

The Crusader Chronicle

ANCHORED IN CHRIST,

Moving in Faith

WHITINSVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Anchored Doesn't Mean Standing Still

Sarah Bowler (Class of 1995), Head of School

As we move through the heart of the school year, our school-wide theme, Anchored in Hope, continues to guide our work and our community, while also offering a wider lens through which we can reflect on where we are now and how we are moving forward together.

Being anchored does not mean standing still. It means having a secure foundation that allows us to respond thoughtfully as circumstances change. This spring finds our school actively strengthening our community and preparing for the future, grounded in the hope we have through Christ and confident in His ongoing guidance.

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

Hebrews 6:19

Across campus, students are learning in environments where they are known and supported. Relationships remain central to our work, and families and faculty continue to partner closely in the shared calling of helping students grow academically, spiritually, and in character.

This year, we have taken meaningful steps to reflect on how we serve our students and families. Ongoing conversations around academic

pathways, curriculum offerings, safety practices, and student support have helped us examine not only what we do, but why we do it. Through surveys, conversations, and roundtables, we have listened carefully, valuing partnership and honest dialogue. These voices continue to shape next steps and reinforce our belief that strong schools are built through trust, communication, and shared ownership.

Living anchored in hope has also shaped how we respond when situations require care and discernment. In those moments, we have leaned on trusted relationships, clear protocols, and prayer, always keeping student well-being at the center of our decisions.

As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude and confidence. Gratitude for students, families, and staff who make this community strong, and confidence rooted in the knowledge that God continues to guide our steps.

Anchored in Christ, we move forward in faith—together.



“...having a secure foundation that allows us to respond thoughtfully as circumstances change.”

WHITINSVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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ON THE COVER

Joseph (kindergarten) enjoying the see saw in the Outdoor Forest. To read more about Outdoor Ed, please see page 12.

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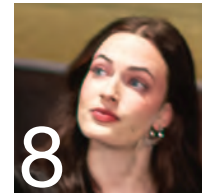
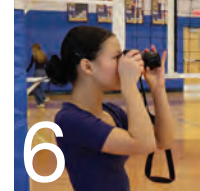
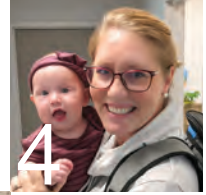
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**GIVING DAY
RAISED**

\$80,000

**TOWARD NEW
PLAYGROUND**

2025 HOMECOMING

Homecoming 2025 was full of our favorite traditions: soccer games, volleyball matches, carnival games, oliebollen, and welcoming alumni! We're especially grateful to **Annika (Krygsman) Bangma (Class of 2005)** for a seamless return to running our carnival! It was a nice trip down memory lane as she reflected on building many of the game pieces with her father, Len Krygsman.

Our eighth annual Giving Day was another celebration of what makes WCS such a special community. We followed our theme, Anchored in Hope, and shared the things that bring us hope. We were able to once again exceed our Giving Day goal, with a donor stepping forward to offer a matching gift for our new preschool playground. Giving Day raised \$75,000 for the WCS Annual Fund, and another \$80,000 toward the new playground.



An Artistic Legacy

WCS is blessed when alumni return to teach the next generation of students. **Emily (VandenAkker) Shannon (Class of 2009)** sat down with us to share her memories as a student, and her passion for art as the Middle/High School Art Teacher.

What was your experience like growing up in this area and attending WCS?

I came here kindergarten through twelfth grade, and had so many positive experiences growing up in the Whitinsville area. My father (**Kurt VandenAkker, Class of 1978**) and grandfather (**Stu VandenAkker, Class of 1949**) also attended, as well as my brother, Jake, and sister, Caitlin. And now my own daughter, Madelyn, is in preschool. The teachers cared a lot and that has been an important aspect for me now as a faculty member and as a parent of a WCS student. That probably went unnoticed by me at the time, but now I see how important it was.

What were some of the most impactful memories here?

The Fun Run, the readathon with Mrs. (Sue) Cooper, using the Krull gymnasium to its full capacity; there were six to ten things going on all at once! Mr. (Chris) Vander Baan helped me see the importance of doing what you love which helped change the initial course of my plans from nursing to arts. I spent time as a teacher's aide for Mrs. (Julie) Petercuskie, and then went to school for art education. I returned to WCS to perform my observation hours thanks to Mrs. (Mary) Dykstra for getting me back into the building!

What is something that has been special to you about working with students?

Making meaningful connections! As a middle school teacher, having all the students from sixth to eighth grade has been nice because I was able to watch them grow. This year I've added high school classes so many of those students were my students in middle school. It's nice to connect with them again as they've gotten older.

I'm sure some of the connections will carry on beyond WCS.

Do any stories come to mind about a meaningful change you have seen with your students?

So many stories. There are students you know who are going through



tough times and come through them stronger. I've seen many middle school boys finally admit how stubborn they are! They definitely grow on you! I also keep in touch with some of my former students. One is about to leave for France to do mission work and another has just become a teacher. It's nice when you can learn something from students in return.

What does a typical art class look like at WCS?

High school kids who have had me before know the deal. We do devotions and share prayer requests. Then I'm either sitting at the desks with students, or circulating about the room. I enjoy checking in frequently with them while they work. In middle school, students may be working on 20 things at once! I like to pick open-ended lessons while incorporating things that they are interested in and want to try. I love mixed media and seeing how materials can all work together. One of our middle school projects is for students to create their own album cover for their favorite band or musical group.



How do your Christian faith and the mission of the school impact your classroom?

My Deep Hope (an element of Teaching for Transformation) is centered on identifying how each student is uniquely made and how they can use their gifts to glorify God and minister to others. Our lessons take a deeper look at God as the Master Artist and explore the beauty of His creation through art-making. The moments when teachers truly connect with students about life experiences are the most impactful.



The Current staff at the start of the school year
(Photo: Ryan Martinka)



WCHS Launches The Current:

‘Telling the Whole Story of the Whole Year for Every Student’

by *The Current* staff



Reporters Connor Neal and Natasha Carreiro collaborate on a story.
(Photo: Audyn DeWeerd)

Two highschoolers with a camera and a microphone hunt through the WCHS hallways after school to find volunteers for their video. At the same time, in a classroom down the hall another student sits interviewing a teacher. Later, at the basketball game, a student snaps pictures of the most exciting shots. These are the staff members of *The Current*, the brand new WCHS online student newspaper.

This year, advisors Sara Korber-DeWeerd and Steve Fortna offered the class Advanced Digital Media for the first time. Both inside and outside the classroom, students engage with a mixture of journalism, photography, videography, and marketing as they collaborate on the class’s ongoing project, *The Current*.

Previously, the WCHS student newspaper was an extracurricular club with limited resources and reach. Now that it has been incorporated into a class, staff members have more time to hone new journalism skills and to work during school hours, allowing them more opportunities to collaborate as a team on stories that matter to them.

“We do a lot of storytelling at WCS through social media and weekly newsletters, but so often the stories are told from the perspective of the adults,” Korber-DeWeerd says. “We wanted to create a space where student voices are center stage.”

The Current’s journalists and photographers have published a number of diverse pieces—from teacher features, to student opinions on school policies, to sports season highlights—with a goal of representing every single WCHS student in their articles and photography. “If you want to be the main voice of the student body,” says sophomore Fiona Johnson, a *Current* photographer, “you have to envision what a collective of WCHS would want to say or hear.”

As *The Current* entered its second semester, some of its staff members entered their last as WCHS students. “It’s been really fun laying down the groundwork for *The Current*,” says journalist and senior Natasha Carreiro, “especially because it’s student-led. We have a chance to create something that might be around for years after we all graduate.”

You can read *The Current* at wscurrent.net and follow them on Instagram at [@wscurrent](https://www.instagram.com/wscurrent).



Photographer Fiona Johnson documents student life. (Photo: Audyn DeWeerd)

The Power of a Pie



Nothing brings our community together quite like the WCS Dutch Apple Pie sale! Customers mark the date on their calendars, middle school teams race to make boxes, scores of volunteers make the pies, food pantries distribute donated pies, and sports teams help with cleanup!

We are grateful to Milford Federal Bank for once again sponsoring our event. Karen Kindle, SVP Consumer Banking, and Vanessa Ashton, AVP Marketing Manager, joined us on our pie-making day to present the check to Tyler Brondyk, WCS Director of Development.



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Front row L to R: Emily Bastien, Samantha Boria, Amelia Bowler, Sophia Robbins, Lucia Gaudiano, Julia Monteiro, Abby Flagg, and Brinley Rufo. Second row: Mark Yarger, Demetri Boormeester, Hailey Kindl, Ruth Stenbuck, Mollaigh Flannery, Aberlin Cwiakala, Madison Amati, Maria Ramos, Emma Whitsitt, Charlotte DeFrancisco, Isabella Aloise, Emily Flagg, and NHS Adviser, Abby Graves (Class of 2017). Third row: Ian Finch, Eamon Moloney, Avery Dertien, Amelia Rufo, Alexi Gilchrist, Amelia Besong, Mya Duffy, Jensen Gonnevill, Josephina Dyke, Nathan Bagaya, and Matthew Dudley. Back row: Enson Enoch, Audyn DeWeerd, Brinley Gonnevill, Elijah Fortna, Nathanael Vos, Matthew Wren, Noah Garrant, Eli Focht, and Micah Deters.

Thirty-one new members were inducted into the John T. Bajema Chapter of the National Honor Society on October 27, 2025. Congratulations to all members and thank you for the ways you demonstrate scholarship, service, leadership, and character.



Seeking Justice: 12 Angry Jurors

Heather (Hannon) Rufo (Class of 1999), Director

This past summer, I became quite enthralled with the rest of the nation as we watched and followed the Karen Read trial. When picking out a play for the WCHS Drama Club for first semester, I wanted a modern play that would challenge the students, not just as actors, but as Christians. *12 Angry Jurors* was chosen for our students because it challenges them to examine their hearts, confront their assumptions, and act with integrity. The play reminds us that justice is not only about facts, but about character, humility, and courage - qualities that reflect the values we strive to live out as followers of Christ.

As the jurors wrestle with disagreement and strong emotions, they model the kind of patience, honesty, and empathy that we are called to practice as Christians. For our students, this has been a lesson in listening deeply, speaking truth in love, and serving others faithfully - both on stage and in everyday life.

Our school theme this year is Anchored in Hope, and it is also reflected in the jurors' commitment to the process rather than rushing to judgment. Thank you for supporting our students and the work they have put into this production. I'm so proud of how much they've grown through this challenging play, not only mastering hundreds of lines and expressing raw emotion on stage, but also showing care and support for one another as cast mates off stage.

If you were able to see this performance, I pray it encouraged your own personal reflection on how we seek justice, love mercy, and remain anchored in hope - and that it left you encouraged and hopeful for the new year.



Middle School Chapel

During the first semester, middle school students surveyed members of our community to discover their prayer needs. As a result, students were then challenged to use that data to create a student-made prayer guide for our middle school. Ten groups created ten prayer guides, then students we were able to vote for our winner!

Students used this guide in small prayer groups during chapel to go before God, and beside each other to begin to pray for these needs. While these prayers are not all-encompassing, they help push our students to grow in their prayer life, teaching them how to meet the needs of others where they are.

WCMS PRAYER GUIDE 2026

FAMILY

Lord we pray for all families of WCS that are sick or wounded, please heal them. Please bless any families who are struggling, and show up in their life to comfort them. Lord fill any loneliness in these families and show them love. We pray that you hear and answer any unspoken requests from our community. Amen

“GOD SETS THE LONELY IN FAMILIES, HE LEADS OUT THE PRISONERS WITH SINGING; BUT THE REBELLIOUS LIVE IN A SUN-SCORCHED LAND.”
Psalm 68:6

**“WHY, MY SOUL, ARE YOU DOWNCAST?
WHY SO DISTURBED WITHIN ME?
PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD,
FOR I WILL YET PRAISE HIM,
MY SAVIOR AND MY GOD.”**
Psalm 42:11

ASPIRATION

Lord our God, put hope and faith in everyone who has prayers or requests to you. Give hope to those who have experienced or are experiencing hard times by letting them know that you are with them. Help us to recognize our struggles and work through them. Remind us to aim high for the dreams you have given us and help us keep our head high for we are made in your image. Amen

INSPIRATION

Dear Lord, our Father, let our words and actions be an inspiration to others. Help us speak words that glorify you to others. You are our inspiration in life, you are the one who will keep us running. Lord you are the person who watches over me, help us not to stumble in our walk with you. Let us be your representatives here on Earth. Amen

“MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD, THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. HE WILL NOT LET YOUR FOOT SLIP— HE WHO WATCHES OVER YOU WILL NOT SLUMBER”
Psalm 121:2-3

**“ENTER HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING
AND HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE;
GIVE THANKS TO HIM AND PRAISE HIS NAME.”**
Psalm: 100:4

THANKFULNESS

Dear Lord, you are our strength. We thank you for the meals and safety you have provided us. Thank you for the roofs over our heads, and the warmth in our homes. We are so grateful for the clothes you have provided us with. We are grateful for everything you have provided us. Help us to always take the time to have a heart of gratitude. Amen.

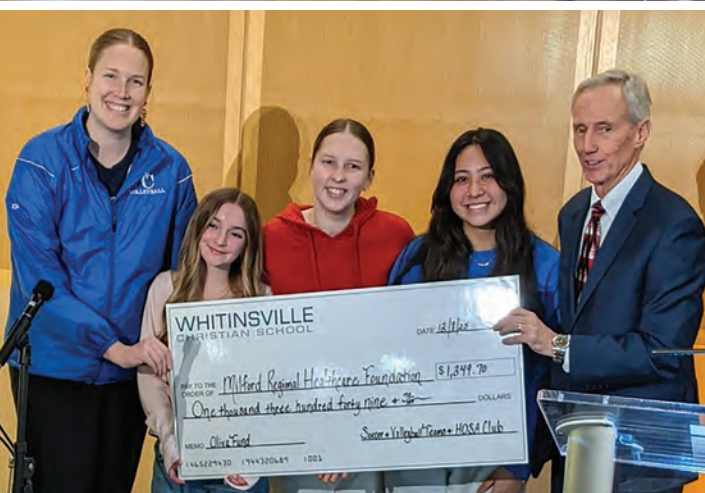
HEALTH

Dear God, we pray for the health of our teachers, parents, other students, and any pets we have. Help those going through surgeries experience success and restoration. Lord, we pray for health through sports seasons and for our mental health as well. We also pray for protection from the flu going around and for wisdom on how to stay healthy. Amen.

**“WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD,
AND HIS BLESSING WILL BE ON
YOUR FOOD AND WATER. I WILL
TAKE AWAY ANY SICKNESS FROM
YOU...”**
Exodus 23:25

Celebrating Our Savior's Birth





Christmas is such a special time at Whitinsville Christian. Of course we love our class parties, tree lighting event, and pin the nose on the reindeer when the power goes out! Yes, that happened.

More importantly, we love the opportunities to tell the Christmas story through our preschool nativity,

our elementary musical, *Not Your Average Joe*, and our Christmas concert. Christmas is also a time for the most wonderful gifts: participation in the BV Emergency Shelter's Festival of Trees, presenting a donation to the Oliva Fund, and singing Christmas carols at the Whitinsville Retirement Home.

Temps are **DROPPING** Fun is **SOARING**

Bonnie (Cooper) Shearer (Class of 2005),
Outdoor Ed Teacher

Once the leaves fell from the trees, opening up sightlines for our Outdoor Ed teachers, Tumble Hill was opened for rolling, sliding, and playing! This sunny area is also our wintertime Outdoor Preschool space.

The main focus of Outdoor Ed is for kids to have creative opportunities to build resilience, social skills, and self-confidence through play. As the weather changes, the play landscape also shifts as brittle plastic dishes are put away for the winter, and rakes, shovels, and large pieces of fabric are introduced. The large tires, metal pots, and ropes will stay out for the winter. These loose parts are all designed to be open-ended creativity-sparking materials. The teachers predicted that the fabric would quickly become superhero capes, but so far they have been far more popular as bedding, tablecloths, decoration on the forts, and a giant slip-n-slide style sliding track on Tumble Hill.

On a day with high winds in the forecast, we set up an experiment with the kindergarteners by putting natural objects such as rocks, pinecones, and sticks on three tables and predicted which ones the wind would blow off overnight. Everything on the “definitely will blow away” table blew away, and almost everything on the “maybe it will blow away” table blew away. All of the rocks piled on the “definitely not blow away” table remained.

First graders have been learning about weather. They had fun measuring and recording the temperature of the hallway, the parking lot, the woods, and the stream water. Once the stream turned to ice, new ways of exploration began!



What a blessing to be able to explore God's world in this way!

Planning & Prioritizing OUR GIVING

Tyler Brondyk, Director of Development

How proactive are you about your financial future? How much time do you spend thinking about your budgeting and giving priorities? I found myself asking these questions at the beginning of the new year, and if I am honest, I think about these questions often. Planning for the days, weeks, and years ahead comes to the top of my mind on a regular basis. Are we to live in the moment and address the financial planning conversation as it comes across our desk? Or, are we to plan out for years to come how and where we are going to invest our treasure? We can tend to lean on one side or another in our financial planning. Sometimes when we talk about financial budgeting and Kingdom giving in particular, God's provision in the present can feel at odds with good wisdom for our later years.

In times of anxiety and uncertainty we are comforted by Jesus's words in Matthew 6:25-27: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

“... a call to stewarding your resources through planning may be a faithful response ...”

The wisdom of Proverbs 16:3 and 21:5 encourages us to faithfully consider God's value on good planning. Proverbs 16:3 "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Proverbs 21:5 "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty." It is clear that the wisdom literature of Proverbs moves us to have a good grasp on our plans, which are future-oriented.

When we think about how we are investing our resources, we naturally want to put our treasure in places where our heart draws near. The Scriptures point us to have a dependence on His provision today, and steadfast hope for what is yet to come. For some of us who have deeply thought about a will, retirement, minimum distributions, and estate planning, Jesus's words to take comfort and worry about nothing may be our response in faith today. If you have not given much thought into how you are stewarding your legacy here on earth, a call to stewarding your resources through planning may be a faithful response. It is clear that Scriptures call us to give generously and abundantly to the Kingdom as all that we have ultimately belongs to God! Yet, we may face stumbling blocks when it comes to the timing and our willingness to let the Lord guide us in stewarding resources that lead to the blessing of the Lord and of others.



If you would like to continue the conversation about future planning in general, our friends at Barnabas Foundation provide expert guidance on helping you make decisions that align best with your values and priorities. You can reach out directly to members@barnabasfoundations.org, or if you prefer, you can email Tyler tbrondyk@whitinsvillechristian.org to set up a meeting. WCS is blessed to be in a position where many have been impacted by our mission and want to continue sowing into the future of the school.



Thank you for serving Christ and others.

NEW ARRIVALS



Brady Bajema (Class of 2006) and his wife, Sarah, welcomed Vivian Joy on August 31, 2025.



Billy (Class of 2014) and Julie (Wiegerts) Fredericks (Class of 2015) welcomed Abigail Leona on December 5, 2025.



Joshua Schneider (Class of 2015) and his wife, Katie, welcomed Ella Jean on January 17, 2026.



James Dunlap (Class of 2013) and his wife, Shelbie, welcomed Micah James on October 30, 2025.

ENGAGEMENTS



Lucy Bowler (Class of 2021) and Eli Sutton are engaged and planning a June wedding.



Benjamin Casey (Class of 2019) and Anna Wuerfel are engaged and planning a September wedding.



Aidan Holgate (Class of 2019) and Maria Mendoza are engaged and planning a July wedding.



Benjamin Moore (Class of 2006) and Megan Harney got engaged at the end of 2025.



Casey Johnson (Class of 2012) and Kervin Crawford were married on June 28, 2025.



Abbi Cullen (Class of 2022) and Brandon Cordero were married on August 3, 2025.



Sam Gulinello (Class of 2017) and Erin Haines were married on August 2, 2025.



Asher Bell (Class of 2024) and Isabelle Kling (Class of 2025) were married on August 2, 2025.



Benjamin MacGillivray (Class of 2019) and Maria Bos are engaged and planning a September wedding.

CONDOLENCES

Karen (Plantinga) Wielsma (Class of 1961) passed away on February 23, 2026. WCS was truly blessed by Karen's work with the WCS Strings and music programs. Her love for music and for her Lord serve as a legacy for generations of WCS students.

James Oosterman (Class of 1951) passed away on January 20, 2026.

Roy Bosma (Class of 1961) passed away in August of 2025.



Hanna VanderBaan (Class of 2018) and Tyler Toothman (Class of 2019) were married on August 8, 2025.



Justin VanderBaan (Class of 2020) is currently playing for Boras Basket, a professional basketball club in Sweden. “I’ve had a great experience during my time here so far. I have learned a lot and adapted to playing a new style of basketball I haven’t played before. My team has had success this season as we currently sit tied at the top of the league. I would say the best part about Sweden is the relationships I’ve built with teammates.”



In January, we welcomed 22 alumni at an event at Five Iron Golf in Boston’s Seaport District.



You never know where you’ll bump into your former coach! Kris VandenAkker caught up with former WCS volleyball player, **Kim (Masnoon) MacDonough (Class of 2003)**, while refereeing Kim’s daughter’s volleyball games. Kris also returned to the Krull, a place filled with memories, to ref the WCS middle school game and catch up with super fan, **Nicole Wiegerts (Class of 2014)**.



Our donors allow us to deliver upon our mission 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. Because of your gifts, we can provide opportunities for students to explore their passions, support them through their challenges, and prepare them for life, anchored in Christ.



90

HIGH SCHOOL COURSES



28

SPORTS TEAMS



195

STUDENTS IN OUTDOOR ED CLASSES

73

Families Helped Through Tuition Assistance



40%

OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE ARTS

85%

of High School Students Involved in Clubs



100%

OF STUDENTS ATTENDING CHAPEL

1195

AVERAGE SAT SCORE

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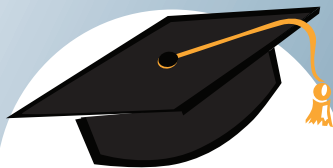
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**40th Annual
Spring Auction**
April 10
Pleasant Valley
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**WCHS Drama Club
presents**
The Wizard of Oz
April 16-18
Nehemiah Center



Graduation
May 29
Nehemiah
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