

THE TORCH

a Kalamazoo Christian Schools Publication

SUMMER 2020



8th Grade
Blessing

An Uncommon Celebration

After eight canceled plans for graduation, the Class of 2020 hopes the ninth would become reality on July 30. Ending the school year on May 22 without graduation and still under quarantine, the masked seniors arrived on campus to return school property and finish virtual learning. Despite the many unpleasant surprises at the end of their high school tenure, each senior received two delightful surprises that day: a campus beautifully decorated in their honor, and a shower of gifts from an "Adopt a Senior" program, secretly arranged by some caring moms.

The class of 2024 also ended the year on a high note with a beautiful 8th Grade Blessing Ceremony held on the middle school football field. Many students and parents commented that the cool breeze, warm sunshine and the first opportunity to be together in 93 days was so good for the soul.

Congratulations to the classes of 2024 and 2020 for their completion of middle school and high school!



Senior Send Off

The TORCH is published twice a year with the purpose of fostering strong ties between the schools and their alumni, supporters, and friends supporting Christian education. Published by Kalamazoo Christian Schools Association. Please inform the Association Office of address changes.

Editors

Mary Denison, Lori Halberda, & Sonia Zeyl

Photos

Dan Cooke

Graphic Design

Kim Hoogenboom

Printing

Holland Litho Printing Services

SCHOOLS INFORMATION

Lead Administrator & Elementary School Principal

Marc Verkaik, mverkaik@kcsa.org

Elementary Office Hours: 7:30a-4:00p M-F 269-544-2332

Middle School Principal

Joel Netz, Class of '91 jnetz@kcsa.org

Middle Office Hours: 7:30a-4:00p M-F 269-544-2332

High School Principal

Dirk Walhout, dwalhout@kcsa.org

High Office Hours: 7:30a-4:00p M-F 269-381-2250

ASSOCIATION OFFICE

Association Office Hours: 7:30a-4:00p M-F 269-381-2044

Director of Advancement

Sonia Zeyl, szeyl@kcsa.org

Director of Enrollment

Jamie Ekkens, jekens@kcsa.org

Alumni Relations

Connie VanDerSlik, Class of '74 cvanderslik@kcsa.org

MISSION

Kalamazoo Christian Schools
– an academically excellent Christian community equipping, inspiring, and challenging students to love and serve Christ in the world.



**KALAMAZOO
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS**

Undeniably Christian. Academically Excellent.

2121 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

www.kcsa.org 269-381-2044

Facebook = [kalamazoochristianschools](https://www.facebook.com/kalamazoochristianschools)

Inside This Issue



Our students found ways to build God's Kingdom through service projects, collection drives, and learning to treat others with love and respect.

Page 4



Kalamazoo Christian teachers never imagined they would be teaching their students from home to finish the school year.

Page 8



God took the small beginnings of Kalamazoo Christian Schools and led us through many generations of growth, all for His glory.

Page 10

Table of Contents

- 1 An Uncommon Celebration
- 3 Welcome from Marc
- 3 KCS Vision in Action
- 3 The Search is Over!!!
- 4 Building God's Kingdom
- 6-7 Creativity with eLearning
- 8 Financial Updates
- 9 Retirement Tributes
- 10-11 What's Next & Seniors Extending the Legacy
- 12 *Cinderella* at KCHS & Pastor's Chapel
- 13 Alumni Spotlight
- 14-15 Alumni Connection



KCS Vision in Action

Kalamazoo Christian Schools envision that each graduate will “Be a disciple who transforms the world.” How does KCS accomplish this formidable vision? By adopting 9 Faithlines for student and faculty engagement that will develop habits leading to this outcome. The schools provide opportunities for students to delve deeply into these qualities of discipleship so that they can continue to live out these Faithlines throughout the rest of their lives. This past year, the schools focused on practicing and implementing what it means to be a Kingdom Builder based on I Peter 4:10 and Jesus’ second command to love our neighbors as ourselves. Next year, we will delve into discipleship practices that will foster our growth as Justice Seekers. As you read these pages, the editors hope you capture a sense of Kalamazoo Christian Schools’ commitment to shaping our students to become disciples who transform the world!

The Search is Over!!!

By Patty Gruizinga

Second Impressions has long been in need of more reliable transportation for pick up and deliveries of used furniture. Our search committee consisting of Bob Razenberg, board members and some delivery drivers was able to locate and purchase a safer and more reliable vehicle that met their established criteria for a new(er) delivery truck.

Our new truck needed a little sprucing up, so International Trucks installed a new lift, Sign Impressions added our new logo to the sides, and the inside was outfitted with slats. We are also thankful to Pfizer Foundation, as a portion of the cost was provided by grants made in honor of 12 of their retirees, our volunteers. Our beautiful new truck is still waiting to make its maiden voyage!

Second Impressions has reopened! Please come shop or consider volunteering your time. Visit <http://www.secondimpressionskalamazoo.com> to get up-to-date information. Thank you for supporting Second Impressions through your donations, shopping and time.



Welcome from Marc

Marc Verkaik,
Elementary Principal &
Lead Administrator



I remember talking with parents during parent/teacher conferences in March and wondering how we would be affected by the quickly changing educational landscape around us. Ten weeks later we finished our school year virtually, and we have begun making plans for the fall that include a number of different scenarios. While our current situation has challenged us to think, act and behave differently in our approach to education, I am proud to say that the Kalamazoo Christian School community has stepped up to embrace the challenge and excel in this climate.

Our mission is to be an academically excellent, Christian community that equips, inspires and challenges our students to love and serve Christ in the world. Throughout this edition of the Torch you will read about how our school community has fulfilled this mission. You will read about stories of achievement, excellence, community engagement and inspiration as we live in the midst of this pandemic.

Building Christ’s Kingdom has been our theme this year and is one of nine parts of our vision for our graduates. We have helped our students think about, act on and embrace their role in being Kingdom Builders here on Earth. You will read stories on how our students, teachers and community are actively fulfilling this role.

While we do not know how our current reality will impact education in the fall or in the future, we know that God has this under control and we can trust His word when He says in Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.” His word does not change in an environment where everything is changing around us. This truth is reassuring and powerful.

Blessings to you and your family,
Marc Verkaik

Building God's Kingdom

This past year, our students found ways to build God's Kingdom through service projects, collection drives, and learning to treat others with love and respect. Here are their stories.

Seeing the children being so kind was a precious example of building the Kingdom."
Linda Maring,
4th grade teacher

During Thursday morning devotions, 1st grade teacher Melissa Baas asked her class "How have you been a kingdom builder?" They shared the things they did to love and serve God and others. Melissa wrote these on paper bricks and taped them to the bulletin board. Some of these kingdom-building acts included setting the table, helping a sibling, reading to Grammy, praising God at church, and picking up trash to clean God's world. The goal was to fill the board and spill over onto the wall. Melissa is certain this would have happened if school had not closed. "My students LOVE serving God and others!" Melissa proclaimed. "My hope is that Kingdom Building is becoming a way of life that will stay with them their whole lives."

While each classroom learned about kingdom building, the elementary school worked together to collect over 500 hats and mittens for homeless children at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries (KGM). Lynn Russcher, VP of Advancement at KGM, came to chapel and showed photos of children who have stayed there. This impacted the students as they realized they were building God's Kingdom by helping children to keep warm.

"I believe this sparked a desire to keep going by having another drive," said 4th grade teacher Linda Maring. In February, the elementary school collected 979 pairs of kids' socks. "The children could relate to these collections and empathize with the need," Linda shared. "No one wants cold heads, hands, or feet." Lynn Russcher remarked, "Seeing the children being so kind was a precious example of building the Kingdom. We are very grateful for this partnership."



Twelve Baskets Food Pantry donations



Mittens, hats and more for kids in need

Next door, the middle schoolers participated in their own Kingdom Building service projects.

Looking for tangible ways for students to live out their faith in our community, 5th grade teacher Kim Meyer started taking students to Twelve Baskets Food Pantry in Portage during the 2018-2019 school year. This was the only place that would allow 10-11 year olds to volunteer, along with an adult. Unfortunately, half of the 5th graders could not serve though because school closed.

Students gave up their lunch break, recess and one class period to restock shelves and break down boxes. Feedback from students revealed some preconceived notions that drugs and alcohol are why people are homeless and need a food pantry. Instead, they learned about people who needed help because of illness or job loss.

"My students enjoyed serving and they wanted to return so I'd like to continue going," Kim explained. "Any experiences we can provide, even ones that push them outside their comfort zone, give them confidence to serve others," Kim added.



979 pair of socks will keep feet warm



7th graders working on blankets



High schoolers making plarn

The 7th grade bible classes practiced Kingdom Building by responding to the command “love your neighbor”. At Christmastime, they loved others by making fleece blankets for Kalamazoo Gospel

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:10.

snuggly blanket in winter opened their minds to what they are thankful for and what these blankets would mean to someone in need.

Ministries. While students each made a blanket, they prayed for the person who would receive it. Thinking about how others might go without a

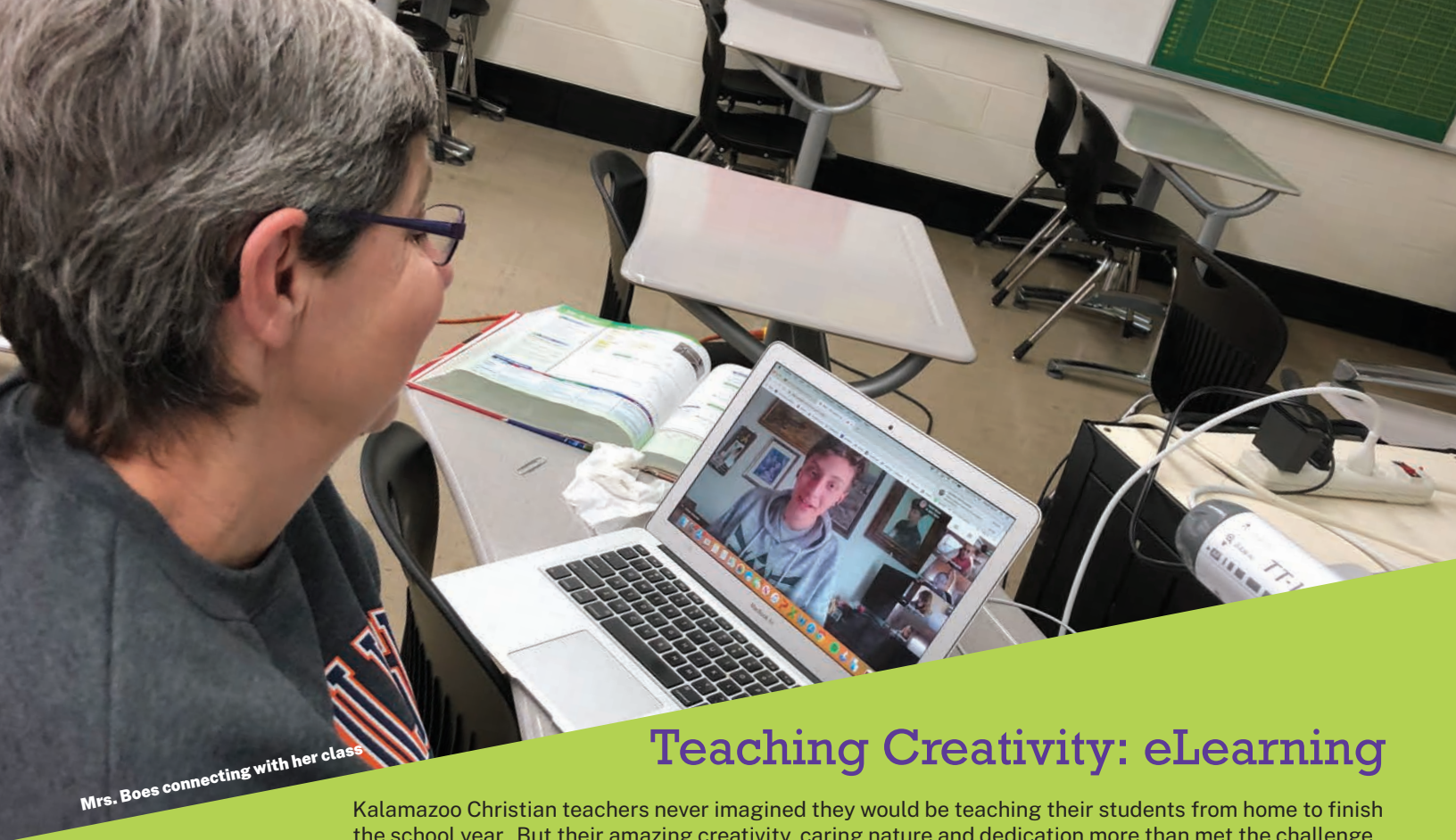
Teacher Karla Durian said, “This has been a wonderful kingdom building project and a way that students can use their time to bless others.” The people receiving these blankets are blessed with warmth, comfort, and a sense of love. Bible class has a strong focus on what it means to love and serve like Jesus did. “Instead of just talking about it, the students got to do something,” Karla added. “This sparks a passion and desire to continue.”

This passion and desire were also evident at the high school where the 9th graders found a new way to serve. Last year, teacher, Dawn Brown, saw a news story three different times about people making plastic sleeping mats for the homeless. “When I see something numerous times, I feel it’s God’s way of speaking to me,” Dawn explained. “Each mat uses about 1,000 bags, so we set a goal of 10,000 bags to make 10 mats for In the Image in Grand Rapids. Thanks to our community, we far surpassed our collection goal!”

Students cut the bags into four-inch strips and tied them together to make the plarn (plastic yarn). A finished mat is 3 ½’ by 6’ with a carrying strap. The students in Dawn’s Repurposed interim class were going to crochet the mats, but then school closed due to COVID-19.

“I believe God called us to do this service project,” Dawn said. The students still want to see the impact of using something as insignificant as a plastic bag to make a difference to someone in need. “He has blessed us with the supplies and He will provide the right time for us to continue. I am sure of it.”

Learning to be Kingdom Builders based on 1 Peter 4:10 fostered learning for our students not reflected on a report card. Practicing how to use their gifts to serve others will hopefully give them the confidence to honor God for years to come.



Mrs. Boes connecting with her class

Teaching Creativity: eLearning

Kalamazoo Christian teachers never imagined they would be teaching their students from home to finish the school year. But their amazing creativity, caring nature and dedication more than met the challenge. So many parents expressed their gratitude through email, cards, and social media for the terrific response from our teachers despite an extremely difficult situation.

Middle School math teacher Christine Webb wore costumes to encourage students to tune in to eLearning. "All our lessons were online and I was afraid that watching video after video would get boring," Christine explained. "Kids sent me emails saying they enjoyed the outfits, and some suggested what to wear next. I was encouraged knowing they were watching the videos. They came for the wacky outfits, but hopefully they stayed for the math."

**"They came
for the wacky
outfits, but
hopefully
they stayed
for the math."**

**Christine Webb,
7th grade teacher**

eLearning posed a greater challenge for Spanish Immersion (SI) classes, but 1st grade teacher Consuelo Enriquez felt encouraged that parents got more involved and even learned Spanish alongside their kids. "Parents told me that after our Zoom meetings, their child was energized and ready to work." 8th grade teacher Cecilia Sebastiani helped her SI students prepare for their 9th grade dual enrollment towards a Spanish Minor at WMU. She read in Spanish on video for over an hour so that they could practice their fluency. "Throughout this unexpected journey," Consuelo shared, "we may never understand why things happen the way they do, but we can be certain of God's mercy and faithfulness."

4th grade teacher Kim VanLoo continued reading the book *Echo* by Pam Munoz Ryan to her class by video. The Pruis family decided to listen together and appreciated how Kim personalized the experience by stopping to explain words or pose questions.

Sophomore Alexa Hoogenboom felt that Mr. Nieboer taught Chemistry "just like he would in class. He didn't edit the videos and he wrote the lesson on his whiteboard at home. He made sure to write clear instructions and made it feel like we were still at school." Overall, the teachers remained engaged with students and worked hard to adapt to individual learning needs. Students needing more help could join smaller groups to work on assignments.

Adapting the specials or encore classes to eLearning posed a significant challenge. Choir, band, art and gym teachers provided students with optional activities rather than assignments, recognizing the difficulty of adapting these classes to elearning. Parents concerned with kids spending so much time on-line could then choose what was most important.

Elementary music teacher, Krista Voetberg, created lesson videos and worksheets that she will use again. She also brought together 90% of the K-4 students to participate in Grandparents Day by teaching each class in Zoom their selected song with motions. To see this presentation and other examples of the specials teachers pivoting to eLearning, go to <https://elearning.kcsa.org>.

Pivot to eLearning: Technology

by Dan Cooke, Tech Director

Technology is an amazing educational tool, so long as it is efficient and effective. As Technology Director, I continuously implement changes based on what works best for education and balanced by what is affordable and sustainable. Over the years we have kept best practice standards for our technology, including use of Google Suite for Education and a 1:1 protocol for all students in grades 5-12. So when we experienced 10 snow days in the winter of 2019, it was natural to create a policy for eLearning in preparation for a similar circumstance. With Chromebooks and training already in place, we established a basic plan for snow day preparedness last spring.

We never dreamed we'd use our plan for a pandemic. Our pivot to eLearning happened quickly once schools were closed on March 12. The admin team and select board members met on March 13 and the teachers met on March 16 to implement our plan. Students returned to school on March 17 to retrieve locker items and pick up their packets. Wednesday morning (March 18) launched eLearning with only two days of missed instruction. The 5th-12th graders had an easier transition because they already were using Google Classroom.

The elementary school required a hybrid approach. Curriculum Director Meghan VanLente, Tech Teacher Erin Tarnutzer and I built the elementary eLearning website from scratch. Within a week, we set a routine for teachers to post assignments that parents and students could access. This supplemented the packet pick up and drop off very well.

These three months have been the busiest of my career. I met frequently with parents, students, and teachers, providing devices, hot spots and technical assistance. Overall, I equipped 52 students with the tools necessary to learn at home.

God has shown His favor on Kalamazoo Christian by providing many ways for our students to continue learning despite being at home. I am humbled that the technology decisions we made over time came together in His time so that we could continue to provide an excellent academic environment during these unprecedented times.



Great outfits to learn middle school math



Elementary packet pickup



High school book drop off at the end of the school year

TO THE DEVOTED PARENTS OF KALAMAZOO CHRISTIAN

by Anonymous

With so much uncertainty surrounding us, one thing is certain: Kalamazoo Christian went above and beyond to ensure that your child's education continued. As a public school educator, I saw schools trying to integrate eLearning, but teaching seemed limited to reviewing material already learned. Your child, however, learned new content that was vital for the next grade. I believe that Kalamazoo Christian was better prepared for our current situation and quicker to roll out a true plan of learning. While the local public schools scrambled to make plans, Kalamazoo Christian was teaching your child.

You may think, **"Is eLearning worth it? Should I be paying tuition for this?"** The answer is a resounding "Yes!" Your child received a consistent education during all of the world's current inconsistencies - it is surely worth the cost.

Financial Update

Going the Distance

While unpredictable weather can bring an unwelcome complication for a walkathon, we never could have anticipated the necessity of a “virtual” at-home walkathon for this annual fundraising event. But this unexpected hurdle was no barrier to our \$25,000 goal. In fact, our KCS families not only surpassed this goal, they more than doubled it, raising an incredible \$55,961!

These donations support our Annual Fund, which helps keep tuition down for our families. With the great success of our walkathon, phonathon and other 2019-2020 fundraising efforts, we have exceeded our annual fund goal of \$400,000! All monies in excess of \$400,000 went to help specific families who were struggling to pay their tuition due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the generous support of our community, we were able to provide \$30,861.99 to 16 families’ tuition accounts.

Sonia Zeyl, Director of Advancement and coordinator of this year’s walkathon, felt extremely grateful and humbled by the generosity of our families: “What a privilege to walk alongside a community who cares so much for each other.”

Thank you so much to all of our walkers, donors, prayer warriors, supporters – fellow Kingdom Builders! You are impacting the lives of our students and families – an eternal investment for God’s Kingdom. We encourage you to keep putting one foot in front of the other and keep walking in faith!

**For we walk
by faith, not
by sight.
II Cor. 5-7**



The Koning Family getting ready to do their walk

VIRTUAL Walk-a-thon 2020



Gym Update We continue to covet your prayers for provision to complete our Making All Things New Campaign. We hope to raise another \$1.6 million to finish the goal of \$2.5 million for the new Gymnasium on the 12th Street Campus. To find out how you can help, please visit the Advancement tab on our website, www.kcsa.org.

Foundation Update

By Larry Stehouwer and David Cleveland

Volunteers at the Kalamazoo Christian School Foundation (KCSF) provide sustained long-term support for our schools and students. We invite you to consider being a partner in that sustained long-term support through donations, your will or estate plan. Those who include Kalamazoo Christian Schools (KCS) in their estate plans become members of our 1877 Society. KCSF has a passion and commitment to provide financial resources so that children can receive a Christian education. In our efforts to increase resources, we have partnered with Money For Ministry to survey our constituents and help them take specific steps to support their passion for Christian education by including KCSF in their estate plans. If you have done that – thank you! If you are considering it, we will be glad to provide additional information and resources. Since taking this initiative with Money for Ministry, we have learned of 29 more supporters who have included KCSF in their estate plans.

KCSF received \$81,481 in donations during 2019 and has assets totaling \$4 million. For the 2019/2020 school year, KCSF contributed over \$180,000 to support KCS. That support helps reduce tuition for all. Additionally, KCSF provides student scholarships and teacher support programs.

FOUNDATION DISTRIBUTIONS '19-'20

Not Listed	1.3%
Science	1.3%
Staff Development	2.0%
College/Trade	4.3%
Special Education	6.2%
Financial Need	9.9%
Samaritan Fund	25.5%
Tuition Reduction	49.5%

BOARD MEMBERS:

Dave Cleveland (President)
Bill Hoffman (Vice President)
Randy Ackerman (Secretary)
Jane Smit (Treasurer)
Dan Alphenaar
Robert Armbrister
Ron Baylor
John Bartels
Ryan DiLaura
Dan Huizenga
Lois Lubben
Mark Nash (KCSA Board Rep)

College/Trade	\$7,750
Special Education	\$11,251
Financial Need	\$17,925
Samaritan Fund	\$46,240
Tuition Reduction	\$89,782

Retirement Tributes

Jerry Mastenbrook 36 Years

by Kyle Mastenbrook, Jeff Blamer & Christine Webb

From Kyle Mastenbrook: My dad started at Kalamazoo Christian in 1965...as a kindergartner! Two of his influential teachers were Dick Moore and Clark DeKryger. He began teaching and coaching here in 1984 and claims that Christian education has been his life passion. He had many basketball team achievements but my dad's greatest joy was seeing how his former students have grown into who God made them to be.

From Jeff Blamer: I can think of no better words to describe Jerry than 'fiercely committed to serving God'. The little things were so important: substituting for a bus driver, being the morning greeter, holding intramural golf in October sleet, and scouting every basketball opponent to prepare his team. Congratulations for a career of sacrificial service.

From Christine Webb: Mr. Mastenbrook was my middle school PE teacher. I wasn't very athletic, but he encouraged me to try sports anyway. He said that even though I may not be THE best, the important thing was doing MY best to support my team and to be better than I was the day before. He was a great coach and teacher and he will be sorely missed.



Jim Potter - 29 Years

Jim started at our high school in 1991 teaching current events, psychology, sociology, US government, US history, and world history. He helped run the Close Up Program and co-coached the quiz bowl team.

"I have loved being at Kalamazoo Christian and have appreciated the grace and support that has been shown to me," he said. "I've been treated very well by students, parents, colleagues, and many school boards. The best tribute an educator can receive is the trust parents have put in me to educate their children. Thank you to everyone in the Kalamazoo Christian community!"

Al Nieboer said this about Jim: "He has been a trusted colleague, co-coach of Quiz Bowl, and close friend for many years. Jim's passion for teaching is well known; just ask his students." The Quiz Bowl team's three consecutive state championships are due to Jim. His tireless efforts in reading thousands of practice questions is revealed in how prepared our players were. No one will forget his creative and gripping presentations at assemblies. Meeting as a staff won't be the same without Jim's wise and entertaining input. I hope to see Jim around school next year continuing his sphere of influence. His friendship will always endure.

Jim plans to teach part time, spend time with his grandchildren, who attend our elementary, and do more camping.



Kathy Bartels 24 years

Kathy graduated from KCS in 1973 and returned to teach at South Christian for three years after college. Raising her two children became her full time job until 1998 when she became the Director of Recruitment and Retention, a position she held for 21 years.

Kathy said that her best memories include meeting prospective families, seeing the exceptional work of dedicated staff, the greetings from students, and working with wonderful people who have a passion for Christian education. Kathy reflects, "I hope that, with genuine, heartfelt passion, I was able to impress upon people the significant value of a Christ-centered education. What goes on in our classrooms has eternal benefits. I am humbled to have been a part of that mission during my years of teaching, parenting and working in recruitment."

Connie VanDerSlik shared "Kathy's dedication to KCS and to the success of this school was tremendous. It was her desire that everyone be blessed to be a student here. Kathy has been a joy to work with the last 20+ years in the Association Office."

In retirement Kathy looks forward to spending more time with family, playing tennis, gardening, reading, and biking.



Kathy Reist 20 years

Kathy drove a bus for 20 years. Kathy said that the best thing about working here was that she enjoyed laughing and joking around with the kids on the bus. She remembers fondly, "There were a lot of sweet kids that I just adored." Kathy is thankful for the opportunity to get to know our students and drive bus for Kalamazoo Christian over the last two decades.

Kathy's plans for retirement are to spend more time with her husband and daughter and to do more crocheting, knitting and cross-stitching.



What's Next for the Class of 2020?

ALMA COLLEGE

Mike Ravn

AQUINAS COLLEGE

Jenna Blackwell

BETHEL UNIVERSITY - INDIANA

Alexis Klaassen, Kaylee Klaassen

CALVIN UNIVERSITY

Sara Baas, Audrey Batts, Derek McClure, Grace Triemstra, Anneke Zeyl, Jake Zuiderveen

CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY

Samuel Netz

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Josh Ebbeler

CORNERSTONE UNIVERSITY

Lindsey Dykema

DORDT UNIVERSITY

Aaron de Jong, Carson de Jong, Sarah Miller, Sarah Wenke

GAP YEAR

Benjamin Hart

GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Abigail Norris

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Benjamin Hettinger, Zachary Shires

HOPE COLLEGE

Kenna Durian, Karina Deering

KALAMAZOO VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mariah Chilcott, Jena Cook, Emily Eshlaman, Lauryn Mohney, Kenna Powers, Ryan Triemstra, Ethan Van De Griend, Zoey Williams, Maria Willis

KENDALL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Logan Holewa

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Adam Vickery

MICHIGAN CAREER & TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Zachary Barnett

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Wil VanderDussen, Claire Dommer, Halen Smith

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Liuxun Zhou

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Ruojia (Joanna) Li

SPRING ARBOR UNIVERSITY

Sydney Stilson

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Billy Zhang

TAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Megan Snook, Clare Dirksen

TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Carley Broekhuizen

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Shuyi (Julie) Li

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Jiaqi (Sunny) Huang, Garrett Mallak

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHWESTERN OHIO

Caleb Betten

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Austin Jager, Paul Sportel, Yue Wang

WORK IN THE TRADES

Cole Visscher



Sara Baas '20
Jeffrey Baas '86 &
Melissa Baas '93
John Baas '64



Audrey Batts '20
Christopher Batts '93
& Rachael Batts '93



Caleb Betten '20
George Betten '86

"Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin..." Zechariah 4:10

EST. 1877

1900

1910

1914

1920

1917

1930

2020 Seniors



Alexis Klaassen '20
Jennifer Klaassen '96
Deborah Klaassen '68
& Dennis DeVries '70
Karen DeVries '71
Howard DeVries '50



Samuel Netz '20
Joel Netz '91



Sydney Stilson '20
Renee Stilson '93
Arthur Meinema '65



Ryan Triemstra '20
Steven Triemstra '92
Marcia Triemstra '69
Daniel Triemstra** '69
Calvin Miersma** '46
Marguerite Miersma** '46



Cole Visscher '20
Paul Visscher '93 &
Heidi Visscher '95
Robert VanderLugt '67
Paul Visscher** '65



Jenna Cook '20
John Cook III '82 &
Jenny Cook '84
John Cook, Jr. '45



Kenna Durian '20
Robert Durian '91
David Durian '64 &
Kathleen Durian '67



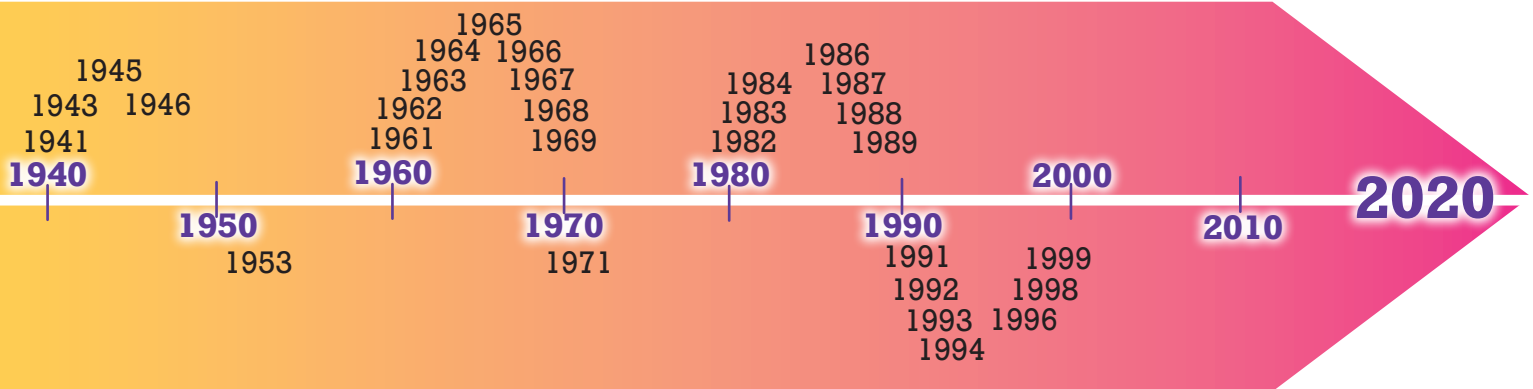
Joshua Ebbeler '20
Nicole Ebbeler '93



Austin Jager '20
Christine Jager '86



Derek McClure '20
Troy McClure '92



Extending the Legacy



Halen Smith '20
Don Smith '89
James Smith '61
Doris Schuyler** '41



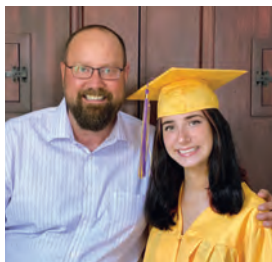
Paul Sportel '20
Gary Sportel '83 &
Kathy Sportel '83
Ronald Sportel** '60,
Garilyn Bogard '62,
Paul Herder '53



Grace Triemstra '20
5 GENERATIONS
Todd Triemstra '89
Virginia Houseman** '60
Thomas Triemstra '66
& Ann Triemstra '66
Roger Linders '43
Effie Linders** '17 &
Leonard Linders** '14



Sarah Wenke '20
Jeffrey Wenke '87
Nancy Wenke '64,
& Lorence Wenke '63



Maria Willis '20
Shaun Willis '94



Jake Zuiderveen '20
Rick Zuiderveen '88
Ronald Zuiderveen '62
& Irene Zuiderveen '63

The 143 year legacy of Kalamazoo Christian Schools began in the basement of Walnut Street Christian Reformed Church with one teacher and 25 students. Today it stands as a strong pillar of Christian Education in Southwest Michigan, with an current enrollment of 900 students supported by many teachers, administrators and staff. God took the small beginnings of Kalamazoo Christian Schools and led us through many generations of growth, all for His glory.

The year 2020 seems to have brought more chaos and confusion than clarity in the world; however, the vision and mission of Kalamazoo Christian Schools remains resolute. The class of 2020 concluded their senior year with unique and trying circumstances, but received an academically excellent education that has equipped, inspired and challenged them to love and serve Christ in this changing world. And while this wording of the schools' mission has changed, the meaning and intent has remained steadfast over generations.

Many of our seniors are part of "legacy families", meaning they represent two or more generations of graduates. The Class of 2020 had 22 families ranging from two to five generations of Kalamazoo Christian graduates. What an amazing legacy!

NOT PICTURED
Logan Holwera '20
April Patterson '98
Barb Patterson '77

NOT PICTURED
Ethan VanDeGriend '20
Angela VanDeGriend '89

**Deceased



Little Princesses: Annika Mastenbrook, Ellory Mastenbrook, Addilynn VanStrien

Godmothers and Grace: *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* at KCHS

By Aaron Potter

Due to COVID-19, many schools were forced to cancel their spring theatre productions. By the grace of God, Kalamazoo Christian was not one of them. The week before school was closed, we presented a truly magical *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, which sold 1,256 tickets over four performances. I am so grateful God led me to choose this show and allowed us to perform.

I was nervous as a first time musical director. Current choir and band director Matt Everett and stage manager Brooke Leep ('13), also served in new roles but were a HUGE help. A rock star cast of student actors and crew included representatives from every grade. The lone freshman, Connor Tuin, stole the show as a sassy, rabble rouser. Several seniors, in their theater debut, ended up having a blast. Two Cinderellas, played by twin sisters and seniors Lexi and Kaylee Klaassen, allowed for some magical instant transformations that brought cheers from the audience.

Thirty-six adorable princes and princesses enjoyed the Princess Tea prior to the matinee on Sat., March 7! Each child visited with the Prince, the Cinderellas and Crazy Marie after enjoying some snacks and "tea." What a treat for them to get up close and personal.

receives the unearned gift of a happily ever after, but in this version, even the villains are shown grace. The stepsisters are more sympathetic and even the wicked, undeserving stepmother is offered forgiveness. This touches me deeply as a Christian, who also does not deserve forgiveness, but receives it from Christ's nail-scarred hands, nevertheless. God gave us so much grace in seeing this show to completion amidst the newness of our team and the pandemic. As the fairy godmother sings in the show "It's possible!" All things truly are possible with God's grace.

Lexi Klaassen shared, "I look forward to the musical every year and have been in seven KCS musical performances! I have learned to step outside of my comfort zone and never give up." Kaylee Klaassen added, "Being a part of theater at KCS has taught me to try new things and helped me to meet new people, creating friendships that I would never have had otherwise."

The show is equal parts silly and sincere and full of beautiful, fun music. Best of all, it is a story about grace. Cinderella



Connections Community Church pastors came to support the students.

Pastor's Chapel

This past February, 80 pastors joined the K-8 students for our annual Pastor's Chapel, continuing the long tradition of celebrating our school's partnership with the church in Christian Education. Throughout our entire student body, there are 96 different churches represented. Keeping these relationships strong is an important part of how our churches and school support one another.

When asked about this relationship, Pastor Simon Tuin of Heritage Christian Reformed Church had this to say: "When I reflect on my experience at the Pastor's Chapel, a phrase comes to mind: Seeing is believing! Kalamazoo Christian Schools invest significant time, energy, and a love for Christ into our children, most of it behind the scenes. Then once a year, the curtain is pulled back and as pastors, we get to see the fruit of this investment. My hope is that this affirms the value of our partnership with the school in teaching our children what it means to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. I've been to a chapel for 21 years straight and enjoy worshiping with the kids, hanging out with them before and afterwards, and visiting them in their classrooms."



Katie VanderLaan and Katie Sytsma

Alumni (and Parent!) Spotlight: Kingdom Building with “Katies”

Current parents Katie (Sportel) VanderLaan ('95) and Katie Sytsma felt called to help the homeless—something beyond serving a meal, writing a check or donating a blanket. Inspired by a Detroit-based non-profit that transformed apartments and houses into welcoming spaces for families transitioning to long-term housing, the two Katies decided to pursue a similar ministry in Kalamazoo. After months of prayer, a lot of nudges and the support of a community, their vision became reality in May, 2019.

Sparrow & Nest Designs has helped 13 individuals or families transition into warm, welcoming homes. All referrals come from the YWCA of Kalamazoo, which partners with local shelters to help victims of domestic violence and human trafficking find longer-term housing. While most clients remain anonymous, Katie Sytsma notes that they have enjoyed meeting a few families: “To share the joy of someone coming home to begin a new life of hope and healing is one of the most incredible feelings.” Sparrow & Nest Designs does more than just drop off furniture and household essentials. The non-profit includes special, decorative elements (wall art and throw pillows) and thoughtful touches (a stuffed animal and board games) that provide a special, warm welcome for the new residents.

Sparrow & Nest Designs is always looking for new or gently used donations to replenish their inventory and to furnish and decorate each new space. Their greatest needs include clean mattresses, kitchen supplies and small dining room tables. Since they do not yet have non-profit status (currently in-process), Sparrow & Nest Designs is unable to accept financial gifts. Visit their Facebook page for more information and photos.

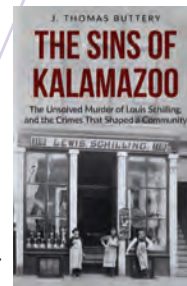
Looking back on her time at Kalamazoo Christian, Katie VanderLaan appreciates the emphasis that was always placed on volunteering and serving in the community: “We were encouraged to look outside of ourselves and connect with other people in the community. It was something we wanted to do and were called to do as Christians.” Twenty-five years later, Kalamazoo Christian continues this emphasis on serving, and the KCS community has embraced this new endeavor by donating their household items and enthusiastic support.

Katie and Katie invite you to partner with them in bringing dignity and hope to families in Kalamazoo.

“Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself...”
Ps 84:3a

THE ALUMNI spotlight

Looking for a good read this summer?



KCS Alum Jeff Buttery ('98) has published a book called *The Sins of Kalamazoo: The Unsolved Murder of Louis Schilling, and the Crimes That Shaped a Community*. “Minutes before 1 pm on March 21st, 1893 the body of respected businessman Louis Schilling was found mutilated in the office of his Kalamazoo meat market; ... the killer was never apprehended. ... The murder of Louis Schilling remains one of the enduring mysteries of Southwest Michigan, but it was neither the first nor the last crime to scar the area.” Read the full description on Amazon.

Since its inception in 1836, Kalamazoo has hosted a multitude of assassins, thieves, & villains whose deeds have threatened to impede Kalamazoo's progress. This is the story of the quest for justice in the Schilling murder case, the crooks and criminals who soiled Kalamazoo's early history, and the officers who pursued them. Add this book to your summer read list - just don't read it at bedtime!

Former KCSA Teacher Retires

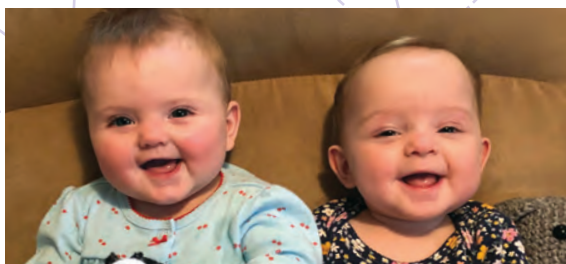


After 37 years in education, Jon DeWaal has retired. Mr. DeWaal taught in the Bible/social studies department at KCS from 1984 until 2009. He was the first of several staff members in subsequent years to lose their teaching positions at Kalamazoo Christian because of declining enrollment. Jim Potter remembers fondly, “Those of us on staff at that time remember the dignity and integrity with which Jon finished out the year.”

Jon took a teaching/administration job at Academia Los Pinares in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in the fall of 2009 and taught there until 2013. That fall, Jon became the Headmaster at Eagle Ranch, a Christian residential program helping kids through major life crises in the Chestnut Mountain community of Georgia. It is from this position that Jon announced his retirement. Jon and his wife Sharon hope to spend more time with their 5 children and 15 grandchildren (plus one on the way!) Congratulations on your retirement, Jon, from the whole KCS community!

THE ALUMNI connection

Alumni Babies



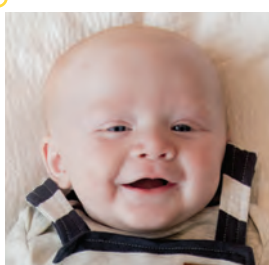
Alice & Claire Sportel
10/13/19
Kevin '03 & Jolie Sportel



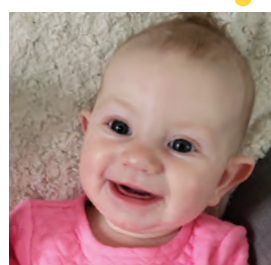
Noelle Westrate
11/22/19
Kevin '06 & Alex Westrate



Henry & Harper DeVries
12/9/2019
Kelvin '07 & Kailee DeVries



Myles Carlson
12/14/2019
Kaj '09 & Michelle '09
(Scheffers) Carlson



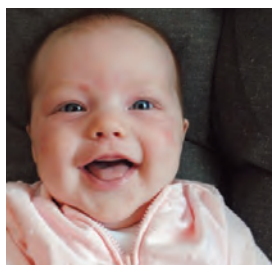
Hayle Anne Groendyk
1/1/2020
Jeff '05 & Heather '05 (Post)
Groendyk



Logan VanOosten
2/4/20
Parker '13 & Ali '13
(VandenBerg) VanOosten



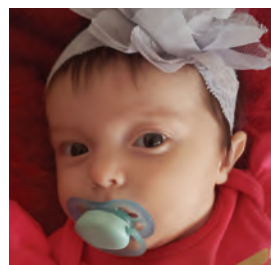
Anneliese Visser
2/4/20
Aaron '13 & Crystal '13
(Kent) Visser



Josie Marie Scheffers
2/15/20
Matthew '10 & Liz '10
(Klooster) Scheffers



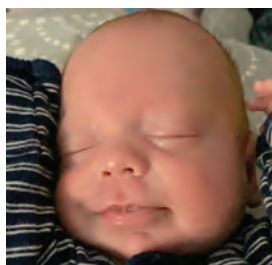
Leeland James Meinema
2/20/20
David '08 & Marissa Meinema



Thyra KayLynn Cramer
2/25/20
Zachary '14 & Tiffany Cramer



Judah Dawson Kiel
3/6/20
Jeff '06 & Heather Kiel



Andrew Thomas Hoffman
3/10/20
Evan & Jenny '10
(Ritsema) Hoffman



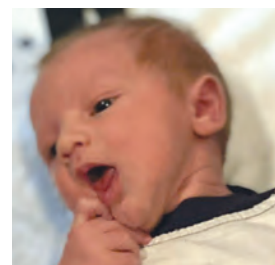
Greta Kate Gustafson
3/17/20
John & Kaylee '08
(Youngblood) Gustafson



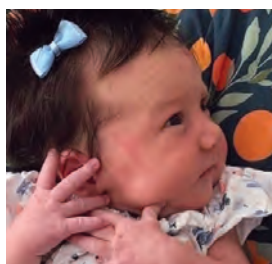
Brooks Walker Coleman
3/18/20
Marcus & Tricia '02
(VanDerSlik) Coleman



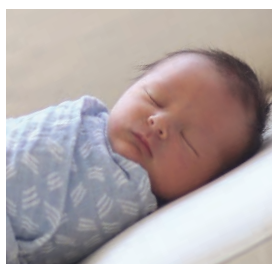
Daxson James Lemmer
4/1/20
Kyle '14 & Savannah '14
(Block) Lemmer



Ahren Glen Fraaza
4/26/2020
Greg '04 & Morgean Fraaza



Rosie Grace VanderSluis
5/28/2020
Jack & Jenny '11
(DeNooyer) VanderSluis



Marco Ted Oropeza
5/6/20
Marco & Christina '07
(DeNooyer) Oropeza



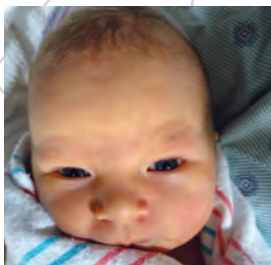
Ethan Robert Keeley
5/8/20
Bryan & Melissa '09 (Gould)
Keeley



Emery Jo Beauchamp
5/9/20
David & Lindsay '10
(Gove) Beauchamp



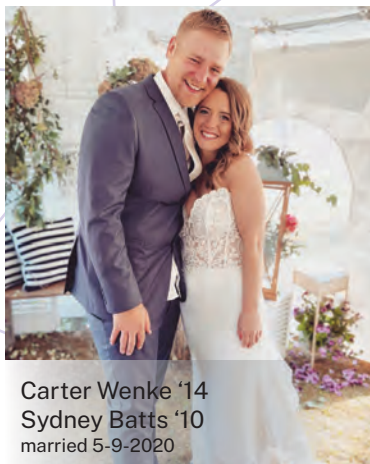
Lucy Jay Mastenbrook
6/4/2020
Kyle '05 & Ashley '05
(Buursma) Mastenbrook



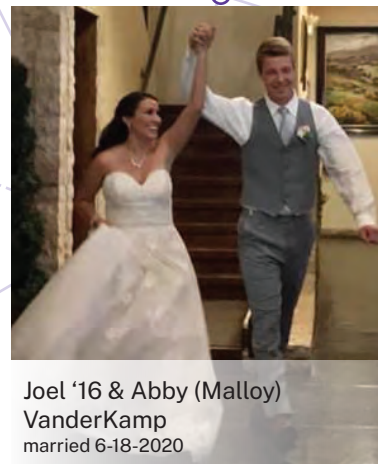
Henry Lawrence Stehouwer
12/5/19
Mark '08 & Anna Stehouwer



Brandon Richardson '12
Marjeanne Bothma
married 5-15-2020



Carter Wenke '14
Sydney Batts '10
married 5-9-2020



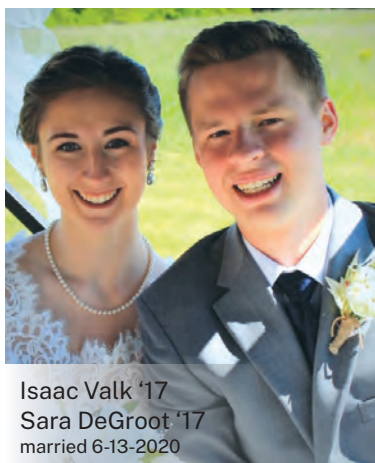
Joel '16 & Abby (Malloy)
VanderKamp
married 6-18-2020



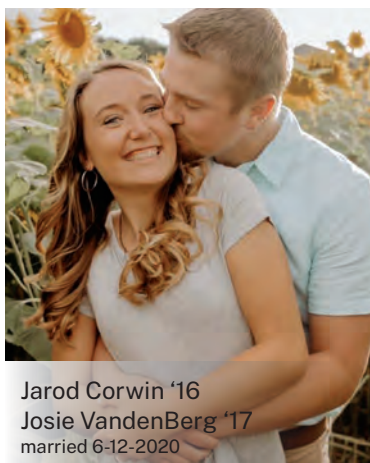
Holden Matthew Proos
2/4/20
Matthew & Janelle '02
(Ausema) Proos



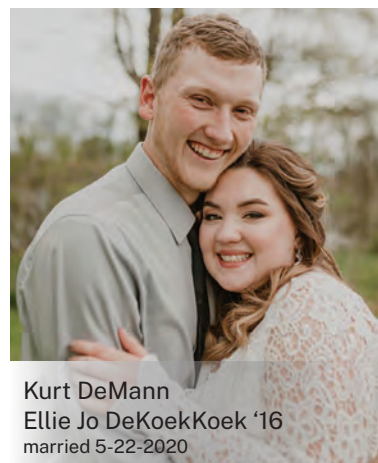
Christian James Cook
3/7/20
Brandon '10 & Jennifer Cook



Isaac Valk '17
Sara DeGroot '17
married 6-13-2020



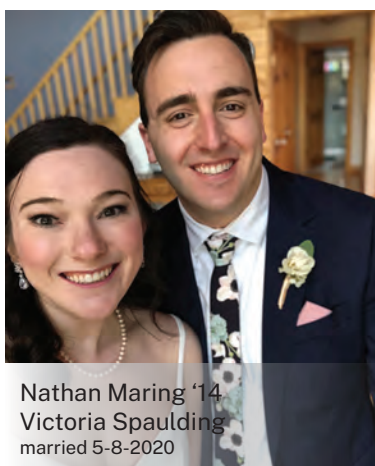
Jarod Corwin '16
Josie Vandenberg '17
married 6-12-2020



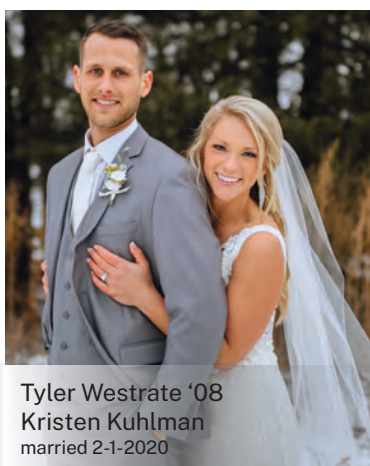
Kurt DeMann
Ellie Jo DeKoekKoek '16
married 5-22-2020



Asher Alan Dykstra
4/27/2020
Jeff & Amanda '00
(Haan) Dykstra



Nathan Maring '14
Victoria Spaulding
married 5-8-2020



Tyler Westrate '08
Kristen Kuhlman
married 2-1-2020



William Hatfield
Brooklyn Block '16
married 6-5-2020

MORE BABIES

Reasner Sophia
(Rease) Doorn
12/19/19
Dan '09 & Lexi Doorn

Reagan Lynn Modderman
5/5/20
Kurt '10 & Rachel Modderman

MORE WEDDINGS

Zach Cramer '14
Tiffany Nolden
married 11-23-2019

Joe Cullen
Bethany Stripp '08
married 1-11-2020

Calling the Class of 1970 & 1980

The reunions for the class of 1970 and 1980 have been postponed to 2021. Details will be communicated at a later time.



KALAMAZOO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

2121 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
KALAMAZOO MI
PERMIT #753

An Exclusive Live Streaming Experience



Liz Bohannon
Thurs. Oct. 15, 2020

- Sponsorships Available
- Schools Virtual Event
- Live Talk with Q&A
- Sseko Designs Trunk Show

Seventh in Our Series Presented by



**KALAMAZOO
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS**
Undeniably Christian. Academically Excellent.

www.thinkBIGkalamazoo.com

Marc Verkaik raves, "I saw her at a Christian Conference last year and she blew me away. Best speaker I've seen in years!"

**For information on being a sponsor or donor,
please contact development@kcsa.org.**



Upcoming Events at KCS

We'd love to invite you back on our campuses for wonderful events like our Homecoming, Auction, and Think Big, but with so many events changing due to the pandemic, it's hard to know what to put IN PRINT!

No worries, KCS provides consistent communication by keeping up to date information on our official Facebook page! This fall, keep tabs on any changes by liking and following our official Facebook page at "kalamazoochristianschools".

Keep an eye out for the completely redesigned Kalamazoo Christian website kcsa.org this fall! Our Advancement Team has been working hard at constructing a revamped and reorganized website.

We would be happy to hear your suggestions and also to share your pictures! Just send us an email at promo@kcsa.org.