith, but it took almost ten years for me to no longer be angry." After years of examining her own relationship with God, Jennifer graduated from seminary in 2015, and is currently serving as a part-time pastor at Central Baptist Church in Southbridge.

Jennifer also serves as the Spiritual Director of The Pilgrimage, an online spiritual formation ministry she founded and launched in 2016. "Spiritual formation had increasingly been on my heart. Through my own experience, that dark night of the soul, I am passionate about helping people find out how deep their relationship with God can go. We can get there, but we need to be shepherded through that struggle. Struggling with God is historically and Biblically documented. It's part of our spiritual growth process. You can go through it and 'throw out baby Jesus with the bath water' as I like to say, or you can go through it and come out on the other side closer to Christ and more Christ-like. The Pilgrimage has been through a few iterations in the last five years but it's in a good place now. I love spiritual direction. It's a privilege to sit with another person and facilitate their walk and communication with God and it's exciting to watch that happen in real time. We also offer spiritual formation courses for groups. Transformation in a group dynamic is also really cool and exciting, to see people

grow in their own relationship with God but also with others on a similar journey."

When asked about the role of WCS in her Christ-like service in God's world, Jennifer remembers the support and affirmation of the faculty and administrators. "Mr. (Jerry) Van Tol was my favorite teacher in high school. He was very affirming of my writing gifts. Mr. Vriesma really helped me start to tap into my spiritual leadership skills, even back then. That validation from teachers was powerful and empowering. It gave me something to hang on to in those moments where I haven't felt good about myself. In my senior year, the Spiritual Life Committee was formed. The Spiritual Life Committee would plan convocation and the spiritual theme for the year. I believe there were mostly adults, plus my fellow senior, Paul Guidry. Looking back, it's very interesting to me that the two of us were chosen, and now we're both in ministry. I'm grateful that the WCS administration valued our input as students, and was very gracious about my youthful zeal for my faith! They made me feel that what I had to say mattered and that someone cared. I think that speaks well of the school."

“My life has been a patchwork.”

Jennifer's book, Favored One, is a provocative and incisive look at the life of Jesus (Yeshua) from the point of view of the person who knew him best: his mother.



stories of our alumni shows this to be true. WCS recently spoke with Jennifer (Grosser) Layte (Class of 1990) and Trevor Praetsch (Class of 2010) to learn more about their Christ-like service in God's world.

INTERVIEW WITH Trevor Praetsch

(Class of 2010)

Q: The dedication of healthcare workers has been at the forefront of this pandemic. How did you choose nursing as a profession?

A: I knew early on that I enjoyed working with people and I enjoyed my science classes. My mother and sister both studied nursing. At WCS, I was able to shadow with Mrs. (RoseAnn) Engbers and hearing her speak about a career in nursing was impactful. It was great to have another perspective, other than my mother's. I still questioned it through college and even considered ministry. During a conversation with one of my professors, she told me that she used her faith every day in nursing. She helped me see what a blessing it is to be able provide the service of healthcare. Once I had my ICU shadow experience in my junior year of college, I knew it was what I wanted to do as a vocation. Even though it wasn't always clear to me, God knew where He wanted me.

Q: Where are you currently working and how did your path lead there?

A: I'm currently in neurocritical care at Dartmouth-Hitchcock in Lebanon, NH. After graduating from Messiah College, I started my career in Pennsylvania as a traveling nurse. It was a great opportunity to explore different areas and figure out where I would want to settle down. I met my wife, Katie, when I first came to New Hampshire and knew right away that I wanted to stay close to her. We were both traveling nurses for a few years, then settled down here. I've worked in cardiovascular intensive care, surgical intensive care, and medical intensive care. Neuro intensive care was the next new thing for me. Dartmouth was opening a new unit and looking for staff and that caught my interest. It's been a great experience and has allowed me to develop my skills in this very specialized field.



Trevor with his wife, Katie, and children, Selah and Oliver

Q: Where have you seen God on this path?

A: When Katie and I were ready to settle down, we contacted a property manager about a potential rental. The landlords reached out to us saying they wanted to rent to us. It felt like an answer to a prayer for security of where my wife and I would live with the baby we were now expecting. Once we met the landlords, we found out they had been missionaries in Romania and they invited us to attend church with them, the church we still attend today. Searching for a home was so stressful at the time. Looking back, of course I should have trusted that God would provide for us, not only a home that solved the stress of a long commute, but also by helping us find a church family.

Q: How has your faith been helpful in your job?

A: It's especially important today as a healthcare worker, when family members cannot visit their loved one, our patient. It's meaningful to be able to pray with patients and provide that counsel. I was initially nervous about doing that early in my nursing career, but I've come to realize that we are treating the whole patient. Now that we are that place-holder for the family, I am glad I can offer that support.

Q: What was your experience like entering WCS as a freshman?

A: When I interviewed with Mr. (Chris) Vander Baan for admission to WCS, I knew I wanted to be there, even though he told me I had to immediately get rid of my mohawk. It just felt different. It was such a shift from public school. My faith became integral to everything I did. It changed my focus on what I was doing and why I was doing it - that I was doing everything for Him. I chose a Christian college to continue to foster that, and where I could continue to develop my faith. I love that my cousins (Meghan DeGregorio, class of 2022, and Nate DeGregorio, class of 2020) have also attended WCS, with a similar experience to mine. It means a lot!

CONGRATULATIONS



Arianna Koeman and Colin Swaim (both of the Class of 2017) got engaged in October of 2020 and are planning a September 2021 wedding. Arianna and Colin will be graduating this spring from Calvin University.



Jamison Koeman (Class of 2015) and Katie Diekema got engaged in June of 2020 and are planning an August 2021 wedding. Jamison will be receiving his Master's Degree from the University of Michigan this spring.



Chris Fredericks (Class of 2019) achieved a major life goal in December when he completed 60 hours of training and earned his pilot's license. He is currently working on 50 hours of solo flying and once this is completed he will be able to start his instrument training.

BABIES



Londyn Estelle Romanoski was born on Friday, November 13. Her proud parents are Tim and **Victoria (Bol) Romanoski (Class of 2000)**, of Annapolis, MD.



Jack Jeffrey Vriesema was born on December 10, welcomed by his proud parents, **Matt and Anna (Hardiman) Vriesema (Class of 2012)**.



Peter (Class of 2009) and Samantha Bloem welcomed a son, Arley James, on February 3, 2021.

We would love to hear from you! Please share any news or update your contact information by emailing advancement@whitinsvillechristian.org.

CONDOLENCES

Bernice (Reynen) Ferwerda, WCS teacher during the early 1950s, passed away in December of 2020. Bernice was first, a devoted follower of Jesus Christ, and second, a loving and faithful wife and mother of five boys.

Herman Oosterman (Class of 1939) passed away in August of 2020. After attending WCS, he graduated from Northbridge High School. He was a lifelong member of the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church in Whitinsville where he served on the building committee and was a Sunday school teacher. He was also a longtime volunteer and supporter of the Whitinsville Christian School.

Frances (Berghuis) Wassenaar (Class of 1945) passed away in December of 2020 at the age of 89. Fran was a lifelong member of Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church and had a deep and abiding faith in her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Faith and family were the focus of her life.

Anna M. (Vierstra) Hackathorn (Class of 1950) passed away in July of 2020, at home surrounded by her family. Anna was born in Northbridge, attended WCS through the 8th grade, and graduated

from Northbridge High School. She enjoyed and was well known for her knitting, needlepoint, and crocheting, and donated many beautiful items to the WCS Spring Auction.

Ronald Jack Jorritsma (Class of 1952) passed away on January 8, 2021, at home in Grafton, MA. He volunteered at St. Camillus Health Center and was an usher at Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church.

Steven Faber (Class of 1970) passed away in September of 2020. After attending WCS, he graduated from Northbridge High School in 1973, and he attended Calvin College. A truly social individual, Steven enjoyed being with his family and friends, and he loved being outdoors, working in his yard.

Jim Nydam, patriarch of one of our 4-generation families and the recipient of WCS's only honorary diploma, passed away in January of 2021. His wife, **Jean (Class of 1942)**, passed away in 2019. Jim and Jean's five daughters, **Ruth, Marilyn, Susan, Laurie, and Becky**, all attended WCS. Gifts in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Nydam may be made to the Jim and Jean Nydam Scholarship Fund.

New Faces

Welcome to WCS!



Joel Alberts
High School History/Bible
Teacher



Beth Cabral
Third Grade Teacher



Cydney Cnossen
Elementary Art Teacher



Hannah Eckstrom
Elementary and Middle School
Spanish Teacher



Geri Fogg
Student Academic Services



Julie Fredericks
Kindergarten Teacher



Lillian Hackathorn
Administrative Assistant
to Head of School



Miranda Osterman
Elementary STEM Teacher,
Director of Enrollment



Heather Rufo
Director of the Arts



Hollis Ryder
Student Academic Students



Alice Tomasino
Business Manager



Natalie VandenAkker
Student Academic Services

Treasures

A Mission for the WCS Community

Darrell Baker (Class of 1989)

Like many organizations, the mission of Treasures Upscale Thrift Shop is multifaceted. The primary mission is to provide funds to WCS by donating all of its proceeds, therefore keeping tuition affordable for families. To date, over \$1 million dollars have been donated to WCS. That represents an enormous amount of clothing, shoes, games, books, furniture, and gifts that were received, processed, displayed, and sold over the years.

That core mission also yields several other benefits. Volunteers at Treasures find community, a connection to WCS, and a connection to others who fervently support Christian education. Many are parents and grandparents of current and former students of WCS. They are proud to contribute their time and energy to work as a team for a fantastic cause.

Treasures also serves to educate the broader community about WCS. Many customers are unfamiliar with the school or its mission so our staff members are able to spend a few moments sharing information about WCS.

The shop provides an opportunity for good stewardship. People are able to donate gently-used high quality items instead of throwing them away where they may end up in a landfill. Since these items have value, they can be sold in order to support the school.

For more than ten years, Treasures has faithfully fulfilled its multifaceted mission to the ultimate benefit of WCS. However, COVID has put that mission in jeopardy. Last spring, the shop was forced to close for months. In recent months, the hours the store has been opened each week have been limited due to lack of volunteers and as a means to protect other volunteers who opt to work only when the shop is closed. This has put the viability of the shop at risk, as well as the likelihood of the impressive support levels historically provided to WCS.



Treasures is located in North Grafton. If you would like to learn more about participating in this mission, even for a couple hours a month, please reach out (774) 293-1564 or office@valleytreasures.org.



We are grateful for our generous donors. This donor list reflects gifts given in the calendar year 2020.

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Baan
Jeffrey S and Laurie Vander
Baan
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Bernard S and Minnie Wiersma
Leo Wiersma
Milton and Joan E Wynja

Marge Johnson

Timothy S and Kelly J Johnson

Oscar Kuipers' 90th Birthday

Oscar and Henny Kuipers
David J and Dawn M Lefrancois
Brian and Thalia S Towle

Rebecca McLaughlin

Michelle Goodwin & Staff

James Nydam's Birthday

David J and Dawn M Lefrancois

Grace Nyenhuis

Kristin LaBelle

Thalia Towle's Retirement

Harold and Judith Blaue
David J and Dawn M Lefrancois

Richard VandenBerg's Retirement

David J and Dawn M Lefrancois

WCS Faculty & Staff Virtual Learning Appreciation

Steven R and Kay Holm

WCS Parents Virtual Learning Appreciation

David J and Dawn M Lefrancois

Memorial Gifts Were Given On Behalf Of:

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Jeffrey and Pamela J Bajema
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Michael L and Annika B
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(See Kimberly Hannon
Memorial Music Scholarship)

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(See Jim and Jean Nydam
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