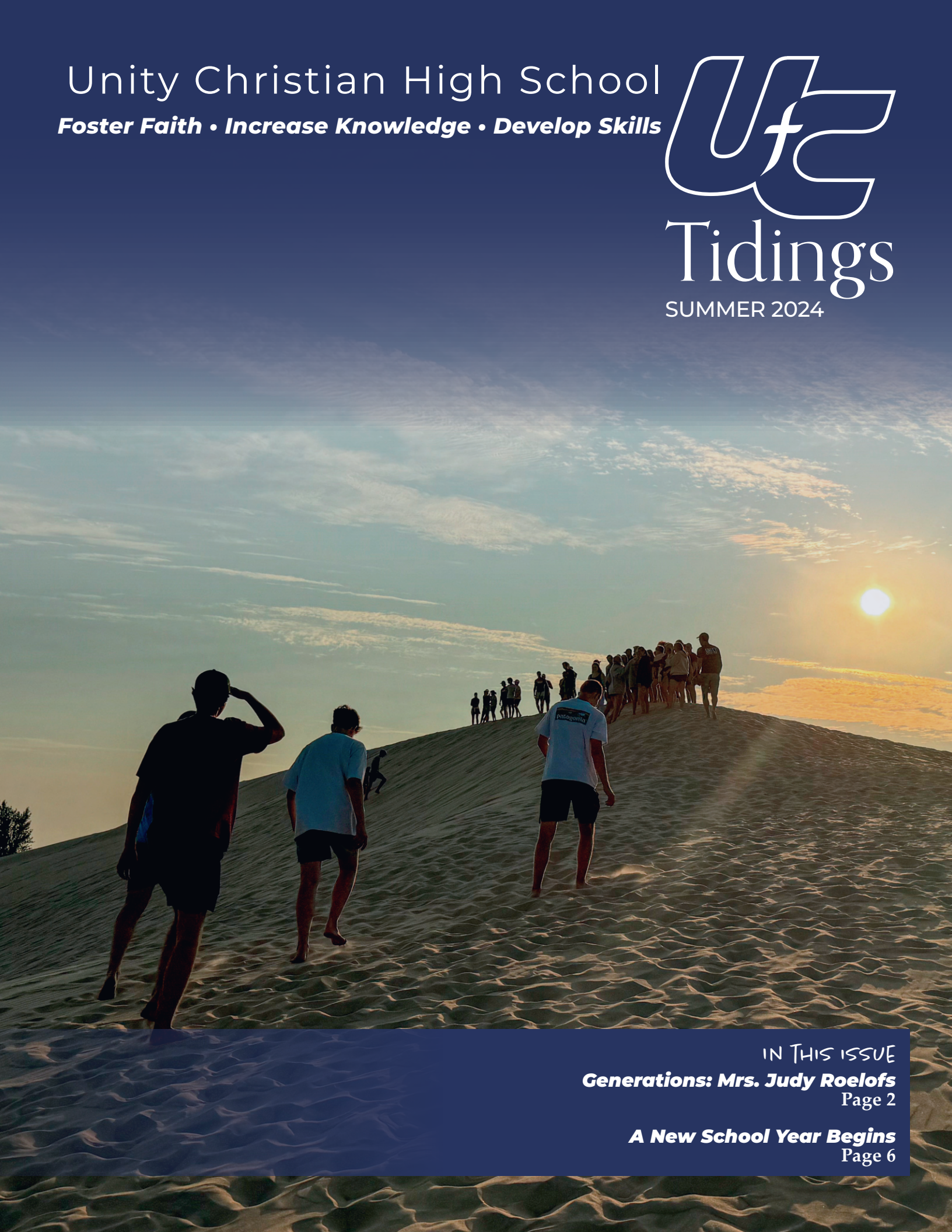


Unity Christian High School
Foster Faith • Increase Knowledge • Develop Skills

UC
Tidings
SUMMER 2024



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The Tidings is a publication by Unity Christian High School's Development Office. Its purpose is to highlight some of the special things that occur within our school and to unify our Unity Community. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Please contact the Development Office if you would like to update your contact information, share an announcement, or if you know of someone who would like to receive *The Tidings*.

Email
communications@unitychristian.org

Phone
(616) 662-4011

Write
Unity Christian Development Office
4542 48th Avenue
Hudsonville, MI 49426

Online
See *The Tidings* or share it electronically from our website:
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-  @UCSaders
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Jerry DeGroot, *Principal/CEO*

Welcome to another wonderful year at Unity Christian! There is much to be thankful for and God has richly blessed us in so many ways. We are immensely grateful to our community and the continued support and commitment to nurturing a Christ-centered education for our students. Your prayers, encouragement, and generosity have played a crucial role in our mission to equip young hearts and minds with both academic excellence and spiritual growth. The Lord has been faithful in guiding us every step of the way, and we trust in His wisdom as we navigate the challenges and joys of this school year.

Our Vision

Developing followers of Christ to be leaders.

Our Mission

Foster faith, increase knowledge, develop skills to serve God and others.

Our Motto

Educational Excellence in a Christian Community

Our Beliefs

- We believe God is Creator, Savior, and Lord.
- We believe the Bible is God's Infallible Word and is the full Gospel of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration.
- We believe our children belong to God and are instructed to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, to enjoy Him, and to love Him and others.
- We believe a Christian world view will benefit a person in this life and in eternity and seeks to restore the Kingdom of God on earth.

As we journey through this school year at Unity Christian High School, we ask you to join us in praying for our staff and students. Please pray that our teachers and leaders are guided by wisdom and grace as they work to infuse faith into every aspect of learning. Pray that our students grow in their knowledge, deepen their faith, and develop the skills needed to impact the world for Christ. We believe that, with God's help, we can nurture well-rounded individuals who shine His light wherever they go. Your prayers are a vital part of this mission, and together we can make a lasting difference in the lives of our students.

This year our students will again experience the ongoing construction project – Expanding our Mission. Tremendous progress has been made and the students and staff are utilizing the newest addition to our school. Unity Christian increased enrollment by fifty students this year with an incoming class of 201 freshman! With this current increase and the trend that points to continued increasing enrollment, the addition to current facilities is supporting our need. Construction is set to begin on the east side of the school in a few months. We are incredibly grateful for the generous gifts that have brought us so close to completing the facility expansion! This project is necessary to provide students with the resources and dedicated space they need to flourish in their education and spiritual growth. While we have made significant progress, we are still short of reaching our goal of \$35 million. We ask you to prayerfully consider joining us in supporting this initiative. Every contribution, no matter the size, brings us one step closer to completing a facility that will benefit our students for years to come. Christian education is expanding through your support and commitment.

As we step into this new school year, let us do so with hearts full of faith and trust in God's perfect plan. We are confident that, with His guidance, this will be a year of growth, learning, and spiritual deepening for our entire community. Let us continue to support one another, pray for one another, and seek God's wisdom in all that we do. Together, we will make this year at Unity Christian one of great purpose and blessing, trusting that God will do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine. Thank you for being part of this journey with us!

In Christ,

GENERATIONS: MRS. JUDY ROELOFS

A Voice In Christian Education

For 16 years Judy Roelofs was not only seen in the hallways at Unity Christian High School, but you could also hear her. Those who had the pleasure of teaching near the choir room fondly remember the sound of choral warmups early in the morning and singing throughout the day. During her career as a Choir Director at Unity, Judy not only impacted hundreds of students but also lived out a life-long love of music and education. Her journey to having a career in Christian education spans decades and is a testament to the evolving emphasis on both academic and spiritual growth in students.

Judy loved music from a very young age. She learned to play the piano and even began teaching private piano lessons in high school. This passion and gift for teaching others about music would shape her future in ways she wouldn't see for many years.

Raised in Byron Center, Judy's experience with Christian education began at Byron Center Christian School and she eventually graduated from South Christian High School. After high school, she attended Calvin College (now University) and began to explore what she wanted to do as a career. Taking a year off to discern her plans, Judy intended to return the following year and officially declare a major. In that year off, "Life" happened, and I never got the chance to go back [to college] until my own children were out of high school... ." Many years later, Judy went on to finish her degree at Grand Valley State University. In the interim, she continued teaching piano lessons and was involved in other musical opportunities. This non-traditional path gave Judy time to discern and faithfully follow God's calling in her life. "...it was those middle years that confirmed that education was what I always wanted, but God had other plans for a few years."

Judy's commitment to Christian education was shaped by her family. Her father was initially not a supporter, but his heart was moved as it

came time for his children to enroll in school. "He made the decision to send us to Christian schools and became an avid supporter!" Her parents' commitment planted the seeds of not only faith in Judy but also in the importance of Christian education. "...as I grew older, the importance and blessing of Christian education became clearer and clearer. So, when I FINALLY became a teacher, my dream was to teach in a Christian school." This truth fueled her dream to teach where she could integrate her love for music with her faith.



When Judy entered the classroom, she entered an environment that did not look the way it had when she had been a student or even when her children had started school. She had to learn to view things not as a student, not as a parent, but as a teacher. What she observed was a growing emphasis on the academic success of students. As a choir director, her role in a student's education looked a little different than her core subject counterparts. "But teaching is ... academic, and having academic and learning standards was imperative to me. Sometimes those two lines had difficulty walking alongside one another. However, the longer I was at Unity, the students began to understand the importance of academic learning [in choir] and also saw the importance and knowledge of all genres of music."

One of Judy's greatest blessings during her teaching career was the ability to educate in an environment where Christ was at the center of ev-

everything. As she made the choir program her own, she saw a shift in her students' expectations. "Not only was their appreciation of music enhanced, but the appreciation of music as a means to worship and praise, contributed to (hopefully) many of them seeing and participating in music as a life-long opportunity." This demonstrated another change she saw in education during her career – a shift toward a more personal and open expression of faith among students.

After 16 years of service at Unity, Judy decided to retire to spend more time with her husband, Steve, who was in ill health. Change is difficult but Judy knew the choir program she had built was in good hands. "[I]t was a blessing to turn over the reins to a former student who I had so much fun working with while she was a student." Despite no longer being on staff, when Steve eventually passed, Judy was surrounded by support from the Unity community. She recalls that those were some of the most difficult days of her life, yet she was surrounded by prayers and encouragement from her Unity family.

Reflecting on her time at Unity Christian High School, Judy views her tenure as a time of spiritual and personal fulfillment. She witnessed the transformative power of Christian education not only in the lives of her students, but also her own life. God brought to fulfillment a lifelong passion for music and a love of teaching.



WELCOME TO UNITY



DAVE DEKKER

My name is Dave Dekker and I'm looking forward to joining the Unity community in the fall. My wife Andrea and I live in Hudsonville with our 4 children, all of whom attend Hudsonville Christian. I just wrapped up my 18th year at Calvin Christian High School, teaching a variety of high school math classes and, more recently, computer science classes. In my spare time, I enjoy doing yard work, reading, and playing sports with my kids. I'm excited to start teaching and sharing God's amazing story at Unity.



SARAH KOETSIER

My name is Sarah Koetsier, and I am excited to join the Unity Christian community as a math teacher this fall. I have taught math for 9 years at Northern Michigan Christian and Western Michigan Christian. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, camping, gardening (I love Dahlias), sewing and basketball. I love teaching math and helping my students discover God's order in mathematics. I am excited to meet you all this fall!



DAVID KUIPER

I am excited to enter the world of teaching after working in business for the past six years. During that time, I noticed God working in my heart to change careers to become a teacher. This process has been challenging in many ways, but it has also been a great opportunity for me to truly trust God's leading in my life. I am thrilled that He has led me to Unity Christian, and I am excited to join this community.



BEKA ROELOFS

I am Beka Roelofs and I am excited to get to be a part of the Unity community as a Spanish teacher. I grew up in the Spanish immersion program from Zeeland Christian to Holland Christian. I continued my studies at Trinity Christian college where I also went to Spain for a semester. I played basketball through high school and soccer through college. I love being a part of a Christian community and can't wait to continue to serve here at Unity.



NICK WEBER

My name is Nick Weber and I will be a new science teacher at Unity. A few fun facts about me are I played volleyball in college at GVSU, I am a certified scuba diver, and I am a new, extremely novice golfer (only hit the range once in my life so far)! I am excited to get started at Unity to build meaningful, lasting relationships with students and colleagues and be a small part of what God is doing at Unity. Can't wait to get started (after summer break of course)!



JULEA BLAZER

Hi everybody!

My name is Julea Blazer. As a recent graduate from Cornerstone University, I am honored to join the staff at Unity Christian. I am so excited to team up with the English department and get to know many students and parents. One of my passions in teaching is investing in and discipling students as they learn and grow. A few facts worth mentioning about me are that I am engaged to a Brazilian, I have a pet turtle, and I love storytelling. I believe that reading and telling stories can be used to further the gospel, connect with students, and engage anyone's imagination. I hope you all have a great rest of your summer, and I look forward to meeting many of you very soon.

God Bless,
Julea Blazer



GIDEON SALL

Hi, my name is Gideon Sall. I graduated from South Christian High School in 2019 and am a recent graduate of Western Michigan University! I am very recently married to my wife, Kennedy. We tied the knot this June! I am a very lucky guy! We love to be outdoors, from hiking, to swimming, to kayaking, to biking and more! We currently attend InSpirit church in Byron Center and are very excited to be joining the Unity Christian community! I look forward to getting to know this community and teaching life skills in the shop!



CAM STAHL

Hello Unity Christian community!

My name is Cam Stahl. I was born and raised in Holland where I attended Holland Christian. It feels good to be on the right side of that rivalry now. In 2015 I moved to Long Beach, CA where I attended high school before I came back to Michigan to attend Hope college.

Outside of the classroom I enjoy being outside, reading and traveling with my two younger brothers and parents.



AUBRIE VREDEVOOGD

Hello everyone! My name is Aubrie Vredevoogd. I'm so excited to join the Unity community as an art teacher. I'm originally from Caledonia, Michigan. I went to South Christian where I played sports and did the yearbook committee. I also studied at Trinity Christian College. I worked for the marketing team, photography team, and ran art club there. I was also given the opportunity to study abroad in the Netherlands and teach students there as well. I am very excited to begin this next chapter and see how God uses me at Unity!



SKYLAR WENZEL

My name is Skylar Wenzel. I have lived in Hudsonville my entire life and attended Hudsonville Public for 12 years. Then I went on to study and play sports at Cornerstone University. I have always wanted to be a teacher and it was really great to learn at CU from a Christian perspective!

I married my husband, Jordan, in 2023 right after we graduated together. We love to be active, pour into our community, and we love Jesus. Both Jordan and I are so excited to be a part of the Unity community!



NICKI BERGSMA

My name is Nicki Bergsma and I am a first-year teacher that just recently graduated from Cornerstone University. To briefly summarize who I am, I have 4 main passions: Jesus, coaching, teaching, and relationships—all of which go hand-in-hand. I grew up in a Christian home but truly began following and knowing Jesus intimately my freshman year of college and in that year, He called me to be a teacher... students and education have held a big place in my heart ever since. Sports have also always been a big part of my life—I played three all throughout high school (volleyball, basketball, and soccer), played soccer in college, and coached soccer the past two years at Hudsonville under Holly Van Noord—so that is where my passion for coaching comes from. Overall, I am all about relationships, so the field of education has brought me so much joy, and I am so thankful to have received a teaching position at Unity for this next year. It is a gift to be able to be in a community of educators who will push me to be more Christlike in character and in my career—I cannot wait to learn from all of you and share my passions and heart with you all.

ALUMNI & COMMUNITY UPDATES



Aliya (Talsma '17) and Trevor ('17) Odehnl are currently stationed at Camp Pendleton in California and welcomed sweet Mallory Jeanne Odehnl into the world on May 13, 2024. Congratulations on your growing family!



Rose (Corner '19) and Nathan ('18) Kerkstra are excited to share the birth of their son, Casian Dale Kerkstra, born on August 10, 2024. Blessings on the new addition to your family!



Rachael (Allen '11) and Paul DeKorte welcomed their daughter, Annika Jean DeKorte, into their family on June 21, 2024. Welcome to the world, sweet Annika!



Theodore Shawn Doan arrived in the world at 8:47am on July 8 to Mady, a Unity English teacher, and Cam Doan. The new parents are so thankful to have him with them!



Levi Link Blamer was born at 9:24am on April 13, 2024 to Bible teacher, Mr. Tim Blamer, and his wife, Isabel. The Blamer family is grateful for a healthy mom and baby!

UPCOMING EVENTS

CLASS OF 2014 10 YEAR REUNION

We can't believe it's already been a decade!
We look forward to seeing you on
Thursday, December 19 from 6-9PM
at the Red Shed in Hudsonville.
You and your +1 are invited!
Cost is \$25 per person.
Message Madi on Facebook to RSVP.
We have a Facebook group with
the most up-to-date information.

-Kayla (Bouwman) Pomper &
Madi (Jongekrijg) Scheenstra

Class of 1974 50th Reunion

Hello Class of 1974!
We will celebrate our 50th Class Reunion on
Saturday, September 28 at
Unity Christian High School from 11am to 3pm.

We request that those attending bring a dish to pass and a dessert to
share. We are looking forward to a time of
fellowship and community.

Contact Jan (TerAvest) Schuett at (616) 260-5922 or
Pam (Schutter) Martin at (616) 288-5883 with any questions!
We hope to see you all soon!

CLASS OF 1969 | 55TH REUNION

The Class of 1969 will celebrate their 55th reunion on
Saturday, October 19, 2024 at Unity Christian High School
5900 48th Avenue, Hudsonville MI 49426
from 5 pm to 9pm.

Come gather with us for food and camaraderie and see the
latest additions under construction at the "new" Unity!
"We've come a long way, baby!"

RSVP by TEXT to 616.446.6972
(Kathleen Nyquist Schellenberg) with a "YES" and your name,
or by EMAIL to kthlnschellenberg22@gmail.com.
Also, if you know of any classmates who do not receive
the Tidings, please let them know about the reunion or have
them contact us.

Cost is \$30 per person. Please remit payment by September
30. Make checks payable to Kathleen Schellenberg and mail to
575 Wallinwood Lane
Jenison, MI 49428.

Thank you!
The 55th Class Reunion Committee

🌟 HOMECOMING 🌟 2024 EVENTS

New Building Tour & Powderpuff Football September 26

You are invited to tour our
expanded building and watch our
upperclassmen girls compete in a
game of powderpuff football. Keep
an eye on our social media for exact
times of these exciting events.

🌟 Homecoming Game 🌟 September 27

Cheer on our Sadlers as we celebrate
Unity's first Homecoming Football
Game. See the Homecoming
Court crowned, past alumni
classes honored, and experience
community fun for all! This is
a home game vs Zeeland West
at Hudsonville Public Schools
Athletic Stadium off Baldwin St
and 36th Ave at 7:00pm. 🌟



BAND & ORCHESTRA CONCERT | OCTOBER 1

Enjoy an evening of music
with Unity's Band & Orchestra
programs under the direction of
Mr. Brian Knot and Mrs. Sara Jager.
7:30pm at Fair Haven Church.



CHOIR CONCERT OCTOBER 3

Enjoy an evening of choral
performance with
Unity's Choir Program directed
by Mrs. Ashton Foreman.
7:30pm at Fair Haven Church.

FUNNY GIRL NOVEMBER 14-16

Join the cast of Funny
Girl for the classic story
of Fanny Price, a girl
who dreams of being
a star and experiences
the highs and lows that
come along with life
and fame. Ticket details
will be available on our
website later this fall.



PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES OCTOBER 7, 10, & 11

More details to come. See the
Home Bulletin as the dates
approach.

A NEW SCHOOL



FRESHMAN MIXER

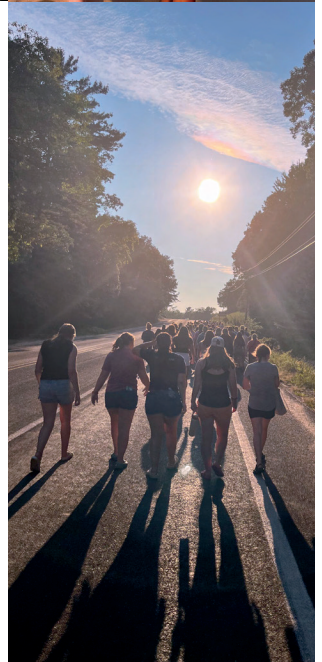
Starting a new school year is never easy. New classes, new teachers, new schedule. Starting high school is even more challenging. New building, new classmates, new demands. To help our freshmen acquaint themselves with each other, our staff, and Unity's building, we mark the end of the first week of school with the Freshmen Mixer. This is a time of bonding and exploration for our newest Sadars. We pray that the Lord guides and grows our students in this new season of their lives.





SENIOR RETREAT

The Senior Retreat was blessed with beautiful weather this year, and this made our free time with students all the more enjoyable. Seeing staff and students play and have fun together during this time was a blast. We even had a few teachers spiking volleyballs on students. Students convinced me, Miss Welch, to try shooting trap for the first time in 15 years. I went 0/10 but they still cheered me on. Students hunted down each other and staff members in laser tag and gave tips to staff on how to shoot a bow correctly. These small and simple moments of doing life between staff and students on the retreat make the relationships and interactions so much deeper in the classrooms of Unity Christian. Allowing ourselves to let down our walls, try something new, and interact in different ways brought new life and joy to the staff and seniors. -Christina Welch, Counselor & Math Teacher



HEART TO HEART

VICTORY THROUGH SURRENDER

by Dan Landstra

"Give me your best guess! I know you haven't researched it, but based on your perception of people, give me a number that seems right to you!"

Looks of uncertainty and confusion darted among several students. Some did their best to avoid eye contact with me. After waiting a few moments to allow the question to sink in, it was time to ask someone for a guess.

"Aaron, give me a number!"

Aaron paused, tapped his pen on his desk while he contemplated his answer, then hesitantly responded, "40".

Immediately, Sam interjected "No way, that's way too low, it's at least 60!"

Several heads nodded in affirmation of Sam's statement, while others shook their head in disagreement.

"Ok" I said, "Let's take a quick poll. Raise your hand if you think the number is higher than 50" Over half of the group responded with a raised hand.

"Well," I said, "It IS higher than 50!"

"I knew it!" Sam said, bursting with pride.

I continued, "Now, for those of you who believed it was higher than 50, what is the highest you would go?"

Sam, who had now become the spokesperson for the group gave the highest number, "70!" he exclaimed.

I let the number settle in the minds of the students for a moment, then said, "The number has dropped over the last decade. It was as high as 90 and has recently dropped to

just over 70."

Sam beamed with pride at his ability to guess well.

"But" I said, "The actual number we are most concerned with has dropped to the mid-50's over the past few years."

Raised eyebrows from many students indicated surprise at the drop-off.

Our conversation on this day centered around what students believed was the percentage of American adults who profess belief in God. Our last number, 56, is the percentage of adults, based on research, who believe not just in any god, but in the historical God of the Bible.

"We are not quite done though," I said. "There is one more number I want you to think about. It represents the percentage of individuals who, out of all the individuals who believe in the God of the Bible, possess a Biblical worldview. In other words, they see the Bible as absolute Truth and work to live out their faith in a manner that reflects their convictions."

Sam spoke first again, "I don't have a clue about this one!"

"Well," I said, "the number is just less than 20 in one study and as low as 6 in another. Either way it is a low number."

A few students exchanged glances of disbelief. Others nodded, suggesting they were not too surprised to hear a number below 10.

Emily, whose expression was one that showed disbelief asked, "Why is the number so low? It's kind of discouraging to think so few people have a Biblical lens for their lives."

Isaac chimed in. "I think it's because a lot of people like the idea of Christianity, but not the practice of it."

I nodded in affirmation of Isaac's statement. "Explain what you mean by that Isaac," I said.

"I heard it in a sermon at my church that if you become a Christian you have to surrender your entire life to God. I don't think people want to do that. So, they like what they get out of being a Christian and kind of forget about what they have to give."

Emily shot back, "I don't get that phrase, 'surrender your life'. It makes no sense to me. I hear it sometimes from teachers or youth leaders or in church, but I honestly don't get it."

I turned back to Isaac and raised my hand toward him, giving him permission to keep going. He continued, "I think it means that once you accept Jesus as your Savior, you now belong to him. Like it says in Question and answer 1, 'I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful savior Jesus Christ.'"

Several students nodded in agreement. Emily, however, furrowed her brow, appearing unsure. She raised her hands in Isaac's direction and with an irritated tone said, "So if a person doesn't surrender everything, that means they are not a Christian? Is that what you are saying?"

I jumped in. "Regardless of how we understand the idea of surrendering, it isn't our job to determine the salvation of other people. That is the Lord's work. Can we all agree on that?"

All heads nodded.

I turned again to Isaac. "Isaac, if

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Speed Wrench Inc.
The Drawing Board, Inc
The Foundation Co. Inc
The John F. and Delia Koetje Foundation
VanderLugt, Mulder, DeVries & Elders
VanManen Petroleum Group
Virtual Systems
Vollink Eyecare PLLC
West Michigan Cabinet Supply, Inc.
West Michigan Community Bank
West Michigan Document Shredding

you're willing, would you tell us what surrender looks like for you?"

Isaac paused. Then said, "Well, it's hard. I believe completely what the Bible says about God. I believe in Jesus, and I know he is my Savior. But to be honest the surrender part is really challenging."

Isaac paused again, gathering his thoughts for a moment, then continued, "When I start to think about giving God every part of my life, it can get overwhelming. There's stuff I am not proud of and certain things in my life I know I need to reconsider. But honestly, I sometimes want to keep those things for myself and not give them to God. So even though I think I know what it means to surrender, I am having a hard time actually doing it."

Isaac's answer produced a unanimous set of affirming nods among the small group of students gathered for this conversation.

I nodded as well, then said, "Isaac, thank you for sharing! What you said was very honest and, I believe, very true for all of us. Surrendering is hard."

Emily, who always desired a clear-cut answer looked at me and said, "If none of us are doing this very well, is there ever going to be a time when we actually do it fully?"

With enthusiasm I said, "Emily, that is an excellent question! And I want you to know I have learned surrendering is a process which takes time. As you grow in faith and deepen your knowledge of God, you will be blessed with the desire to give up more of your own desires and choose instead to find your satisfaction in Jesus.

There is a passage in the book of

John which states, 'If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you.'"

Sam joked, "Whatever I wish! That sounds pretty good!" We all chuckled at his humor. Then he added, "Truthfully, I never understood that verse. It sounds like we get whatever we want if we believe, and I don't think that is right."

"That's true Sam, God is not a genie!" I replied. "What it does mean is when we commit to a life of serving God, he will bless us with his grace and hold us close, even through all the times we come up short. We will have spiritual abundance...whatever we ask for. Ironically it is by surrendering everything that we ultimately gain everything."

Emily nodded, "I like that idea, surrender everything to gain everything. That's good."

The small group disbanded and each of us went on to complete the rest of our day at Unity. However, this conversation, which occurred at the end of last school year, was the launchpad for our chapel theme this year.

Based on a quote from Abraham Kuyper in which he states, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

Join us in praying for our students as they grow in faith, that they would consider what it means to surrender to Christ and by doing so, will gain everything.

Lord, let it be so.

Dan Landstra

EXPANDING OUR MISSION

We are incredibly thankful for the generous support of our Unity Christian community in the “Expanding Our Mission” campaign. Over 1000 donors have contributed and for that we thank God! Our students are actively learning in the new educational spaces added on the west side of the building and construction will start this fall on the east side. The construction schedule for the east side will be aligned with fundraising results. We have enough financial commitment from donors to erect the structure and enclose it. Fundraising efforts will continue with the goal of outfitting the interior without a pause in construction.

We have a donor who has generously committed \$500,000 in matching funds to help us encourage new donors who have not yet committed to “Expanding Our Mission.” Any new donor commitments, whether pledge or gift, will be matched dollar for dollar to help us finish this project and avoid turning away any students from our feeder schools.

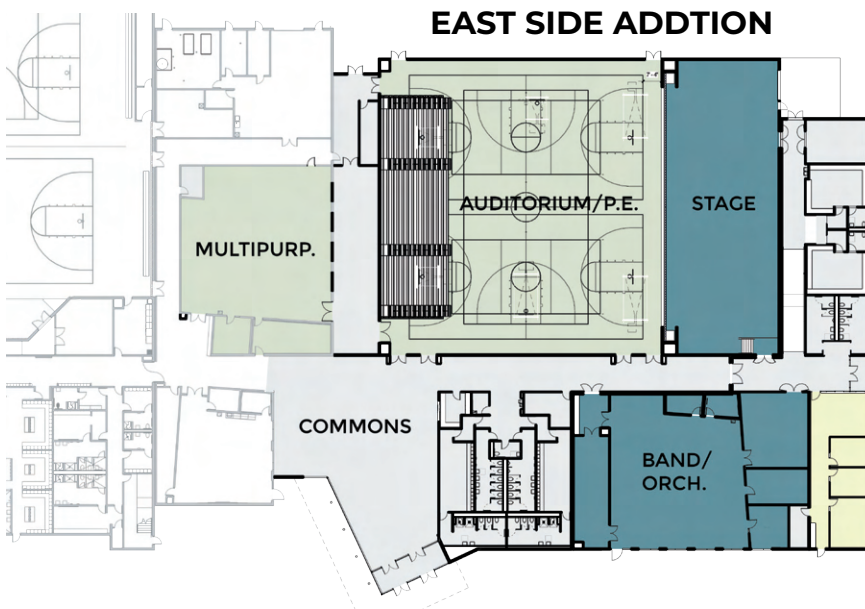
GOAL: \$35,000,000 CASH AND PLEDGES TO DATE: \$26,555,000

Fine Arts

Praising God through instrumental and vocal performance brings honor and glory to Him. Providing adequate space is a key component for growing Fine Arts programs. A larger, shared music room for our bands and orchestras will foster an environment well-suited to learning while providing much-needed areas for storage.

Multi-Purpose Room

Another exciting area is a new shared multipurpose space with a large, raised stage area. This stage will replicate the stages Unity currently uses for theater performances. Students in musical and/or play will utilize the space for practice and performances. Our intent is to host Unity’s winter play along with the band, choir, and orchestra concerts.



A financial investment today ensures excellent education infused with faith and based on the truth found in the Bible for 50 plus years to come.

SHARE THE LOAD

If you or someone in your family has been impacted by Christian education, and if you believe that Christian high school education is a valuable resource for our eastern Ottawa community, we need your help.

Please prayerfully consider a financial investment to ensure that Christian education at Unity continues for generations to come. Through the financial gifts of many we can share the load, encourage students, families, and Unity staff.

Physical Education

Current physical education spaces are also shared for Chapel, testing, and other school-day activities. With the addition of an auxiliary space, Unity’s physical education teachers will be able to better serve students. The construction of new Fine Arts areas will allow for the former band/orchestra room to be a multi-use physical education space along with a practice area for Unity’s wrestling team. Unity currently uses space at Hudsonville Christian Elementary for wrestling practice.

Pledge Today



A PATH TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Smedley Family

When people use the phrase “Christian school families,” it’s not uncommon to think of the Christian School ‘dynasties’ that are well known in the community – families that can trace their roots back to the founding of the school, have been highly involved in extracurricular programs, or have sent dozens of children through a particular school. But that is not the reality for many of our families at Unity. We have families who are new to the faith, new to West Michigan, or just new to private Christian education.

The Smedley family falls into the latter category. They always valued education – Meredith’s mother had faithfully served her community as a teacher in a local public school. Both Shane and Meredith had their own personal faith walk, but it wasn’t something they pursued together as a family. Consequently, those two values – education and faith – were not paired together. Christian education was not even on their radar when their daughters began school. When they eventually considered the option, they first viewed foregoing Christian education as an easy way to save money.

Things began to shift during the pandemic. As the world was thrown into chaos and uncertainty, the Smedley’s found themselves needing God’s peace more than ever before. They plugged into church as a family and got serious about instilling faith in their daughters, Kerrigan and Quinn. They again felt a nudge to find a place for their girls to be educated through a Christian worldview.

The family had moved to Hudsonville in 2017 and the girls attended a local public school system. While both girls were academically successful there, they never felt fully at home. As the pandemic wore on and the girls were entering high school, Shane and Meredith knew it was time for a change. Their older daughter, Kerrigan, felt unnoticed at school and as she began her sophomore year, things didn’t improve. They began to explore alternative schools in earnest when Quinn, then an 8th grade student, also felt nervous about attending such a large high school the following year.

A few weeks later, Meredith took their girls on a tour at Unity. Within the first five minutes she felt a sense of peace and was “confident the girls were going to be Crusaders!”

When the girls started Unity the next fall, the whole family noticed an immediate difference. During their first round of Parent-Teacher Conferences Meredith remembers,

“Previously, we would hear about how the girls were doing good in their schoolwork, they turned things in on time, they did well on tests, etc. It was very cold and impersonal. At Unity, the teachers actually asked how the girls were doing! They wanted to know if they felt like they were fitting in. When we told them that they were struggling a little bit making new friends, two of the teachers said that they would change the seating chart so the girls could sit next to someone they were getting to know! Before, I wasn’t even sure the teachers really knew who my girls were, now they were asking to pray for them!”

Even extracurricular events at Unity felt different. Something they quickly noticed was how praying before sporting events and performances set the tone for student activities.

Unity not only provided a spiritual and academic education but also a whole range of activities and opportunities to the Smedley girls. “Our girls have had such a great experience at Unity! They have made wonderful friends. They have had opportunities in sports, theater and clubs that they most likely wouldn’t have had at a larger school. They are getting well prepared for their future after high school.”

Christian education has become central to the Smedley family. They know that as Christians we are called to live in the world but not be of it. They see that value exemplified through the education their daughters have received at Unity. They see how learning to make Christ a priority in every aspect of one’s life has shaped their daughters. The hard conversations they have in class and the knowledge of Christianity’s unquestionable truths have empowered them to express their faith confidently outside the walls of Unity.

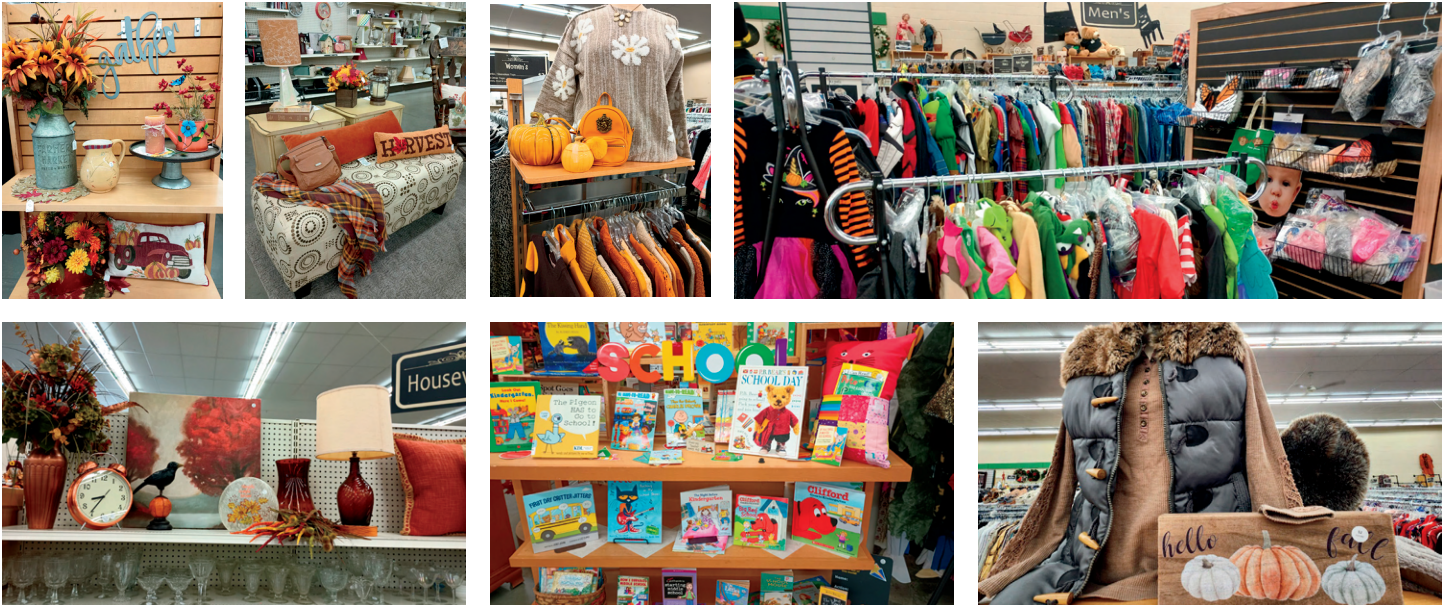
“DO IT!” is what the Smedley’s say to families considering Christian Education. “Your children will get a great education, have great opportunities, and most importantly, they will grow in their relationship with Christ.” The time and effort invested in this new community was worth it for the Smedley’s because of the positive impact it had on their girls and their family. Talking about Jesus, praying together, and remaining dedicated to church are whole family activities now. They believe that there is nothing more important than investing in your child’s relationship with Christ.



Revive has it ALL for FALL!

Stop in to see for yourself all the beautiful fall clothing, shoes, purses, and more! Plus fall floral arrangements, seasonal decorations, and home goods to put the color of the season into your home. All at prices that are as good as it gets!

Need a costume for the season? We've got it! Volunteers have worked hard to put all the pieces together to create costume sets for the whole family – even the dog! Find complete outfits, hats, wigs, masks, candy buckets, and more! Great for upcoming school Wax Museums or other events too!



LEGO LADY

Did you know revive has its own “Lego Lady”? Barb Wiegers is the expert in all things Lego and personally assembles every Lego set that comes in to revive, sometimes with a little help from some great kids. If the set is missing a piece or two – or 10, she checks her stash of spare parts and replaces it. If she doesn't have it, she heads to the Lego store in Grand Rapids – who probably know her by name – and tries to get the pieces she needs. She also checks for instruction books or tries to identify the set number if instructions are missing. If she can't identify the set on her own, she will look for a unique piece that helps her figure it out, or let Google Lens do a little of

the work. If even Google can't find it, she sends a picture to the Lego company and they identify it for her. Then comes the assembly. It is time consuming, but she feels so blessed by these donations that she finds it to be a joy. One of the first sets she put together for revive was a complete 4-sided Western Fort from the 1990s. It was a great start to a career of creating building block masterpieces! Legos may be a toy for many of us, but for those with a little extra affection for them, it's an art! And this volunteer is a “master builder” of the highest order! Barb, thank you for showing all of us you're never too old to do a good work – or to play with Legos!



ALL THE BEST!

The revive family is wishing all the best to Ellery Miedema and Shania Bouma, two special Unity graduates off to new adventures this fall! Ellery heads to Calvin University, and Shania begins school with Young Adult Services. Both girls have been such a blessing to revive! Ellery has worked at revive for almost 3 years, processing loads and loads of donations during that time. She has also been invaluable with countless other jobs around the store, keeping revive organized and looking nice, sorting through

tons of clothing, and stepping in whenever someone needed help. Shania too has been a big help at revive. Her weekly volunteering has kept our busy days more manageable, and her help at the cash register or with special projects has always been appreciated. The extra hours she was able to volunteer this summer on her own were also a bonus to revive! Thank you, ladies, for shining your light around here and making this place better for it! We know God will use you to bless others wherever you go!



Address
3675 Baldwin St.
Hudsonville, MI 49426
616-662-3375
revive@unitychristian.org

Shopping Hours
M, W, F: 10 am – 5 pm
T, Th: 10 am – 7 pm
Sat: 10 am – 3 pm

Donation Hours
M-F: 10 am - 4 pm
Sat: 10 am - 12 pm





Unity Christian High School

5900 48th Avenue

Hudsonville, MI 49426

Phone: 616-669-1820

www.unitychristian.org

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