



PARENT NOTE – December 2, 2024

“Creation Caretakers”

Genesis 2:15

FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK:

As I write this last Principal’s Update for the 2024 calendar year, it is a blessing to reflect on the amazing ways God has blessed the Highland Christian School community! In celebration of my sixth year as HCS’ principal, I’ve decided to leave my ‘Top 6 Moments from 2024’. Enjoy!

1. God has blessed our school community with **675 students, 108 staff members**, and an incredible community of kids, parents, grandparents, and churches. God’s faithfulness is certainly present in the lives of the individuals who are a part of Highland Christian School.
2. Our monthly **Saturday Serve continues to be a blessing** for those in our community. Whether playing bingo for veterans, filling ‘Blessing Boxes’, raking leaves for local residents, or bringing flowers to shut-ins, these opportunities continue to support those in our community and showcase one of our strategic goals - to model and be Service Workers!
3. Last year, our students showed **172% growth in math and 117% in reading** on MAP tests. This is well above one year’s worth of growth! The PLC (Professional Learning Community) remains strong. We remain focused on:
 - a. What do we want students to learn?
 - b. How do we know they have learned it?
 - c. What do we do if they do not learn it the first time?
 - d. What do we do if they already learned it before they came to class?
4. In the second year of our new building, we have seen how the community continues to go above and beyond to support our school’s mission and vision. Many continued thanks to the various vendors that supported the project - all under the leadership of Lagastee Mulder. With a remaining balance of \$2,400,000 on our loan, and **roughly \$3,000,000 in support already received**, we see God’s hand at work in every gift given to the school. Additionally, we remain ahead of schedule on our repayment plan! Isn’t God amazing?!
5. We continue to see strong enrollment with **132 applicants in the first 12 hours of enrollment for the 25/26 school year**. Unfortunately, many of these families will not be able to enroll due to full classes, 98-99% retention, and tight classroom caps. We continue to collaboratively explore how we can support the strong demand for Christian education in Northwest Indiana.
6. This fall, we tried something new and hosted a book study centered around *The Anxious Generation*. With participation ranging from **50-120 parents and grandparents per night**, I was inspired by the wisdom of our community and its commitment to learn how we can best support our students amidst the complex challenges in our world. I am excited to see how God will use this study to transform HCS staff, students, homes and families for Christ!

Thank you for being a special part of the HCS community. We wouldn’t be the same without each and every student. God is faithful!

Dr. Kyle Weener

SCHOOL NEWS:

Welcome Back! We hope all of our HCS families had a wonderful Thanksgiving!

- **REMINDER: This Wednesday, December 4 is a late start day.** Drop-off begins at 9:40 a.m. and classes begin at 10:00 a.m. Buses will run about 1.5 hours later than usual. BAC is available.
- **Everyone is invited to our All-School Worship Chapel this Friday at 8:30 a.m. in the gym!**
- **December's Saturday Serve** will focus on filling Blessing Boxes throughout our neighborhoods.

Date: Saturday, December 14

Time: 9 - 11 am

Place: VanTil's Supermarket 2635 169th St, Hammond

Sign-Up Link: [December Saturday Serve Sign Up](#)

Come as a family and gather at VanTil's Supermarket in Hammond to shop for groceries. We have assembled a list of foods and toiletries for the boxes. After shopping, we will send your family with groceries to fill Blessing Boxes throughout our neighborhoods. We have identified and have directions to the Blessing Boxes. If you are unable to help on this day with the project, we are accepting donations to purchase groceries to fill the Blessing Boxes. Place your gift in an envelope with the label **Blessing Boxes** and send them to the office. Your gifts will greatly help make this project a success. Thank you for your work in bringing God's Kingdom on earth.

Questions? Contact Vicki Huizenga vhuizena@highlandchristian.org

ATHLETIC NEWS:

December 3: Boys' Basketball

- **6th grade @ Crown Point Christian (AWAY) 4:00 p.m.**
- **7th grade @ Crown Point Christian (AWAY) 5:00 p.m.**
- **8th grade @ Crown Point Christian (AWAY) 6:00 p.m.**

December 5: Boys' Basketball

- **6th grade vs. Calvary (HOME) 4:00 p.m.**
- **7th grade vs. Calvary (HOME) 5:00 p.m.**
- **8th grade vs. Calvary (HOME) 6:00 p.m.**

December 7: Boys' Basketball

- **6th grade tournament @ HCS (HOME) 9:00 a.m.**
- **7th grade tournament @ Calvary (AWAY) 9:00 a.m.**

CHEERLEADING TRYOUTS for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls are THIS WEEK! The girls will be cheering at the junior high girls' basketball games and at the end of the season they will perform a competition routine for friends and family. **The tryout information can be found below:**

- Tuesday, December 3: Tryout Day One 3:30pm - 5:30pm
- Friday, December 6: Tryout Day Two 3:30pm - 5:30pm

**Both days of tryouts are required. The girls will learn a short cheer, dance, jumps, and stunts on Day One. We will have their actual tryout on Day Two.

COUNSELOR CONNECTION:

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Or are you feeling the 'holiday blues'? The holiday blues are temporary feelings of anxiety and depression around the holidays. Extra stress, busy schedules, lots of sugar, and less sunlight can make us feel lonely, sad, tired, and blue. Visit this site to get useful tips and tools to help you and your child mitigate these feelings, and be preventative of long term anxiety or depression. [Tips for Managing the Holiday Blues | NAMI](#). If you, your child, or someone you know needs help call 1-800-950-NAMI; or text "HelpLine" to 62640; or call 988 in a crisis. You're not alone!

FAITH CORNER:

At this time of the year we recognize that our hearts were created to be filled with **HOPE**.
But in our world our hearts can get easily distracted.

What does your heart **HOPE** for?

I hope I get everything on my Christmas list.

I hope I get everything decorated and wrapped before Christmas Eve.

I hope there is snow on Christmas morning.

Share around your table your hopes for this season and your hopes for this coming year.

May we **HOPE** that every heart around our table prepares **HIM** room so that Heaven and nature sings.

Read Isaiah 9:2-7 from The Message

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

For those who lived in a land of deep shadows—light! sunbursts of light!

You repopulated the nation, you expanded its joy.

Oh, they're so glad in your presence! Festival joy!

The joy of a great celebration, sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.

The abuse of oppressors and cruelty of tyrants— all their whips and clubs and curses— Is gone, done away with, a deliverance as surprising and sudden as Gideon's old victory over Midian.

The boots of all those invading troops, along with their shirts soaked with innocent blood,

Will be piled in a heap and burned, a fire that will burn for days!

For a child has been born—for us! The gift of a son—for us!

He'll take over the running of the world.

His names will be: Amazing Counselor,

Strong God,

Eternal Father,

Prince of Wholeness.

His ruling authority will grow, and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings.

He'll rule from the historic David throne over that promised kingdom.

He'll put that kingdom on a firm footing and keep it going

With fair dealing and right living, beginning now and lasting always.

The zeal of GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies will do all this.

Prayer:

Come Lord Jesus, bring **HOPE**, faith, joy, & love into your world. You are the **HOPE** for this messy world. Help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what is really important. Amen.

TRIP NEWS:

Only Two TRIP Orders left to order physical gift cards before Christmas, December 5th and 12th.

Online Ordering: There are extra online bonus rebates being offered through the RaiseRight.com app! Check out the retailers offering more bonuses. Are you signed up for online ordering? Contact Ann Lynch at trip@highlandchristian.org for more information.

These retailers are offering smaller denomination gift cards while supplies last for the holiday season:

\$5 – Barnes & Noble, Cold Stone Creamery, Panera, Starbucks, Taco Bell

\$10 – Amazon, Applebee's, CVS Pharmacy, Darden Restaurants, Dick's Sporting Goods, Disney, Gap Brands, Home Depot, Jewel, T.J. Maxx, Walmart

TRIP orders for physical gift cards are due (online and paper order forms) this week, Thurs., Dec. 5th by 10 a.m. TRIP will be accepting physical gift card orders on Dec. 5, 12, Jan. 9, 16, 23 and 30. Online ordering is available 24/7. Contact Ann Lynch at trip@highlandchristian.org for more information.

TRIP Teams for Stuffing Orders: Team B – Dec. 10; Team C – Dec. 17; Team D – Jan. 14; Team A – Jan. 21

COMMUNITY NEWS:

- Living Hope Church presents SHAKE UP CHRISTMAS, a Christmas production that the whole family will enjoy! Join us on December 6th, 7th, and 8th at our Merrillville campus. This is a FREE EVENT, but seats are limited so please plan to arrive early! For more information, please visit www.LHCWEB.org.
- Mission Bible Church in Highland is searching for a Pastor of Student Ministries. If you're interested, please contact the church office (219-924-6240) or check out the following website for a position description and information on how to apply: <https://www.missionchurchnwi.com/content.cfm?id=9024>