

Reveal

Jenison Christian School Education Foundation Newsletter

School Theme

Every year in the late fall/early winter, the Spiritual Community Team, comprised of JCS Staff, ask for suggestions for next year's theme. Each team member is given the opportunity to present a theme idea, suggest a verse that would go along with it, and ways that theme might be divided up into 3 sections (focusing on one section each trimester).

The top 3 staff choices, by vote, are given to the 7th graders. The 7th graders are given a paper on which they state their favorite theme idea and why they think that would be a good theme for our school when they are 8th graders. The Spiritual Community Team looks at their choices for a final decision.

In the springtime, David VanZytveld (Music Teacher) takes the theme that was decided on and develops an outline containing scripture passages, song ideas, and how the theme will be divided by trimester. Teachers may offer song suggestions and scripture to add to David's outline. Teachers get a rough draft of the outline before school is out, and David finalizes it over the summer.

Also, in the springtime, the committee discusses what the school wide theme shirt design might look like. A decision is made before the school year is over and order forms are prepared for the upcoming school year. This year's theme is Shine Your Light, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16.



August 2020

School Theme

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Psalm 78:4, 6 "We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done...so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born..."

A Principal View



Principal Tim Paauw

JCS has a new look for 2020-2021 school year, a certain eye on the future! This summer has been exciting with the bulldozers moving dirt and power tools at work everywhere as we have been adding a car-loop to the front of our building, replacing rooftops, and renovating all our elementary student bathrooms, which, by the way, will also be ADA compliant.

In the midst of the construction, I have provided tours for families moving to our area this month from Illinois, the U.P., Miami, and Arizona, among a few other tours I have provided for local families looking for a new option. Our enrollment is strong and we anticipate a year of growth. We praise the Lord for His blessings and the continued signs of a flourishing school community as we take steps in faith.

The big question as we look to the future and seems to be on nearly everyone's mind right now is, "What is JCS' plan for re-opening school for the upcoming year on the heels of this spring's closure and with COVID-19 still present in our county?"

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Learning at Home

If you were watching the late evening news on March 12, 2020 you heard Gov. Whitmer say that schools will be closed for in classroom learning indefinitely due to the COVID -19 world pandemic. What?! But. Huh?

If you were a parent that remained awake that night trying to figure out how and where and what it would require to participate in Learning at Home... well, within the hour, you would have seen an email from Principal Tim Paauw of Jenison Christian School's plan calmly and articulately outlining the how and where and what.

Each student came to school on Friday, March 13th and was able to bring home worksheets and iPads or laptops. Teachers were prepped and prepared and gave everyone confidence, including hesitant parents, on how to be successful at this. Each student had access to anything that was needed for learning at home. The phase was for four weeks, 3 weeks of learning and spring break. (Note: Our school auction, scheduled for March 14 is postponed, not currently rescheduled, however, some of the class items were auctioned via email to the highest bidder.)

For the first week, starting Monday, March 16, students and parents did their best to foster a new normal. A newness for school where sleeping in was okay and siblings became classmates. Breakfast, brunch and lunch replaced the hot lunch line. Extra curriculars and sports were cancelled so families ate dinners together. Some parents might have thought "This isn't so bad, we are getting great family time." Some teachers might have thought "This is weird, I miss my students."

The second week many kinks were worked out and Zoom conference calls were added so students could see classmates and teachers face to face. While this medium of communication worked for some, it was difficult for others. Nothing could replace in-classroom learning. Some student finished their course loads quickly and completed a school day's work in a few hours. Other students took more time to complete the work. Some students received help from resource teachers and support staff. We were all adapting quickly.

The third week, as families would have been looking forward to spring break, saw those plans being cancelled or postponed. Reality sunk in that the



landscape of "normal" had changed and looked different, which affected all of us.

The fourth week was spring break and no assignments or work were given. Students looked forward to this as a real break. It was during this week that JCS announced Learning at Home would continue through the end of the school year. Gov. Whitmer also forbid any schools to resume in classroom learning for the rest of the school year. This really impacted families and students and teachers as they prepped for 6 more weeks of learning from home.

Some students thrive in independent study, and some really need coaxing and constant monitoring, but as we saw the last 6 weeks come and go, everyone had moments of personal achievement. "I can't do this" was replaced by, "This isn't so bad, I kinda like this." Even the teachers had their own personal achievement notes and now that the 10 weeks have been completed and report cards have been sent out, well, we made it through better than once expected.

The school year completed with a teacher parade outside JCS with elementary students and staff in the Baldwin St. parking lot and the middle school teachers in the Graceland Dr. parking lot. It was difficult for students and teachers alike, but it did provide a level of closure of their commitment. As any parent might have seen while driving by, these teachers were committed through the end. They prayed for each student, they developed individual learning targets and were supportive to parents in incredible ways. These teachers heroically defined what Learning at Home looked like during the COVID-19 world pandemic. Not only were we proud to be the JCS community, I think they thrived in this environment.

Kindergarten and Eighth Grade graduations still happened, albeit drastically different than in prior years, outside on JCS property. The commitment to have these milestone ceremonies was spearheaded by the staff knowing the pictures taken that night would be remembered as a moment that we, parents and teachers, fully supported the work of the other. Every parent appreciated the work of every JCS teacher and we are grateful for them.

So what will next year look like? I don't know. Plans are being made now that will impact the fall and the learning environment. In the meantime, as always, we trust in God. Trust that He has called us to love, serve and share just as our theme for this 2019-2020 declares.



Preparedness Plan for Opening this Fall

Here is a sneak peek at some key considerations within our reopening strategy:

► JCS intends to open our doors for the first half-day of school on August 26 and cannot wait to welcome our students back with the support they need to grow spiritually, social/emotionally, academically, and physically. We anticipate flexibility, grace and encouragement for all, patience, and community of spirit to be key attributes that will help make us successful as a school in guiding those initial steps correctly. We know it will come with challenges and our team is preparing and will be ready.

► JCS has been hiring extra support staff so we can meet the needs of families and staff who might hit moments where they need to be home in quarantine ahead due to COVID related situations. We value community and YOU are a key part of that. We will do what we can to help keep you connected if it happens to you or you need to start the year in that situation. We anticipate it could happen, but we will walk through it with you. We are exploring more tech tools, video-lesson capacities, and we are collecting the best of the things we did from spring and training together so we can improve upon what we know and do if that moment hits ahead.

► JCS will be aiming to educate our students on key practices that can help all within the community know they are safe and feel comfortable:

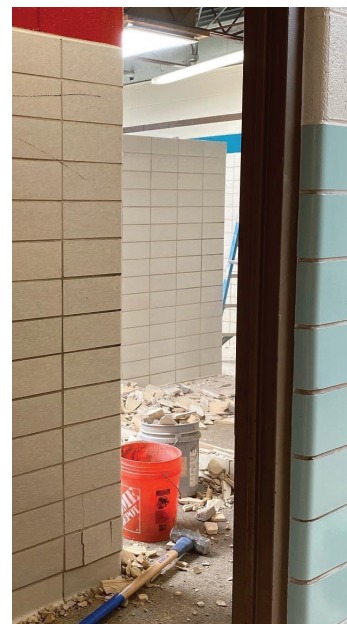
- We will have hand sanitizer at our building entrances and in EVERY room in the building next to the door so we can teach students to “scrub-in” when they walk into an environment and to “scrub-out” as they leave (including on their way to recess and on their way back in).
- We will have our hallways marked with 6 foot distances so students can adjust and learn what that measurement looks like.
- We understand that masks are not as cool as jean jackets, sideways ponytails, and leggings, but if we are in Phase 4 we will have our entire staff and middle school students “sporting our masks” at all times on site other than for meal-time (with exceptions for those with medical issues providing a doctor’s/psychologist’s note) per our legal requirements and to show kindness and care for those who it may help. All Pk-8 students will need to wear them on the buses, and our elementary students might be asked to wear them as they walk to a special if we know they will be walking past other classes. Students 4 years old and younger should never wear a mask per the state’s guidance. Most of these situations will be recommended by us but not required if and when Michigan enters Phase-5.

► JCS will continue to adapt our program to maintain our students’ needs as our first and highest priority, while prayerfully making decisions and seeking to lead with Christ at the center of our community through our actions toward one another and in all that we teach. We recognize the variety and spectrum of feelings and emotions within this school community and will do our best to walk with each family where you are at and within our ability to do so. You are important to us.

A Principal View

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I can assure you that as your school leader it has been burning on my heart as well and is my number one focus of each day. My heart’s desire is to help students and staff experience some more normalcy ahead as we take steps toward being together in person again. It is the thought that swirls most often in my daily prayers. I have read all 63-pages of our governor’s MI Safe Schools Roadmap and have worked with a JCS task force made up of staff members that span across preschool through eighth grade. I have been on the phone with our local health department director regularly and have met with our legal counsel in processing our needs since the Michigan Schools Roadmap was released. Our school board has met this summer to thoroughly review our plan to ensure it represents the best of what we stand for in our school’s mission and purpose. This plan has been sent to parents the first week of August and also posted on our website. We ask for your prayers and your help as we navigate this together. Please talk with your children about how they can prepare to be supportive so we can shine Christ by how we treat others and show respect together.



Annual Passing on the Faith Drive

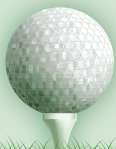
We will once again be running our 'Passing on the Faith Drive' for the JCS Annual fund this Fall. **The goal for this year's drive is \$145,000 which allows us to meet the needs of the students and staff at JCS.** Our needs look a little different this year in light of Covid-19. While JCS has continued to provide leading edge programming to our students through at-home learning, this has increased some financial needs within our programming. Additionally, the fund supports families who desire Christian education for their children, but may not be able to meet the cost of tuition, especially in times of job loss and financial strain. Lastly, the fund allows each student at JCS to experience God's world through unique and diverse experiences through service and exploration, both through classroom experiences and virtual tools. *We know that 2020 has been stressful and hard, and we are so thankful for the JCS community who have continued to give generously to keep our school and our families sustained.* **Thank you for your continued support of Jenison Christian School in the 2020-2021 school year!** You will be receiving a call from J. Milito and Associates in the next few weeks. Please answer the call as they partner with us in asking for your support!

Giving to the Foundation

A gift to the Foundation supports the future of Jenison Christian School. A healthy endowment for the school ensures long-term financial stability and continues the provision of quality, Christian education in the Jenison community. Gifts can be made today through cash or other assets, or through a legacy gift from your estate. The Barnabas Foundation is a trusted ministry partner of the JCS Education Foundation and is ready to help you direct funds to the JCSEF and other kingdom causes designated in your will. If you'd like more information on ways to give to the Foundation, please contact Liz Wiersema, development staff at JCS (616-457-3301).

Golf Outing

The 18th Annual Jenison Christian School Golf Outing was Monday, August 10 at the Meadows of GVSU. The outing had a record number of golfers this year and raised over \$25,000 for our transportation fund and other needs at the school! We are grateful to our sponsors who supported this event:



AMDG Architects, Inc, DJ's Landscape Management, Elders Electric, Enpol, First Companies, Georgetown Eye Associates, Georgetown Waterproofing, Grand River Bank, Hap Hoekwater and Sons, Hudsonville Family Dentistry, Kaptein, Dykstra & Company P.C, Kent Companies, Koetje Builders, Inc, MBK Corporate Promotions, Moore & Bruggink, Inc., Ridgeview Industries, Schepers Brothers, ServPro of Southwest Grand Rapids, Superior Asphalt, The C.P.A. Group, The Katerberg Agency Farm Bureau Insurance, Van Dyken Mechanical, Inc, and Vanderlugt, Mulder, DeVries & Elders, Inc.

First Ever Virtual Eagle Walk

The JCS Eagle Walk went virtual this year, in light of the Covid-19 shut down. The enthusiasm from our JCS community was overwhelming, and we could not have felt more supported and connected during this virtual fundraiser. From individuals and business sponsors the JCS Parent Club received \$28,225! Thank you, JCS Community! A special thanks to our business sponsors:

Gold: DJ's Landscape Management, Clark and VanOverloop Family Dentistry, John Cremer Five Star Real Estate, and Scholma Construction

Silver: Wiersema Painting and Finishing

Bronze: Allendale Dairy Queen, Elders Electric, Hertenstein Technologies, and Noordyk Business Equipment.