

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



Tidings

FALL 2024



IN THIS ISSUE

Homecoming, A New Tradition

Page 2

Alumni in the Arts, Anna Schreur

Page 14



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:
<https://www.unitychristian.org/parent-resources/#bulletins>

Social Media
Connect with the daily happenings at Unity through our social media channels.

-  @UnityChristianHighSchool
-  @Unity_Christian_High_School
-  @UCSaders
-  @UCSaders

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Learning to Give
Mr. Jerry DeGroot

-PAGE 1

Homecoming, A New Tradition

-PAGE 2

Heart to Heart: A Question of Identity
Mr. Dan Landstra

-PAGE 6

Upcoming Events & Giving Corner

-PAGE 9

Happening @ Unity

-PAGE 10

Alumni Updates

-PAGE 12

Alumni in Arts, Anna Schreur

-PAGE 14

Expanding the Mission,
Industrial Arts

Mr. Bill Postma

-PAGE 16

Development Update

-PAGE 18

revive News

-PAGE 20

2024-25 Unity Christian Trustees

Brad DeKock
President - 2025

Jon Lanning
Vice President - 2027

John Dice
Treasurer - 2026

Teresa Kooyer
Secretary - 2026

Ed DeYoung
Vice-Gerent - 2025

Ryan Kooiman
Member-At-Large - 2027

Administration

Jerry DeGroot
Principal/CEO

Jeff Engbers
Athletic Director

Dan Landstra
Director for Spiritual Life and Leadership

Bill Postma
Director of Instruction

Scott Soodsma
Dean of Students & Attendance

Doug VanderPloeg
Director of Transportation/Facilities

Troy Billin
Director of Development



LEARNING TO GIVE

Jerry DeGroot, *Principal/CEO*

Living in Michigan and experiencing the changing of seasons is one of those blessings in seeing God's hand in Creation. The changing color of trees is one of the most spectacular scenes in the landscape of our state. Recently, the weather has been absolutely beautiful, but with winter on the horizon, we cherish every day that brings sun and warmth. While the rhythms of our seasons bring beauty along with storms, I would venture to say that most of us have not experienced nature that causes permanent change in our lives.

The hurricanes that have swept through parts of the United States have left a path of devastation in their wake. Communities in coastal states, particularly in the southeast, have faced severe flooding, high winds, and widespread power outages. Homes were destroyed, streets turned into rivers, and families displaced. Emergency responders and volunteers have been and are working tirelessly to provide aid, but the recovery process will be slow and challenging. As communities come together to rebuild, they are finding strength in resilience and support from neighboring regions and relief organizations.

As Christians God calls us to see others through the lens of Christ's love and compassion. It's easy to get caught up in our own desires, but God calls His people to be selfless and attentive to others. As a Christian School, we hope to teach students how to use their gifts – whether that is time, talents, or resources which can be used to help others in meaningful ways. Encouraging them to step into others' shoes and imagine what it feels like to be in need fosters empathy and a sense of responsibility. As they experience the joy of giving, they begin to understand that, in serving others, they are ultimately serving God and fulfilling His call to love others sacrificially.

At Unity we recognized a need and an incredible opportunity to not only help others but to show students how to help and that every little gift makes a difference. The student body at Unity was given the opportunity to show Christ's love through giving of their own resources. In chapel Mr. Landstra shared openly about giving sacrificially, that all are blessed by God's gifts, and we are called to give back those resources as a response to God's love for us. A challenge was made to the students at Unity – raise \$10,000 for the hurricane relief fund through the organization Samaritan's Purse. This was a tangible way for students to become involved and on October 7 the 10 x 14 project was set. Unity students were encouraged, without financial support from their parents, to raise \$10,000.00 by October 14 – project 10 x 14. The students now had a goal – raise \$10,000.00 in one week! This meant that students would have to give an average of \$12.50 each to reach the goal of \$10,000.00 – giving up something for the sake of others.

On October 14, the money donated was totaled, and the goal had been surpassed! While the total amount was not important, the greater lesson learned was how a little can provide so much more. This 10 x 14 project was not hidden under a bushel. God compounded this blessing as others started to pour in their resources. Parents gave, grandparents gave, community members gave, and even the local Christian radio station Joy 99 began a promotion to raise funds for hurricane relief. Our students learned a lesson of how giving sacrificially allows for unsurpassed blessings. It is not about how much you give but the heart behind the gift. God values the sacrifice, not the amount.

The blessings that surround us are immeasurable. How is God calling you to give sacrificially? How are you using the resources God has provided?

I pray that all can help set an example for the next generation in showing how sacrificial giving to advance God's kingdom, no matter the amount, will be blessed beyond measure.

Thank you for the love and support you provide to the students and staff of Unity Christian.

In Christ,

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.

HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME

by Jeff Engbers, Athletic Director



Under the lights of Hudsonville High School, Unity Christian hosted the first annual homecoming football game against the Dux of Zeeland West. This matchup was between two undefeated teams as the two squads entered the game with identical 4-0 records. We had a large crowd of Unity Christian alumni, parents, and supporters who filled a good portion of the Hudsonville stands. Alumni enjoyed complimentary entrance into the game and ice cream served from the JQ99 Joy Bus.



From the start, our defense set the tone for the night. With a relentless energy, we shut down Zeeland West's wing-T offense which had been averaging over 39 points per game, showcasing our skill and determination. As the game progressed, we maintained our strong defensive strategy, stifling Zeeland West's attempts to score. In the end, our hard work paid off with a decisive 20-8 victory. The players celebrated on the field, as they had not only defended their undefeated record but also helped create lasting memories on a night filled with pride and school spirit.

Adding to the festivities, the student council organized a spirited "Blue Crew," a group of enthusiastic students decked out in school colors who energized the crowd by tossing T-shirts into the stands. Their enthusiasm was infectious, adding to the school spirit and community throughout the stadium. At halftime we had a relay race featuring students from different grades. The friendly competition added to the celebration of homecoming, fostering unity among the student body.





HOMECOMING DANCE

by Quinn Smedley, Student Council Member

Preparing for the Homecoming dance has been a long time coming! For approximately two years, Student Council has been seriously discussing the addition of Homecoming to our school year. Last year we finally got the “all clear” to start planning for the 2024 Homecoming dance. Lots of thought went into this dance because we knew it was our first ever Homecoming dance and we wanted it to be impressive. We decided to book a different venue than what we had before, and we booked a ballroom in DeVos Place. When the student council committee was tasked with decorating for the dance, we toured DeVos Place and it was clear this was a big upgrade from other dance venues. This made decorating a challenging task to complete because there was so much more space to fill and decorate. The decor ended up being black linens on the tables and string lights above two banners that read, “Homecoming ‘24” and “Under the lights” which was the Homecoming theme this year. There also was a gold and silver ballon arch at the entrance to the ballroom. The students’ attitude to the dance was positive overall. This year’s Homecoming was one of the most enjoyed Unity dances in a while. Students felt the venue was very remarkable and extravagant considering our previous venues and the participation in dancing was a lot higher than previous school dances. The Homecoming dance was truly the perfect way to end Unity’s first ever Homecoming week.



POWDERPUFF FOOTBALL

by Mikayla Wolters, Student Council Member



On Thursday September 26, 2024, Unity Christian hosted the first ever girls’ powder puff football game under the lights. Last year, Mrs. Koning announced to the student council we would be having our first ever homecoming week in the fall of 2024. Student council then started preparing for the big event. One thing we wanted to change was to make powder puff a bigger and better event. In years past, the junior and senior girls played each other on a Saturday afternoon on the grass fields. This year, the powder puff game was played right after the school building was open for alumni to come tour and see the updates since the construction has begun. To form teams, student council made an announcement for juniors and seniors to sign up to either play or coach.

Any boys who wanted to help as coaches met at lunch and drafted the two teams from the list of girls who signed up. We had enough players to form two teams for each grade. The week or two leading up to the big game, the coaches could choose to have practices, to figure out plays and positions. Finally, the big night was here! A beautiful sunset sky was the perfect backdrop to a perfect fall night. The first round matched up the two junior teams and the two senior teams. After those games were completed, the winning senior team took on the winning junior team from the first round. The losing teams from round one also played in a consolation game. After the final buzzer, the first-place team was one of the senior teams, and the consolation game was won by one of the junior teams.



SPIRIT WEEK

by Lulu Ghent, Student Council Member

When we started planning our first homecoming week ever, we really wanted to emphasize overall school spirit. Winterfest is also for school spirit, but more a sense of individual class spirit, with points and lip sync competitions. Bringing the school together as a whole was our focus for this homecoming week. The week consisted of games at passing times, breaks, and lunch involving both students and staff. Every day different dress up days occurred includ-

ing Mathlete vs. Athlete, Biker vs. Surfer, Monochromatic outfit day, and Spirit day. We also planned "anything but a backpack day" which is a favorite among students. On this day, students get to choose whatever they want to hold their books and binders, except for a backpack! Anything but a backpack day allowed the students to have fun at school, be creative, and more interactive throughout the school day with others. For games this week, we in-

corporated games that were easy to play, and got every student involved. The two main games were Matching Game and Rock, Paper, Scissors. The match game provided every student with a number, which had a match by somebody else in their grade. Throughout the day, the challenge was to find your matching number, and go to the office for a candy treat. This game was super fun and interactive for students who found their match, and maybe got

to meet a new friend or talk to somebody they have never met. The rock, paper, scissors tournament gave everyone a chance to challenge each other and teachers for a beaded necklace. Winners would collect necklaces, and the top 16 winners were invited to a championship bracket at lunch the next day. Overall, homecoming week gave students the opportunity to bring some fun into the school year with events, games, and dress up days.





HOMECOMING OPEN HOUSE

For Unity's 72-year long history, only 9 years have been spent at our 48th St Campus. This means that out of all our alumni, only 9 classes have graduated from our new building. And with our most recent addition, we currently have no graduating classes who have experienced the building as it is today. With that in mind, we decided it was time again to open our doors to our community. On Thursday, September 26 we hosted an

Open House event for the community to experience the building that they have helped us construct.

We welcomed long time alumni visiting the 48th St campus for the very first time, future Sadlers dreaming of the halls they will walk someday, family members peeking at where their student spends their time, and recent alumni exploring the most recent additions. They were welcomed into the building with cook-

ies and smiles from our Development Team. As our guests began touring the building, they encountered student leaders from Student Council posted at key areas around the school. These students had volunteered their time to share stories about their experiences as Unity students and answer questions about the building.

As guests' time in the building wound down, they were encouraged to keep their

'homecoming experience' going by visiting the Powderpuff Football game taking place that evening and coming out to the Homecoming Football game the following evening. As guests exited the building you could feel the excitement in the air. Campus was hopping with activity in the evening! It was such a blessing to share an exciting evening with the community and alumni who came out that evening.

HEART TO HEART

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY: WHAT MAKES US WHO WE ARE?

by Dan Landstra

The game was intense. Each team worked very hard to gain the victory for their school. At a critical moment in the game, a player from the team whose jersey bore the words "Unity Christian" made a mistake, giving the opposition a clear advantage. In a moment of anger and frustration, the player yelled out an inappropriate word which was heard by more than a few spectators in the stands. The coach also heard what was said and immediately substituted the player out of the game. The athlete, knowing their emotions got the better of them, sat down on the bench with their head held low.

An adult spectator turned to the person next to them, shook their head disapprovingly, and said, "I thought this was a Christian school!"

A group of students sat together in a local restaurant on a weekend evening. The conversation was lively as the students enjoyed their dinner while recalling the events of the past week in school. The topics shifted from classes and school activities to gossip about certain students in school who were not well-liked by some of the group members. The comments ranged from unkind to mean and even contemptuous.

Unbeknownst to the group, individuals at a table behind them

overheard most of the conversation and were troubled by the tone and content of the student conversation. While leaving the restaurant, the adults notice two of the young people are wearing Unity Christian apparel. One of the adults remarks to the other members of their group, "I thought that was a Christian school!"

When the relationship started, it was fun to have a significant other. It was the first real relationship for both, and they enjoyed each other's company. But the innocence of a new relationship and the boundaries that should accompany it gave way to the pressure of conforming to a culture where boundaries and standards are remnants of the past. They were soon found by an adult to have exchanged inappropriate pictures with each other on their phones. Both recognized the seriousness of their error and a desire to turn away from it.

But social media is an uncaring and unforgiving messenger of poor choices made by individuals, especially the young. As rumors circulated about these Unity students, truth lost its footing to speculation among those looking to be "in the know". One adult, not a Unity parent, made the following comment about the situation on social media: "I thought Unity was a Christian school."

These three stories are fictional. However, they represent similar, real stories that occur each year involving Unity students.

"We are supposed to be different from a school that doesn't have "Christian" in its name!"

"We are different, but we're not perfect! I can't stand it when some people think we never do anything wrong!"

Alex, Jack, and members of a leadership class (no real names used) were passionately discussing what it means, for students, to belong to a Christian high school community. The conversation began when a member of the class was sharing an experience where a friend from another school "called out" a Unity student for behavior deemed by the accusing student to be unacceptable for a student from Unity.

Alex continued, "I believe if we say we are Christian, then it has to mean something beyond just saying it. There has to be evidence of it in the way we live!"

Shaking his head in disapproval, Jack responded, "I never said Christian people were allowed to do whatever they want! Of course, there has to be evidence!"

Other members of the class nodded in agreement. "But" Jack added emphatically, "I really don't like it that some people think Unity is some kind of angel factory where everyone always does the right thing." He paused for a moment, then finished, "It's just not true!"

The class sat for a moment and reflected on the exchange. Allie spoke up next and said, "Mr. Landstra, you've been at Unity for a long time. What do you think? Do you expect more from Unity students than you do from kids who don't have 'Christian' in their school's name?"

I pointed back to Allie and asked, "Let me ask you this: What makes a school 'Christian'?"

Allie furrowed her brow and straightened up a bit as if she had just smelled something offensive. "What do you mean by that?" she quickly replied, "Isn't it obvious?"

"Maybe it is," I said. "But humor me and tell me what makes Unity 'Christian'".

Sara jumped in before Allie could reply, "For one, we have specifically Christian things like Bible class and chapel. We pray throughout the day. No public school does that!"

Everyone nodded, but not confidently. The students seemed aware the answer Sara gave was good but incomplete. The look of uncertainty on Sara's face indicated the same.

Finally, Evan broke the silence and said, "It's where we start from that makes us who we are."

Everyone turned toward Evan, looking for more. "What do you mean by that Evan?" I asked.

"We are what we value. And for a Christian school, we value the Bible more than anything else. If we start with the Bible, everything we do comes from that starting point."

I smiled, appreciating the articulate way Evan spoke his belief, then asked the class a question, the answer to which we had discussed many times, "So, if what Evan said is correct, the Bible is our...what?"

Several voices chimed in, "Lens!"

"Right," I replied. "And, if the Bible is the lens through which we see and understand every single aspect of school life and culture, then faith and belief are 'what' into everything?"

The same voices replied, "Infused!"

"Exactly!" I proclaimed. "We are a Christian school primarily because of our worldview, which is rooted in the Bible and permeates everything, as a school, we do." I waited a moment, allowing the students time to process, then added, "Worldview makes all the difference. Whatever a worldview has as its center will determine what flows from it. For a Christian school like Unity, the worldview center is scripture. It makes us who we are!"

Heads nodded, but there were definitely some unsatisfied looks among several members of the class. I waited to see who might choose to speak up. Alex broke the silence. Raising his arm in frustration he said, "You didn't answer the question!"

Jack turned toward Alex, giving him a nod of approval, then looked at me and said, "He's kind of right Mr. Landstra. You didn't settle our dispute."

Sara followed, "Tell us if you think it is fair to expect students at Unity to behave differently than students who don't go to a Christian school?"

"Alright," I said, "How about instead of just giving you an answer, I challenge you to consider what factors contribute to an answer, then you can decide what the answer is?"

Alex and Jack glanced at each other, then gave me a nod of approval.

"Great," I said. "Just to be clear though, let me start with this...I believe for anyone who has made the choice to commit their life to Christ it is essential they strive for a lifestyle that is consistent with their profession."

Raising my hand to a "stop" position, I then added, "But! There are a couple of factors you must consider when thinking about Unity students and the interconnection of belief and behavior."

"Like what?" Alex asked.

I thought for a moment about how to proceed, then asked the class, "Do you think every student at Unity fully accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior?" Everyone shook their heads, "No." I then asked, "Do you think every student at Unity embraces the Bible as their lens and works to infuse faith into all parts of their life?" Again, heads shook, "No."

"So, we agree" I stated, "not all students at Unity have made a commitment to Christ. Correct?"

Heads nodded.

I continued, "Do you believe there are students who, over the course of four years in high school, positively change what and how they think regarding faith and belief?"

Macie, a senior, spoke up. "I know several people from our senior class who have changed during high school."

"You're right Macie, I do too!" I replied.

I wanted Macie to complete her thought. I asked her, "Those people who, as you stated, have 'changed'. What about them changed?"

Macie didn't hesitate. "Their hearts!" Then she added, "God changed their hearts!"

Everyone nodded.

"Right!" I said, then asked, "If God changes a person's heart, what other changes eventually start to come?"

Alex nodded in understanding and said, "Their behaviors".

"Exactly" I responded. "And that is the first factor we must consider. Becoming a Christian is an inside-out process. Change on the inside, or your heart, will eventually work its way to the outside, which is your life. I worry that some people might, at times, get that backward and expect behaviors from Unity students born out of an assumed faith they do not yet possess."

Macie chimed in, "That makes sense, but what is the other factor?"

"Macie" I responded, "It has to do with the process of sanctification."

Evan jumped in. "I think I know where you are going with this."

I smiled at Evan and with a hand extended toward him, invited him to continue, "Go on Evan. Tell us what's on your mind."

Evan sat up straight in his chair and said, "As we grow in our faith over time, the Holy Spirit continues to work in us so that we desire sin less and we become more Christ-like in our actions." He held the thought for a moment, then finished, "Kind of like becoming more holy over time."

"That's a great answer, Evan!" I enthusiastically exclaimed.

"Yeah," said Alex, "But what does that have to do with us?"

"Well," I said, "If you think about people from your church who are the age of your grandparents, are there any who seem like models of faith based on what you know about them?"

All heads nodded and a few names from local churches were cited as examples.

I continued, "Do you think the people to whom you are referring always lived and followed Christ the way they do now, or did they grow into the person you now see?"

Sara, perhaps a bit annoyed being asked a question with, in her mind, such an indisputable answer quipped, "Obviously they grew into it."

"You're right Sara, it should be obvious."

Anticipating more, Sara added, "But...?"

Without hesitation I followed, "But that isn't the way we always think when it comes to young Christians and their actions."

I pointed to every individual in the classroom and said, "Don't get me wrong, I am not excusing sin that results from poor choices. But the reality for all of us living in a fallen world is that the battle with sin and temptation is real. And I think it can be particularly challenging for younger Christians who are at the beginning of the sanctification process, and who are growing up in a time when there are even more temptations to deal with than previous generations had."

I paused for a moment, then continued, "And the struggle with sin is real for all students who are Christian, no matter what school they attend."

So, although we openly talk at Unity about how actions reflect an underlying belief, it doesn't mean we won't fail at times. And clearly, we all, not just students but all of us, struggle.

At a Christian school though, sin isn't where the story ends. The mistakes of our lives lead us to open conversations every day about the opportunity for a new start."

Sara nodded and added, "And you want to know, for me, what is one of the best parts about going to a school with 'Christian' in the name?"

Everyone stared at Sara as we waited for her answer. She concluded with, "When we inevitably do mess up, we are always encouraged to look right back to the lens and remember the grace God offers when we confess and repent."

Evan added, "I'm really thankful it all points back to God...In the good and bad things in life, we are looking for God through it all. Having a chance to learn that way is a huge blessing."

Thank you, Lord, for the young people who pursue you. May they be encouraged to surrender their hearts fully and may your Spirit work in them as they strive, over all their years on earth, to become more Christ-like in all they do and say. And lead us to extend to others, when they behave in a way they shouldn't, the grace you freely give to each of us.

May it be so!

From the front row...

Dan Landstra

Unity Director for Spiritual Life

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 21
Hudsonville Holiday Parade
UC Band Performs
6:00PM

DECEMBER 5
Orchestra Concert, Jenison Fine Arts
7:30PM

DECEMBER 11
Band Concert, Unity
7:30PM

DECEMBER 16
Choir Concert
Fair Haven
7:30PM

JANUARY 6
Second Semester Begins

SAVE THE DATE
Class of 1975
50th Class Reunion

LOCATION
Unity Christian High School
5900 48th Ave
Hudsonville, MI 49426

TIME
4 – 7 P.M.

DATE
October 4, 2025

More info to come.
Check out the Class of 1975 Reunion
Facebook page to stay up to date.

GIVING CORNER



Did you know that you can give directly from your IRA to Unity Christian High School? This type of gift is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) and is a tax-advantaged way to donate directly from an IRA to your favorite charities. QCDs can count toward satisfying your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), once you reach your RMD age (currently 73). A QCD can even be made before your RMD age, as long as the gift is made at age 70 ½ or after. This strategy allows you to support your favorite charities, reduce taxable income, and meet your RMD obligations all in one move, making it a great tool for both retirement and charitable planning.

HAPPENING @ UNITY



The Girl's Golf Team set a new school record for a state score. They scored 754 and finished 9th at the Division 3 State Championship.

FOOTBALL TEAM IS THE OK GOLD CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS WITH A 5-0 RECORD.



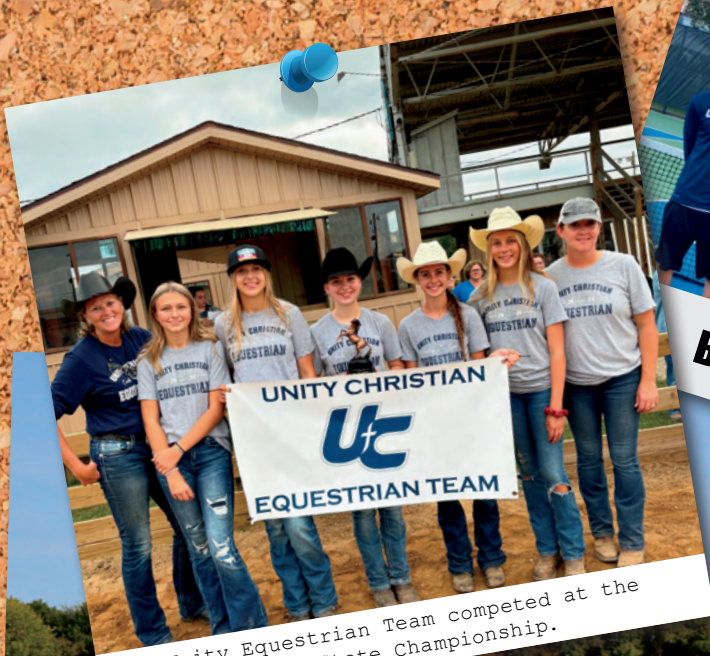
The Boy's Varsity Soccer team is the OK Black Conference Co-Champion and ended the season with a 14-3-4 record.



Ava Schepers set a new school record in the 500 Freestyle.



2 Unity students on the HCS/UCHS Robotics team were part of a "Meet and Greet" with Michigan State Senator, Roger Victory.



Unity Equestrian Team competed at the MIHA State Championship.



BOY'S TENNIS TEAM WENT TO THE STATE FINALS.



UNITY HOSTED ITS 10TH ANNUAL VICTORY DAY.



Musical Cast and Crew preparing for "Funny Girl."



Orchestra & Band Fall Concert



Student body & community raised \$13,000 for a hurricane relief fund.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Births

Libby (Walters '13) and Brandon Haan



Libby (Walters '13) and Brandon Haan welcomed Liam into the family on July 6, 2023! Liam had a busy first year of life, traveling to seven different countries while dad was deployed in Germany. The Haan family is now all together in California and settling into their new home!



Hailey (Overweg '11) and Andrew Brinks welcomed Camryn Rose Brinks into the world on April 29, 2024. The whole family, including big brother, Parker, love their new addition to the family.

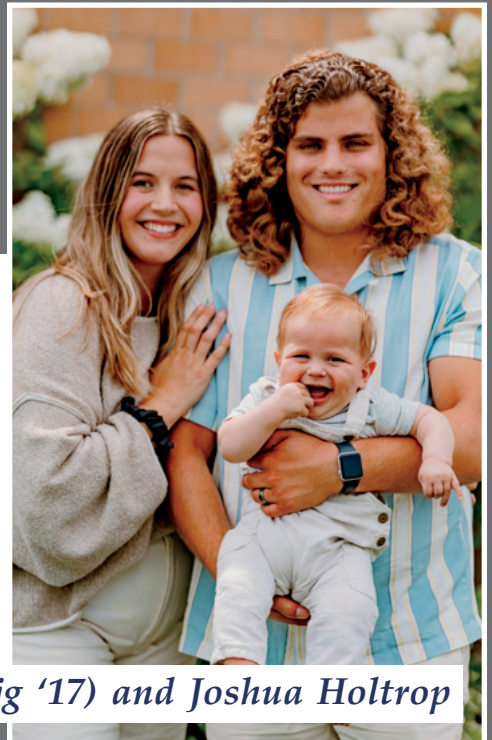
Hailey (Overweg '11) and Andrew Brinks

Alyssa (Kloosterhouse '13) and Charlie ('13) Vrieland



Alyssa (Kloosterhouse '13) and Charlie ('13) Vrieland's family grew on August 31, 2024 when they welcomed daughter, Cleo June, into the world.

Maci (Jongekrijg '17) and Joshua Holtrop were married on June 9, 2022 and moved to Dallas, Texas 6 weeks later. They moved so Joshua could attend school at Christ For The Nations. He will graduate in May of 2025, and they will see where the Lord leads them next. Maci and Joshua welcomed their first baby, a little boy named Judah Daniel, on February 12, 2024!



Maci (Jongekrijg '17) and Joshua Holtrop

Ethan ('18) and Chloe Dykstra

Maverick John was born to parents Ethan ('18) and Chloe Dykstra on December 18, 2023.

Welcome to the Blue Crew, little ones!

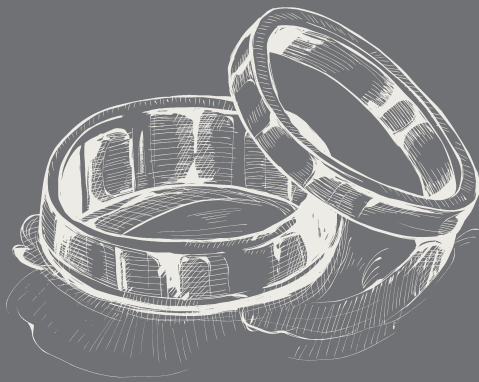
ALUMNI UPDATES

Marriages

Spencer ('14) and Alexis VanderLaan are happy to announce that they were married on September 14, 2024.



Austin Kooienga ('21) is pleased to announce that he is recently engaged to his lovely fiancée and that they will be married next September.



Kayla (Bosma '14) and Ryan Rearick are excited to announce that they were joined in marriage on October 18, 2024.



ALUMNI IN THE ARTS

—ANNA SCHREUR—

MUSIC EDUCATOR & CHOIR DIRECTOR

Anna Schreur's life has been shaped by her deep love of music. God developed her passion into a dream of being a music educator. But Anna's journey to becoming a teacher began long before she had her own classroom. First, she was a student at Unity Christian High School (UCHS). Anna believes that the opportunities to grow artistically and spiritually, along with the support of dedicated teachers at Unity, helped cement her on this path. It's easy to see where God guided our lives when we look back – we can see where we started and where we ended up. Looking back, Anna can see how the Lord was always leading her to her current role as the Choir Director and Music Teacher at Hudsonville Christian School.

Anna Schreur, then Hulst, grew up in a home where Christian Education was a priority. This was exemplified from the very beginning of her education. Her parents homeschooled Anna for two years and then enrolled her at Hudsonville Christian School. She would then graduate high school from UCHS. Anna explains, "My parents prioritized a partnership with the local church and Christian education to help develop and cultivate my faith from a young age. Christian education provided a firm foundation for my faith. It is a blessing I will always be grateful for."

By the time Anna was a high school student, music was not just an area of study – it was something she lived. She was involved in choir, orchestra, and worship teams at Unity. She was blessed to have multiple avenues to express her faith through the arts. "I got involved in fine arts at Unity because God gave me a passion for music, specifically worship music. When worshipping, I feel closest to God. Getting involved in the fine arts and chapels at Unity provided me a tangible way to respond to God for who He is and what He's done," Anna recalls.

This connection between the arts and faith was nurtured by several teachers who were influential in Anna following her dream of a career in music education. "Teachers such as Jess Hollenback, Sara Jager, Ashton Foreman, and Brian Knot helped me develop my love for music and discover a love for music education," Anna shares. Anna feels these mentors helped her envision a future where music could be a viable career path.



Anna credits her time at Unity with more than cementing her passion for music, she also sees how her Christian education helped her develop a holistic worldview through the lens of Scripture. "Christian education influenced my passions, pursuits, and perspective on life," she said. "Seeing the world through the lens of Scripture changes everything."

After high school, God led Anna to Nashville, Tennessee where she began studying K-12 Vocal Music Education at Belmont University. Her first semester was exciting. There was a thrill in moving to "Music City", but once the shine of novelty faded, what was left was uncertainty and homesickness. "The initial excitement of attending my dream college wore off quickly as the reality of being nine hours away from home set in," Anna shares. As first semester came to a close, she made plans to move home and study somewhere closer. "I had made the worst decision of my life. Or so I thought." After moving home,

Anna's heart was not quieted as she expected. Instead, she longed to be back at Belmont. Through God's providence and grace, a way was made for Anna to reenroll at her dream school the next fall.

God was not done with Anna yet. She would go on to have three amazing years in Nashville. An experience that she holds dear was the chance to sing with Ed Sheeran for a televised Elvis Presley tribute. Belmont would call her back to Nashville in 2023 for another exciting opportunity. Anna traveled to record background vocals at Ocean Way Nashville Recording Studios for Kelly Carner, a Gospel singer-songwriter and former Belmont Professor.

After graduating from college, Anna spent a year teaching in Brentwood, Tennessee. Unfortunately, COVID-19 interrupted her first year of teaching. God opened the door for her to move home through a position in the Hudsonville Public School system. But Christian education was still on Anna's heart and once again, a door was opened. Anna shares, "Ever since I was a 6th grader at HCMS, I prayed that one day God would allow me to be the choir director and music teacher at Hudsonville Christian Middle School."



My friends, God hears your prayers, and God answers prayers!"

The next year, Anna's longtime dream was fulfilled. Now as the Middle School Choir Director and Music Teacher at Hudsonville Christian, Anna's role is multifaceted. She does more than just direct choir. As a music teacher at the middle school, she also has a hand in the education of every student. She feels privileged to have an even wider impact still. "One of my favorite things about my job is leading all-school chapels," Anna says. "I hear and see glimpses of heaven on this side of earth. The presence of God is palpable." Anna also finds fulfillment in her talented team of co-educators and in coaching the middle school track team.

While her job is an answer to prayer, it is not without its challenges. Working with middle school students comes with its own unique set of circumstances and dynamics. "Middle school students are fun, creative,

silly, sometimes smelly, and extremely talented," Anna jokes. "I really try to foster and instill a mutual respect between myself and my students from the very first day. This impacts everything!" Students take some time to adjust to the higher level of expectations in middle school music and choir, but Anna loves watching her students rise to the occasion.

Anna's time at Unity began preparing her for her current role by demonstrating the importance of biblical community. While one of Anna's goals is to strengthen her students' musical abilities, she also knows that her role as a Christian educator is bigger. "My time at Unity allowed me to grow not just in my passion for music, but in my passion for people," she says. "As Christians, we thrive in biblical community,

and I think that's why I teach. I love God. I love His young people."

Anna feels that her life has been a testament to the importance of Christian education. "Christian education is an investment, and the return is priceless," she says. Anna shared that her favorite verse is Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." Anna's story is one of answered prayers, walking by faith, and God doing great things! Anna, in return, is using her gifts for God's glory. She is living out a calling that she first witnessed in her teachers when she was young – a calling that mixes her passion for music, faith, and people in a way that uses her gifts!



EXPANDING OUR MISSION

At Unity, our goal is that every student receives an education that maximizes the unique gifts and talents each student has been given by God. Industrial Arts at Unity is a big part of doing that. We believe industrial art classes are for all students, not just those pursuing vocational training. These classes provide students with a basic understanding of how to use tools and provide students with knowledge and skills that will benefit them as future homeowners.



Part of the West Side building expansion is an additional 2,500 square feet of new shop space and a dedicated shop classroom. Unity chose to make this substantial investment in square footage for Industrial Arts because, for the past few years, we have had to limit student enrollment in shop classes. Student interest far exceeded our capacity. In the 2023-24 school year, we enrolled 200 students in 15 periods of shop classes. In 2024-25, because of the addition, we have enrolled 296 students in 22 class periods. That is a 48% increase in student enrollment!

In addition to being able to serve more students, the learning environment has been vastly improved. A dedicated shop classroom with desks allows the shop teacher to provide instruction in a quiet learning space with minimal distractions. The additional 2,500 square feet has been designed specifically as a wood shop while the existing shop area has been redesigned into a metal shop. This change has had a large impact on the working environment in both areas due to increased space between machines. This creates not only a more pleasant educational environment but also a much safer one. Furthermore, a large 2-level storage area has been built between the wood shop and metal shop. This was a critical element of the design because with the increased enrollment comes many more student projects that need to be stored.

A sign outside the old shop area, titled 'the Carpenter's room' reads, *"May you find your God-given skills and use them for His honor and glory."* The additional and renovated Industrial Arts space is creating an environment for students to do just that. Thanks be to God!

-Bill Postma, Director of Instruction



BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION

TROY BILLIN, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Foundational: “forming or serving as a base or foundation: **FUNDAMENTAL**”

Just like forming up and pouring concrete on undisturbed soil provides a base that is **FOUNDATIONAL** to construct buildings on, Christian Education at Unity needs a **FOUNDATIONAL BASE** of many constituents praying and contributing financial resources.

As we pivot to the east side of our building addition and watch the foundations being laid, I ask you to consider some of the many **FOUNDATIONAL** components of life and education at Unity.

SPIRITUAL

- The Bible is the **FOUNDATIONAL** document used by Christians to find Truth.
- Acknowledging Jesus as the only Savior from our sinful nature is **FOUNDATIONAL** to the Christian Life.
- Loving God above all and your neighbor as yourself is a **FOUNDATIONAL** command to Christians.

EDUCATIONAL

- Great education is **FOUNDATIONAL** to any community that wants to thrive.
- Training young people to serve God and others is **FOUNDATIONAL** to our calling as Christian Educators.
- Helping students understand that “choosing a faith-infused life means glorifying God through a life of gratitude, submitting every part of life to His will, while extending God’s grace to the community. Christianity is not “what” a faith infused student is, instead it is “who” they are.” This understanding is **FOUNDATIONAL** to our way of educating students.
- Excellent teachers that invest themselves in each student are **FOUNDATIONAL** to our way of teaching.

COMMUNITY

- Facilities that are functional, flexible and adequate to accommodate all students whose parents desire a faith-infused education is **FOUNDATIONAL** to serving our local Christian Community.
- Having a wide base of many donors giving what they can in our community to support Unity Christian High School is **FOUNDATIONAL** to our long-term existence and excellence.



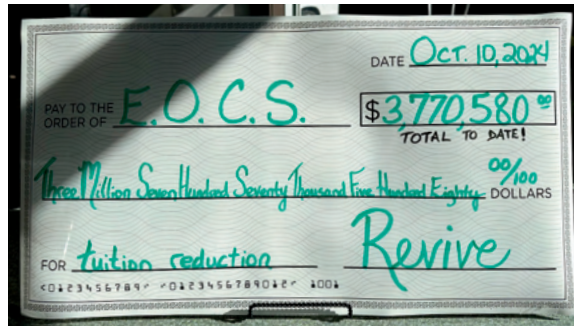
Will you follow the example set by our students, and contribute what you can to help us finish the interior of the east side addition making it functional for use by second semester next year.

We **NEED** 2000 more donors giving what they can. We have a donor who has generously committed \$500,000 in matching funds for new donor commitments, whether pledge or gift, to encourage donors who have not yet committed to our “Expanding Our Mission” campaign. We believe that God will use our community of supporters to provide the funding needed. Please prayerfully consider what you can give or pledge to support our **FOUNDATIONAL** resource and equip it for service to parents and students for the next 50 years.



PAY DAY!

This October, *revive* eagerly welcomed all the Eastern Ottawa Christian Schools principals to a gathering in celebration of its 2024 Distribution of funds to our schools. After a year of plentiful donations, days full of shoppers, and record-breaking sales, this would be the biggest payout yet: a total of \$723,060 for this academic year! That represents \$260 per student for every student enrolled in Allendale, Borculo, Hudsonville, Jenison, Lamont, South Olive Christian, and Unity Christian High School. Not only is that the highest amount per student paid out yet, but it is exciting to see that this is the highest enrollment number ever included in *revive* payouts, with a grand total of 2,781 students! God is doing good things in our schools! We pray that the families drawn to Christian education find our schools to be a place of learning but also of growing in faith. All of us at *revive* are honored to be able to support that very important goal.



BLISS ON A BUDGET

reVive recently received this email from a regular shopper. With permission, we'd like to share it with you as just one example of all the blessed interactions and relationships we get to be part of each week.

"Hello! I'm reaching out to you to give you a huge thank you! I spent 6 months collecting and shopping in your shop for my wedding. It turned out absolutely gorgeous! It was a joy coming in every week and sometimes a few times a week to collect everything I needed for the amazing backyard wedding. Your volunteers are always so helpful and seem to love what they do. Helping and enjoying all my treasures I find when I visit. Our wedding turned out so much more beautiful than I could have imagined. And all in our budget. I appreciate how well you keep up with filling your store with amazing items. I'd say we had 80-85% of what is pictured was from your store alone. It took everyone's breath away when I shared it was thrifted. I appreciate your hard work and your mission! God bless and know you have a customer for as long as you are in business. Thank you from the bottom of my heart! And see you soon for all my holiday season shopping very soon." -Mrs. Kerry Ann

Although raising funds for our schools is reVive's greatest passion, we realize that God has plans for this store that go far beyond that. To be a positive part of the lives of our shoppers and donors is a privilege we don't take lightly. And we pray we can continue to be a blessing to everyone in our community who walks through our doors.



RETRO FROM reVive

Like the woman shopping for her wedding, reVive also welcomed a mom on a mission. She wanted to give her 16-year-old daughter a birthday party to remember and was looking for all things elegant and antique. It would be a party that brought back all the beauty and style of more than a century ago. On her shopping trips, she collected fine china, crystal stemware, and items such as serving trays, candy dishes, and other pieces to add to the effect. Afterward, she came back to the store to tell us how beautiful it all turned out! It was such a joy for those working and hearing her story to know we had helped someone do something fun for someone she loved. And so nice knowing we could help her do that affordably too!



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

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Grand Rapids, MI
Permit #250



“developing followers of Christ to be leaders”