

# ANNOUNCER

## *Adams Protestant Reformed Christian School*

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adamschristianschool.org

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### **Administration & Staff**

#### ***The Beautiful Classroom***

**Mr. Rick Mingerink**  
**Administrator**

**I**t really is a work of art. The flow. The rhythm. The cadence. The movement. Teacher speaking, children responding. Children wondering, teacher prodding.

The classroom is a beautiful space. To see a teacher teaching with children growing in awe and wonder parallels the beauty and complexity of the bee’s dance as it moves in and out of flowers. A classroom is a hive of sorted and deliberate activity. To some it might appear chaotic. To the understanding eye, it is an orchestra of learning. Books, maps, charts, pictures, stories, and voice culminate in a crescendo of activity directed at the children who form the focal point. These tangible tools are wielded with care and skill to impact the mind of the child which is both unseen and unknowable. There is almost something mysterious about wielding a tool for the purpose of shaping something unseen.

The splendor of a classroom is found in the variety of children that make it up. No classroom is ever the same. With each child there is a unique face, a unique look, a unique person. Each brings a different personality, different experiences, and different questions.

Together, they learn. Together, they question. Together, they grow in knowledge of the world God created. Some learn quickly. Some learn slowly. Some question often. Some listen readily. Some speak eloquently. Some sit quietly. All grow together. All are pushed and pulled in an environment where they learn about themselves and the world God governs.

But this learning is more than knowledge of what is real. That is hardly enough. Knowledge of reality is not what makes the classroom a Christian classroom. A Christian classroom is a space where children learn truth in all areas of life as revealed by God through His Word. It is more than learning that a tree trunk has layers. It is learning that God created that tree. That God sustains that tree by providing bark. That that tree is created to glorify its Creator. It is showing the child that the natural world is inseparable from the spiritual. It is learning that sin entered this world and deformed that which was created good. It is learning that God does not forsake this sin-cursed world, but has a covenant with His creation and will redeem all things in heaven and on earth through Christ (Col. 1:20).

This is the power found within a classroom of Christ. And this learning takes place in a space where God’s children can learn together. Where they see God not only as *my* God, but as *our* God. Not only as *my* Creator, but as *our* Creator. Not only to praise with *my* own voice, but with voices *together*.

This makes the Christian classroom a beautiful space.

The physical space of a classroom is a wonder room. Astounding things happen within those four walls. God is at work in that room. He assembled every detail of that space and uses every person and thing to mold and shape each child. God put that boy in that classroom to be shaped by the other boy and same in return. God put that teacher in that classroom to shape those students and to be shaped by them in return. The wonder of the classroom is not found only in the learning, but also in the learning together.

Shutting a classroom down is tragic. It should be done almost never. Almost never. It is like diverting the flow of water over the Niagara Falls because the rocks beneath need to be bolstered. Sometimes these things should happen. Sometimes they happen regardless of our efforts. It is tragic, nonetheless. Yet, it is a travesty when we do not even show up to the Niagara Falls to begin with. It is a travesty when the wonder of the classroom is not considered a wonder to be had at all.

I hope we are done shutting down Christian classrooms. I pray I never see it happen again. But even more, even more, I hope I never fail to appreciate or neglect the beauty and wonder that happens inside a classroom. Classrooms are beautiful spaces.

## Kindergarten News 2020

Mrs. Nancy Decker  
Kindergarten

The kindergarteners and I are happy to report that Adams Christian Kindergarten A has been a busy and productive place. Important kindergarten goals for the month of September were for the students to get to know each other, learn to know and follow rules, and to feel comfortable with the order and routine of the day. How wonderful it has been seeing them change from strangers into good friends, as they cooperate in activities of work and play. Learning the rules and routines has helped them feel comfortable in the classroom and has given them more confidence in learning. The boys and girls are working hard in the kindergarten room and it shows! How thankful we are for over two months of “in school” learning, but we know there is so much more to accomplish. Here are some of the highlights of the year thus far.

## Daily Devotions

Daily walks, summer travels, beautiful vistas from the windows of our homes or on the road in our cars— God’s beautiful creation speaks to us. As Psalm 19:1 says, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.”* And so, from mountains to valleys or eagles to sparrows, God gives us physical things that help us understand spiritual truths. Knowing that children love animals, our morning devotions have been taken from a book called God’s Amazing Creatures and Me! Beginning with a verse from scripture, followed by a little lesson about an animal, the kindergarteners and I have learned more about ourselves and the ways God sees us. When we studied the bullfrogs that join together in a nightly chorus and the Red-eyed Vireo, the one songbird that sings non-stop throughout the summer, we were reminded that we are to use our voices to praise God. *“O sing unto the Lord a new song, all the earth.”* Psalm 96:1. Even though they all appear the same, no two zebras have stripes that are exactly alike. This taught us that we are created by God and are special in His eyes. *“I will praise Thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* Psalm 139:14. We learned that we are like sheep. They are very helpless, but able to do one thing well. They know their shepherd’s voice and when he calls, they follow. Our Shepherd is Jesus, He speaks to us in His Word, and we must listen. *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”* John 10:27. And the small little hummingbird and the very common sparrow taught us that God cares for us as He cares for the little birds. *“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they?”* Matthew 6:26

## Senses and Science

One of the fun units taught in the kindergarten science curriculum is a unit on the five senses. How wonderfully God has created us so that we may enjoy His creation through our seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling. These five senses help us totally experience the beauty and wonder of God’s creation and then joined with His Word, we learn more about God himself.

It was not for lack of effort, but maybe bad timing in the cutting down of their milkweed feeding grounds and school starting later than usual, that our butterfly cage had just one little black, white, and yellow Monarch caterpillar. But one was enough to witness with our eyes the forming of their lime green and string of gold chrysalis, and finally the emerging of a gorgeous Monarch butterfly.

It was not for lack of wishing that a normal class trip with a wagon ride to a pumpkin patch could happen, but safety and staying healthy made learning about pumpkins happen in the classroom. The students all knew what a pumpkin looked like, but our hour of pumpkin art became more real as we touched the smooth skin, prickly tendrils and stem, and oh, the pulp with slimy strands protecting the slippery seeds. And then we wanted to smell and taste that pumpkin and there was nothing better than a pumpkin donut straight from the Post Farm! We thank our room moms for bringing that delicious sweet treat.

That leaves one more sense and we turn to our lessons in math. What better way to learn to tell the time than with an antique chiming mantle clock? Thanks to the expertise of our janitor/clock repairman, Mr. Don Kamphuis, my old family heirloom is now chiming in the kindergarten room. We have been learning about the “o’clocks” with our ears, counting the chiming gongs as they interrupt important reading and math lessons! Our time math lessons then connect to our writing program with our study of the Mother Goose poem Hickory Dickory Dock. Thankfully, the mouse that is scurrying up and down the clock in this familiar rhyme, is only in our imaginations!

### ***Cooperation in the Classroom***

It has not taken very long for this group of five- and six-year-olds and their teachers to get to know each other and enjoy their time together, but it has meant that we all needed to learn to cooperate. Although there are a lot of activities that are completed individually, cooperation happens in the classroom and on the playground as the children have learned to share, listen, take turns, obey rules, and always show love to one another.

The children have learned to share and listen. Sharing begins in the morning with news—stories from home that are important to them. From a brother’s birthday, to sitting on the end seat in the

pew in church, to going deer hunting with dad, to losing a tooth, to coffee visits at grandma’s house—oh, the children love to share and the rest of us learn to listen and be interested. There is a special sharing and listening time called “show and tell” or “share bag” as we like to call it in kindergarten. Our “Getting to Know You” paper is filled with pictures, photos, drawings, and stickers—a collage of the kindergarten student! We have learned about families, favorite foods, favorite colors, the games they play, where they vacationed, and much more. It has been so fun to hear the children talk about themselves, and again we listen with interest and join in when we clap, slap, snap, and whisper the syllables in the name of our special kindergarten presenter.

The children have learned to take turns. Maybe they have learned to take turns at home with only one or two siblings, but now being patient and remembering others is more challenging as our “school family” this year is a group of fourteen. Share bag, helper board, being the “germ” in germ tag, visiting the “penny store”, and the list goes on and on, have all been a part of learning cooperation.

And obeying rules makes our place of learning an orderly place, and this also does not happen without combined effort and working together. Classroom rules, gym game rules, school rules—they are all important and must be obeyed. Very soon our Bible stories will take us to Mount Sinai where God gave His rules to His people. The boys and girls know these laws or rules are read each morning in our worship services. We talk about the summary of that law which is the most important rule in life and in our classroom and very simply expressed for kindergarteners—love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

Our November calendar shows us that Thanksgiving Day is not far away and so pilgrims, native Americans, the Mayflower, turkeys, and cornucopias adorn our bulletin board and door. My favorite Thanksgiving Day picture is from my mentor, Mrs. Judy Booth. This picture is old, a bit tattered and worn, but the lesson it teaches is timeless. Together a grandfather and his granddaughter bow in prayer before enjoying God’s bounties on their special Thanksgiving holiday. Our verse-by-verse Bible memory recitation of Psalm 100 has been a wonderful connection to this Thanksgiving photo, making us pause and have hearts full of gratitude. Psalm 100 has been a reminder to Kindergarten A of our great God,

His promises, our calling to praise and serve Him, and His wonderful covenant blessing though many generations.

*Know ye that the Lord, He is God, it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves, we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise, be thankful unto Him and bless His name For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations.*

## A Window of Opportunity

Mrs. Renae Baas  
Second grade

Sneaking in a quick outdoor lunch on a beautiful November day.

Running to the store while your husband is home and the baby is sleeping.

Attending a presidential rally on the night before the election.

Spending an hour on the phone with an elderly saint to cheer his day.

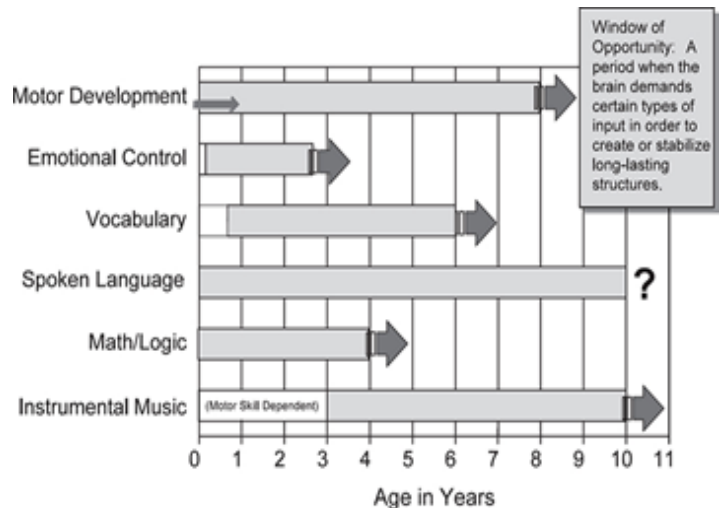
Acquiring tickets to a major league baseball game.

Singing Christmas carols outside the door of a suffering saint.

Opportunities. We all have windows of opportunities in our lives. Windows we can't miss, windows we can't live without. Many of us have a "seize the day" approach to life. Parents, if the children in your homes are under the age of twelve, you are living in a window of opportunity that is so large that the view of the grandest mountains cannot be compared to it. In the realm of education, the critical period in a child's life when his/her brain is most able to learn is from the time of birth until the brink of teenage life. This is not to say that a child does not continue to learn as he grows into his teenage body and then into young adulthood. However, of those twelve years of critical learning time, five of them are almost exclusively spent in your home. Myself? I cannot look back, or I may do it with regret. Did I waste those windows of opportunities for my children or spend them foolishly? My children are grown. The giant bay windows have shutters which are already blocking the light. They continue to learn

but not at the pace and elasticity as was once afforded to their growing brains. We are quick to give healthy reasons for not missing certain opportunities in life. Before we miss any more learning opportunities, consider the windows listed below and decide if there are ways you could better help your child in the critical years left in his/her learning window.

According to David Sousa, author of the book, *How the Brain Learns*, a window of opportunity is an important period in which the brain is highly susceptible to certain input in order to make critical connections in the brain. To the layperson, this just means that during certain critical years, the child can easily soak in information like a thirsty sponge. To underscore this truth, research has proved that if no visual stimuli were given to a child before the age of two, the child would never see. Likewise, the Linguistic Society of America reports, "Children who are never spoken to will not acquire language...a child who regularly hears language on the TV or radio will not learn to talk." This is sobering but not surprising information. It reveals the extreme importance of visual and auditory interaction at a young age. Sousa provides the chart below to help clarify:



This chart indicates the prime years for learning in six different areas. The shaded areas indicate the years in which a child can experience the most educational growth. As an observant parent, you will notice that these areas are largely developing within the first five years of life, a time typically spent at home. The framework for your child's future education begins in the home. It is no accident that Moses spent the first five years of his life in the home of his godly mother. It is no accident that he later recalled and held the truth he learned on his

mother's lap. It is no accident that God used those years to shape his future decisions. How can we, as parents, help our children develop during these critical years? It seems the overarching answers are interaction and communication.

Much of the information cited below is information gleaned from a class I took this summer. I share because it is dear to my heart. Hopefully, you notice that your child is doing these activities. Then bravo! You are preparing your child in the prime learning years.

**Motor development** can be divided into two areas: gross motor and fine motor skills. Is your child playing hopscotch, riding on scooters, swinging, jumping on trampolines, running obstacle courses, blowing bubbles, or playing with balloons? Great! Your child is developing his sense of balance and his brain is sending and receiving signals about how to react in all these situations. His gross motor skills are developing and subsequently leading to better fine motor skills. Does your child like to play at your feet in the bathroom or the kitchen? Give her kitchen tongs or hand him the tweezers while scattering random objects to pick up. Make a sock puppet from a wayward sock. Encourage him to scarf up items from the floor using his "hungry wolf" or "ravenous caterpillar". Haul out the playdough, the puzzles, the paints, the scissors. Your child will be able to write and form letters with little effort once the school years arrive after these seemingly playful tasks.

What about my child's emotional outbursts? Am I really expected to teach my child **emotional control**? Yes, it is largely developed by the age of three. Our brain has two responses to emergency situations: fight or flight. One is considered the gas pedal and one is considered the brake (Harvard Health Publishing, March 2011). The gas pedal is usually developed very early. A newborn's cry indicates the newborn is worked up and has no other way to let you know. While a newborn may find a few of his/her own brakes like thumb sucking or visual avoidance, parents themselves help their children learn ways to regulate their emotions. Knowing this is all "learned" within the first two and a half years of life raises the bar for us as parents. How can parents help? Although there are a host of answers, modeling is chief. What is your response to an emergency? Is your voice calm? If ever there is a time to be calm, cool, and collective, strive for those three

C's when your children are young and learning emotional control. As Proverbs 15:1 instructs us, "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

As early as two months, your baby is babbling sounds. This is the beginning of **vocabulary** development. Simple words like mama and dada surprise us and excite us at 7-8 months. By the time your child is five, she can easily possess a vocabulary of 5,000 words. Make conversation a priority! Consider this. A technological device does NOT demand a response. It does not force the child to think and form words. Speaking to your child is the chief way to develop her vocabulary. Having a balanced conversation encourages your child to try out new words or practice words she already uses in a safe environment. Help your child understand the words you are using. If you accompany the words with gestures, it will help her obtain meaning. For example, if you were to explain the word weary to a child, you might yawn or put your hands under your head. The size of a child's vocabulary in kindergarten is a good predictor of how well she will be able to read in the coming years. Since the vocabulary area of the brain is largely developed by the time your child is six, conversing with your child as often as possible in the early years of his life is vital. Our students at Adams come to school with a large vocabulary, especially in association with their faith. Parents, keep up the good work. You are being diligent, speaking of God's goodness when you walk in the way, when you sit in your house, when you rise up and when you sleep (Duet. 6:7).

**Language acquisition** is simply acquiring the native tongue. The process is honestly going from an adorable wordless wonder to someone who can't stop talking at the dinner table. How does this happen? The process is immersive and subconscious. A child receives a ball and hears the word ball several times. He associates the round object with "ball", tries it out, and gets a reassuring nod and a successful acquisition of the ball. A child imitates those around him and is successful when his speech affords him his desire. Listening to the world around them accelerates language growth. Again, communication from you is vital in helping your child grow in his native language.

**Math and logic** are the next areas of concentration. Helping your child understand what numbers mean and how they relate to each other is vital to math skills in the future. This is number sense.

How can you help? Count everything. Steps going from the basement? Count them. Groceries going into or out of the bag? Count them. Markers going back into the box? Count them. Matching socks, sorting laundry, sorting silverware, lining up shoes from the smallest to biggest all are ways to develop your child's sense of numbers.

Playing board games encourages your child to develop strategies and pushes his brain to make logical moves. What else can we do? Work puzzles together; then gradually pull away. Is your child outside or deep in the basement building forts with his friends or siblings? Fantastic! He is developing his executive functioning. His brain imagines a finished fort. Together with his friend, the two decide what supplies are needed. Someone allocates the work with, "I'll get.... You get..." The plan is made, and the children are executing the plan. In your opinion, a bigger and bigger mess is being created. On the other hand, this fort-building is giving them the tools to be logical thinkers. If there is no time to build a fort, to line up shoes, to count markers back into a box when a child is young, then the simple tasks of school are going to take extra brain power. Build your child's math and logic skills by allowing imaginative play and insisting on time for organizing and counting.

It looks like you might be largely off the hook when it comes to most musical development. However, around the age of three, children begin to develop the adequate motor skills to handle **instrumental music**. Beginning lessons at this age might be frustrating primarily because reading skills are not yet developed. Indeed, not all children have a Mozart ear. However, how can you foster this musical part of the brain? Having a musically rich home excites the frontal lobe of the brain responsible for mathematics and has so many other advantages, especially in our community. Singing is an easy way to learn new concepts. Singing is an easy way to memorize Scripture. Singing is an easy way to bring joy. Fill your home with music and that will lend itself to future development of concrete skills as your children enter school and beyond.

We live in a fast-paced world. All of us have taken vows on our lips, the vows to provide an education for our covenant children. God has given to our children brilliant minds which are growing at a magnificent and unbelievable rate. As Moses sat on the lap of his godly mother, he undoubtedly learned

memory verse after memory verse. His love for God grew at the same incredible rate as his vocabulary. Parents and grandparents, we have an enormous task, to "train up our children" in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6), to literally stuff their souls and minds with good things. Our homes provide the foundation for our children to succeed in school. As teachers, we count it a privilege to carry out these tasks in your absence. We take this calling seriously and thank you for entrusting your children to our care.

As our children age, the shutters close and the great windows of opportunity become smaller and smaller. Make "communicating and interacting with my son" on the top of your list. As teachers, we too will strive to make "communicating and interacting with our children" a top priority. Opportunities arise for all things fun in this world. Answer the persistent outsider with these words, "I can't leave today. My child needs me. I just can't miss this window of opportunity!"

## God's Footsteps

Mr. Mike Feenstra  
Fourth grade

The following is adapted from an outdoor chapel speech given on October 7, 2020.

*"Thy way was in the sea, O God, through mighty waters, deep and broad; None understood but God alone, To man Thy footsteps were unknown; But safe Thy people Thou didst keep, Almighty Shepherd of Thy sheep." Psalter #211:3.*  
(Taken from Psalm 77:19-20.)

God's footsteps are mighty, spiritual footsteps. We clearly see those footsteps in the parting of the Red Sea. That mighty miracle of God came after the ten plagues. Psalm 77 states that God led His people safely through the plagues and through the Red Sea by the hand of Moses.

These plagues were terrible to Egypt. Yet, we often forget that God's people had to endure the first 3 plagues. When the rivers changed to blood, the plague also affected the Israelites. The fish died and the land "stank". When the frogs came everywhere, the Israelites had to deal with it. When the frogs died, the land "stank". The lice were a plague on Israel and Egypt. Flies, sickness of animals, the boils, the hail, the locusts, the darkness, and the killing of the firstborn were on **Egypt**. God made a division and ultimately saved His people in the Red Sea. They were baptized and separated

from the Egyptians. Exodus 8:23 states, “And I will put a division between my people and thy people: tomorrow shall this sign be.” We remember the sign of the Red Sea each time we read the prayer in the Baptism Form. God led His people through the midst of the sea upon dry ground and He drowned the obstinate Pharaoh.

When God divided the Red Sea, His footsteps were mighty. Let us notice three things about God’s footsteps. God’s footsteps are mighty, God’s footsteps are unknown, and God’s footsteps are the safety for God’s people.

First, God has mighty footsteps. God’s footsteps show His power and His love for His people. We read in Habakkuk 3:5, “Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.” We learn from this passage that before the end of the world, God will send sickness because sickness comes before His footsteps. An example comes to mind. What happens when a man walks through a field? We would answer that the crows, grasshoppers, and insects would all skitter in front of him. Just as when a man walks through a field, the birds and animals scatter in front of Him, so the same thing is true of God in a far mightier way. Mighty creatures stir before He comes, and this includes plagues. Mountains flee away from Him. Locusts flee away. Disease scatters away. That a plague is upon us right now is an indication that God’s footsteps are coming.

Second, God’s footsteps are unknown. With our natural eyes, we do not know where the footsteps of God go. Summer ended not so long ago. What happens when you walk through the sand? Your footsteps are erased because of the waves of water. God is a Spirit, and He sometimes leads us through the water, and we can’t see why He is doing that. We can’t see why we must wear masks at school. At times it even seems as if we are “drowning” in our mask. God has His purpose even in the plague that is all around us. We must realize that.

Third, God’s footsteps are safety for God’s people. God told Israel to go through the Red Sea when they were trapped by the Egyptians. He told Israel to go straight forward into the water. They did not know why. But God knew that Israel was saved by means of the creation. In another place where God divided the waters, we read about the mountains fleeing and the waters moving because God would divide Jordan (Psalm 114:6). God can make water, mountains, locusts, and disease flee away before Him in order for Him to make a way for us through this world and into heaven. As those plagues flee away before Him, He keeps us on the safe path to heaven. He led His people through the middle of a mighty Red Sea upon dry ground. The same is true today. Today, a sickness is moving before God. Though we may be touched by that sickness, it can’t touch the

souls of God’s people because Jesus died on the cross for their sins. They are safe and God will surely guide them to heaven. “But safe Thy people Thou didst keep, Almighty shepherd of Thy sheep.”

## **Math Perceptions**

**Mrs. Kristin Dykstra**  
Seventh grade

When I brave the elements outside and end up on the younger students’ playground, it inevitably happens. Students run up to me, and many of them excitedly and proudly proclaim how much they love math. (Yes, my reputation precedes me.) However, there are always a couple who hang back and finally admit in abashed voices that they don’t really like math that much. I wait. I know it’s coming. Almost as if they have to explain themselves, they justify their feelings by informing me that it is because they are just not that good at it.

A couple years ago Rick Mingerink gave me an article entitled “Math Anxiety: Can Teachers Help Students Reduce it?” Having taught Junior High math for over 16 years, this article laid clear from a basis in cognitive science what I have observed and come to know.

In discussions with family, parents, and students, I have been informed many times by numerous individuals that they have never really liked math; that they were never that good at it. Some will even admit that the very idea of doing math caused them anxiety. This anxiety can begin in very young students. Math anxiety is defined as “having tension, apprehension, and fear of situations involving math.” Although we perhaps want to shrug this off, this anxiety has been found to significantly lower math achievement. In other words, if we as teachers (and parents) can decrease the students’ anxiety involving math, we will see higher scores and a greater success in this area.

How does anxiety affect achievement? A student who has this anxiety must deal with not only the math problems he has been given, but he must also work to overcome feelings of not succeeding, of getting the problems wrong, and of saying the incorrect answer. This anxiety takes up valuable working memory. Working memory is a cognitive system that holds information and allows one to make decisions based on that information. A student free of this



worry is able to use his working memory solely to solve the problems at hand.

While there are many factors that can be attributed to causing anxiety about math in students, two stand out. If a young student struggles early on in math, the probability of anxiety having a negative effect on his achievement increases. The other factor is his social circumstances...the family, the school setting, and the society in which he is growing up. Hearing teachers, parents, or other students express anxiety about math has been linked to the student himself believing there is a basis for this.

Although I have emphasized the anxiety students feel in relation to math, there can be the same obstacle in the other subjects...English, history, science, and so on. If a child enters a classroom with anxiety, part of his working memory is going to be spent on this, and achievement will be negatively affected. As teachers there is much that we can do to help a child overcome this. As *Christian* teachers, we *must* help our students prevail over this crippling worry which inhibits achievement and optimal learning about the world in which God has put us.

As teachers (and parents) we should not give the students a basis for their anxiety. Instead of telling them that we never liked a certain subject or were not very good at it, we should encourage them to work even harder to succeed. Inform them that they are able to accomplish every task, however challenging, through determination and hard work.

We should make our classrooms a place where mistakes can be made without embarrassment or shame. Often a wrong answer gives more opportunity for learning and growth than a class period full of only correct responses.

In every subject that we teach, we should teach with the highest enthusiasm and explain the content in the clearest way possible. In this way, the students will be able to understand and be successful...shedding anxiety with each day that passes.

I always inform the students on the playground that their feelings and struggles in math have absolutely no bearing on how I view them. I also assure them that their impression will change...math is great!!

## ***Our Response to Civil Authority***

Mr. Jon Mingerink

**Eighth grade**

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade History we have been looking at the Revolutionary War and how the United States came to be. One of the ideals the Founding Fathers based this country on is the social contract. This philosophy originated in the Enlightenment with such philosophers as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The philosophy was used to explain how governments were created and the role citizens play in them. The social contract says that individuals give a government the right and authority to rule over them. In exchange, the government is to protect the citizen's rights and maintain social order. When the government is doing this, then the citizens will let them rule. If the government fails to do this, then the citizens have the right to get rid of said government and replace it with one that will.

This idea is the basis of the Declaration of Independence. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and the men of the Second Continental Congress signed it, they used the social contract as justification for why the colonies were allowed to break away from Great Britain and form their own nation. The idea of the social contract is also written into the supreme law of the land, our Constitution. The preamble to the Constitution says that the United States government is formed by "We the people."

In the 1700s when the colonists felt that their rights were being abused, their response was to rebel against the government. They justified that response with the social contract; a philosophy that has authority originating with man instead of God. Throughout the history of this country the freedoms and rights that we enjoy as American citizens have been eroding away and under attack. This past year especially our state and federal governments have become more brazen in their assault on our rights. All in the name of health and safety.

The question for us as Reformed believers is how are we to respond? This is an important question for us to meditate on as this is not an easy question to answer. From what I have seen and heard in this past year we often answer this question with our hearts instead of our heads. Emotions cloud our ability to be discerning believers.

We have grown up in a society that loves to talk about the freedoms and rights that we have as



American citizens. We are after all the “land of the free and the home of the brave.” We have the freedom of religion, the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech, the right to assemble, and of course the right to guns! I feel that we start to think of these rights as God-given instead of what they are, man given.

The Founding Fathers sinned when they believed the social contract. They originated authority with man instead of with God. Because of that they saw no problem with revolting against a government that was infringing upon their rights. We, however, hold to Article 36 of the Belgic Confession where it says “We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, hath appointed kings, princes, and magistrates, willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies...” The state and federal magistrates have their authority from God, not man. When we disobey their laws, their executive orders, or their mandates then we are disobeying God himself. We are very good at teaching our children this when it applies to us as parents. We have work to do in applying this to our civil leaders as well.

Since authority originates with God, Article 36 continues with what our response to them ought to be. “Moreover, it is the bounden duty of every one, of what state, quality, or condition so ever he may be, to subject himself to the magistrates; to pay tribute, to show due honor and respect to them, and to obey them in all things which are not repugnant to the Word of God...” Unless the law is against the Word of God then we are called to humbly submit and obey.

Is the wearing of masks against the Word of God? Is socially distancing against the Word of God? May I refuse to give contact information when it is required? Maybe I will just lie and give a false name and number. Who will know? Now it gets stickier when group sizes are limited, and the holidays are here. The entire family is not allowed to get together for Thanksgiving. Do we do it anyways? And what about guns. We have a new President who seems keen on gun control. If he does not regulate guns you can be sure it will happen eventually. What is our response going to be then? Is gun control against the Word of God? Do I have the right to keep my guns or must I give them up when the civil government comes knocking?

The freedoms and rights that we enjoy as American citizens are under attack. The response to COVID-19 by so many in this country was and is to look to the government as a means of safety and salvation. Many have willingly given up the power and authority to control how we live all in the name of health and safety. Once the government takes power it does not give it back either. How do we respond then to these infringements upon our lives? That answer is not always black and white. It rarely is. We must pray and read the Word of God so that we know what is and what is not repugnant to it. May the Lord give us discernment so that we may rightly respond and submit to the civil governments.

## School Board

### *From the Board*

**Mr. Ed Ophoff**  
**Board President**

The Board has been fully engaged this year with the very challenging task of navigating an ever-changing COVID-19 landscape. Some thanks are in order.

1- First and foremost, thanks to our heavenly Father who gave us this year the means and the will to reopen the school.

2- Thanks to the COVID response team ably chaired by Joe Kuiper who worked many long hours deciphering the latest Executive orders and Health Department orders. If you have the opportunity, say thanks to Joe, Brent Snippe, Rick Mingerink, and Tim Van Til for their efforts.

3- Thanks to our teachers for taking on the task of in-person instruction despite risk of transmission plus extra work doing remote teaching for sick kids.

4- Thanks to our administrator, Rick Mingerink, who shouldered the added responsibility with aplomb and successfully opened the school on time.

5- Thanks to our bus drivers who dutifully masked up and use the annoying sprayers after each trip.

6- Thanks to the janitorial staff, Don, Mary and Lindsey, who adapted to the new normal of extra cleaning protocols.

7- Thanks to the support staff who also made the necessary adjustments to run the school safely.

8- A big thank you goes to all you parents who have supported the school through all this insanity by continuing to send in your tuition, enrolling your children, and staying involved in the educational process (ok, some of you were a bit reluctant). Overarching all of this, your commitment to the cause of Christian Education here at Adams is commendable. Thank You!

### **Finance Committee Update**

**Mr. Jason Elzinga**  
Finance Committee

*“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5: 20)*

We give thanks to our heavenly Father for His continued provision for ACS. One of the ways He provides is by giving us the financial resources to continue to operate our school from day to day, through the means of all those who support the school. We are grateful to all who support ACS in many different ways.

The Finance Committee currently consists of Derek Kuiper (1<sup>st</sup> year), Tim VanTil (2<sup>nd</sup> year), myself (3<sup>rd</sup> year), and Joe Kuiper (2<sup>nd</sup> year, Treasurer). Please contact any of us with questions concerning tuition or general finance questions.

Our annual Support Drive is ongoing, with a goal of \$330,000. The drive accounts for a significant portion, about 20%, of our total yearly budget. We are thankful to report that to date we have collected \$186,000, with the goal of collecting the remaining balance by the end of the school year. Thank you to those who have already contributed, and we ask for your continued support to help us reach our goal.

COVID has affected the school in many ways, and finance is no exception. We have incurred some additional costs for things like cleaning supplies, cleaning equipment, and technology-related expenses. However, due to the generous support of our constituency (for example those who donate their time to help with the increased cleaning), at this point in time the financial impact of COVID has been minimized.

As a Finance Committee and as a Board, we ask for your prayers that God would give us wisdom and humility in our work.

In a world filled with fear and unrest, let us together say with the Psalmist, *“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1)*

### **Federation Update**

**Mr. Joe Kuiper**  
Federation Committee

The Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian School Societies met on October 29, 2020. Routine business of the federation was handled, including approving next year’s budget, election of officers, and review of committee reports from the past year. Another important item handled at this year’s meeting was the appointment of Kyle Bruinooge to a three-year term as executive director. The Federation is excited to have Kyle in this position as he has shown himself capable of handling this responsibility. Not to be forgotten to ACS is the reason for the appointment of a new executive director. That reason being that our administrator, Rick Mingerink, finished his second consecutive term as executive director of the Federation. As I’m sure you can all imagine, Rick did a fantastic job. If you have a chance, thank Rick for his superior leadership in this position for the past six years.

This past year, the Federation filed and received Federal non-profit status! This is a significant development since it will allow the Federation to pursue outside donations more effectively. With a growing budget every year due to an increased amount of work, the Federation hopes to supplement its future revenue with charitable donations.

The Federation, through Teacher Training Committee (TTC), has been busy at work operating its mentoring program. Thirteen teachers participated in the program last year and this year there are twelve more first year teachers participating.

The Federation reminds us all of our need for many more teachers. Please remember this need in your prayers and encourage our young people to consider this great calling.

## Building Committee News

Mr. Tim Van Til  
Building Committee

With the 2021-21 school year well underway, we know that this year is far from a normal school year. We are thankful every day for the in-person covenantal instruction that our children are receiving. As a building committee we have implemented a few extra tasks this year. One of these tasks is the extra cleaning and sanitizing of frequently touched surfaces. This is done twice a day. We want to thank the mothers who have volunteered their time to come to school around the noon hour of each day to sanitize the locker handles, doorknobs, light switches, and bathrooms. For the most part, each time slot has been filled with a few exceptions in which the office staff has graciously filled in. At the present time we see the need for volunteers to continue for the foreseeable future. If you have not signed up yet and you would like to or if this is something you would be willing to do again, you can go to Adams website and choose a date that works for you. We truly appreciate your help! Every evening the school is sanitized once again by our janitors. We want to thank Don and Mary Kamphuis for their work at ACS, especially with the added work load we have implemented on them of sanitizing the entire school.

Currently, we have no additions or major projects, so our attention is on the upkeep of our facility. This summer, new sound panels were installed, and the painting of the gym was completed. The current lights in the gym are the original T8 fluorescent bulbs and they have begun to show their age in the past few years. With cost savings of energy and continued cost of maintenance we thought it wise to upgrade at this time. We recently contacted Klein Electric to install new LED lighting. The roof of the original school building was also repaired this summer. So far, these fixes have held up well. However, we continue to monitor the roof as it ages and will likely soon need to be replaced.

As many of you know or may have experienced, the student drop-off/ pickup at Adams has not been ideal for the last number of years. As God continues to bless Adams with growing enrollment, we see this situation only getting worse. As a committee we are looking into viable options to help alleviate the parking lot issues. Lord willing, next year we will have a fix in place.

As we continue day to day during these uncertain times, we know that we are unable to do anything of ourselves. We are comforted knowing that our heavenly Father goes before us and guides us and that He holds us in the palm of His hand.

*“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.” Psalm 46:10-11*

## Transportation News

Mr. Derek Kuiper  
Transportation Committee

This year transportation looks different, but even though we have had some difficulties, we have seen good come this year as well.

We have a new driver in training. Michelle Kuiper has taken up the work of training for this position. She is currently in the midst of taking tests to obtain her licensing for a driver. We are thankful for her willingness and ability to help in this way.

This year has been difficult in various ways but all of our drivers have persevered though it all and we thankful to them for their dedication.

## Other News

### Grateful Giving

Mrs. Sara Potjer  
Mothers Club President

With thanks to God, we can say that our year is off to a good start. With thanks to God, we can say that the Lord has given us many willing hands and hearts to continue in the good work of serving in Mothers Club. And with thanks to God, we have been able to run a few fundraisers so that we can give to our school financially.

Just how does Mothers Club choose to distribute that money?

For years now, Mothers Club has helped fund what we call the Wish List. The first part of this list includes items that the staff at Adams would like to purchase which would aid them in their teaching. Each teacher fills out their request by the end of February. Rick Mingerink then checks those lists to make sure they are valid needs. There are times when

some of those requests are redirected to the School Board.

The second part of this Wish List is what we refer to as the standard items that we help our school with. This includes: Bibles and Psalters for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, \$10 per student of teachers' supply money, funds to support the resource room, IDEA program, band, choir, and elementary music program. This list also includes the cost of tuning our pianos, funds to support the office and kitchen supplies, staff birthday gift cards, an extra \$300 for each new teacher to help them get started, Grandparents Day Coffee, Teacher Appreciation Lunch, Parent/Teacher Conference dinner for the staff, and \$10 per student to help pay for class trips. As you can see, this list is long; but we are thankful that we are given the privilege to help our school in these ways.

In May, Mothers Club votes to approve this Wish List. After this dollar amount has been approved, there is often money left in our account that we are able to give towards another cause. In the past, we have voted to give this money to the School Board to pay off our school debt or some money has been given to the Adam's Foundation. Most often, this money is given to the Long-Range Planning Committee. This Committee is made up of members of Mothers Club, Boosters, the School Board, two teachers, and our administrator. Together, they compile a list of items needing to be purchased or completed for our school. Last year's list included: the baseball field, 2 new pianos, chair carts, landscape upgrade, gym bleachers, Chromebooks, concrete surface play areas, science room upgrade, outside benches, and new bulletin boards. As the money is given to this committee, they can complete this list.

We hope that this has given you a better idea of how we as a Mothers Club work to support our school and that you will join us in our efforts to carry out this work.

### ***Long Range Planning***

Thank you for raising money for Adams Christian School! Below are some of the items purchased in the last two years using funds from the Boosters Club Auction and Mothers Club fundraising projects:

- New pianos in classrooms
- Additional library books
- Library iPads for looking up book titles
- Baseball field
- Gym repainting with new sound panels
- Fencing around the school property
- New bulletin boards in all the older classrooms
- Tree plantings around the school grounds (30 trees!)
- Outdoor benches