

PATHWAYS

“SHOW ME YOUR WAYS, LORD, TEACH ME YOUR PATHS.” PSALM 25:4

HCA’s vision is to inspire students to love learning and live lives worthy of the calling of Christ.

UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Feb. 20-24 - February
break (No school)

March 17 - Term 4
Development Day (No
school)

March 24 - Hearing
Screenings (info & opt out
forms coming next month)

March 27-31 - Iowa
Standardized Testing for
grades 2-8

March 31 - Term 3 ends

April 5 - Resurrection Egg
Hunt

April 10-14 - D.C. Trip
(Grades 5-8)

April 17-21 - April break



PRINCIPAL’S CORNER

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. Proverbs 15:22

God’s word reminds us of the wisdom in reaching out to others for perspective and advice. As the stakeholders of Holden Christian Academy, we will be looking to *you* to provide valuable information as ‘advisers’ for the school’s benefit. Parents have a vested interest in the school for the success of their children, and teachers for their professions. You also have valuable insight about your child(ren)’s learning, engagement, and spiritual development.

(continued on next page...)

You are aware of the culture of HCA and the impact that has on students' social and emotional development. Your input, in conjunction with student achievement data, will inform the goals that become a part of the school improvement plan. School improvement is a continuous process of setting goals, making a plan to achieve those goals, reviewing our progress, and making adjustments. A healthy school like HCA reviews student progress and school culture continually, but every three years a more in-depth school improvement process is undertaken.

This spring, the administration and school committee will embark on a more thorough review of the school. Please join us in prayer as we humbly seek the Lord's perspective during this process and evaluate the data that is provided to create wise goals for HCA. As part of the data collection process, students in grades 2-8 will take the Iowa achievement tests in April to measure their academic progress. We will also ask each family, student, and staff member to evaluate many elements of our school such as the physical space, academic progress, spiritual development, and school culture to highlight HCA's strengths and potential areas for improvement.

Although the school is a complex organization, we are dedicated to accomplishing the mission of, ***"Honoring God through creative learning and strong academics in a caring, fun-filled school."*** Please be on the lookout for a survey in April that you can complete to help us analyze the school's strengths and weaknesses. Your input is extremely valuable and an important part of this process. **We are looking for a minimum of 80% participation in the survey to provide reliable data that will contribute to the creation of wise goals.** As in all things, we want to honor God and seek His plan for the school through this process, so we begin with prayer for clear perspective and humble hearts. *In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.* Proverbs 16:9

In His Service,
Nikki Cleveland, Principal

Honoring God through
Creative learning and strong
Academics in a caring, fun-filled school!

Update on the 23-24 school year

We are excited that **so many** of you have re-enrolled your children for next school year!! If you have not taken a moment to do that, it helps us plan and make admissions decisions for new students when we know how many students will be returning. Please let us know by logging into the FACTS Family Portal > Student > Apply/Enroll and select either “reenroll” or “will not reenroll” to let us know your plans. New students are actively being screened and offers of admission being made at this time. (There are literally only a few seats left in Preschool, Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 5!!!)

SAVE THE DATE (and RSVP!)

The Parent Teacher Council is organizing a fun family field trip for Friday, June 9th at 7pm. HCA has 65 tickets to a WooSox game reserved!! Find out more info and secure your family’s ticket reservation by clicking [HERE](#).

JOB OPPORTUNITY:

We are hiring a Night Custodian, to begin work as soon as possible. This position is 25 hours per week, and work can be done anytime between 6pm and 6am. General daily cleaning responsibilities include sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, trash removal, bathrooms, glass and dusting, etc.

-Cleaning experience preferred.

-Send inquiries to our Facilities Manager, Matt Brouillet mbrouillet@holdenchapel.org



PLEASE TAKE NOTE...



Important Fundraiser Update:

Thank you to everyone who has generously donated to the 2 biggest fundraisers for HCA: the Annual Fund and the American Challenge!

ANNUAL FUND: To date, we have raised \$10,510, of our \$15,000 budget for this important fundraiser.

AMERICAN CHALLENGE: To date, we have raised \$4,965 of the \$17,500 we have budgeted for this fundraiser.

There is still work to do to meet our goal! Support HCA's Annual Fund by clicking [HERE](#)! ...and keep getting sponsors and donations for the American Challenge through Feb. 28th by clicking [HERE](#)!

God is doing amazing things at HCA, and meeting these financial goals will help us continue offering an amazing Christian education for our students.

Interested in learning more about the Parent Teacher Council? Click [HERE](#) to sign up for more info, or to join! The next meeting will be Monday, March 13th at 3:15pm in the Holden Chapel Welcome Center (or on the playground if the weather is conducive!)

(please bring books or quiet activities to occupy your children if you don't sign them up for ASP)





Middle Schoolers recently enjoyed a field trip to the Gale Free Library in Holden.



Nurse Holly came to visit and teach the Preschoolers how to take care of babies!



Preschool News!

“Love is patient, love is kind.” Such a perfect and age appropriate way to talk to Preschoolers about Valentine’s Day, and the bigger story of God’s love for them and to have towards each other.

January wrapped up with lots of sledding and snow play outside, and as the snow melted, the dirt digging began again—they always find the dirt! What a gift to see children in an environment where God intended for us to thrive, and we know the benefits developmentally, emotionally, and physically of spending time in God’s creation. We are blessed to be able to experience our Nature Explore area year round, in all weather, and we love seeing and experiencing the changing of seasons and activities we can enjoy as the seasons change.

The Preschoolers loved getting to participate in some of their spring/summer activities by being able to ride scooters and bikes in the gym for a week. Their excitement for the chance to use their whole bodies and move a whole lot was palpable every day! Coupled with the start of our Community Helpers unit, they had the opportunity to practice self regulation with our Police (teachers) directing traffic—STOP, GO, and SLOW! In the classroom, you could hear the retelling of a favorite story, Officer Buckle and Gloria, and dress up play as police officers was a hit. Amazing cities and towns were crafted in the block area, and to see the architects and engineers at work is testament to who God is shaping them to be!

Next up was Firefighters, and what a thrill it was to be able to act like firefighters all week through play, painting, storytelling, and learning games! Preschoolers loved using the fire truck and hoses to put out pretend fires, rescuing families from the dollhouse, counting/matching the number of firefighters up the ladder during circle time, and practicing Stop, Drop and Roll. They even got to paint at the easel like they were putting out a fire, using textured paint brushes!

Valentine’s Week brought students the opportunity to be mail carriers. All week, students were given the opportunity to write letters and valentines to their classmates, friends, and family, and deliver them within our very own Post Office in the classroom! They loved the chance to create mail, drop it into the mailbox, and distribute it. This was extra special on Valentine’s Day, and made the experience make more sense to them – and even more fun!

We have loved having parents visit our classroom as Community Helpers! We are always amazed and grateful for the ways our families contribute to our community, and that they can come in to teach us about how they honor God in their professions. We will continue to have guest parents throughout the rest of the month and love these hands on experiences.

With great anticipation we look forward to March and our Frontier Days! We will be learning about early American life while the students in K-8 are doing the same. This unit will immerse us in how people lived, worked, and worshiped long ago. Families, keep an eye on your emails for ways to participate in the fun and learning!



Team A News!

Kindergarten Update from Mrs. Coombs:

One, two, skip a few, 99, 100! Can you believe it? We have been in school for 100 days already! Kindergarten celebrated this milestone with some fun counting and fine motor activities. We beaded necklaces, made colorful headbands, and even exercised our bodies! We finished the day exchanging Valentines with our friends. What an exciting and busy day!

During Term 3 we will learn to make healthy food choices and how to “eat the rainbow”. **Parents, I need your help!** Please send snacks and lunches that contain the wonderful colors of the rainbow. Students will track the different colors they eat on a chart. We will also learn about the importance of rest, drinking water and physical activity.

Kindergarten dove into learning about our five senses. We started with sight. Ask your child if it was harder to draw a picture with or without a blindfold! We also used our sense of sight to explore the property around our school, just as Lewis and Clark explored this new land long ago. We used the homemade binoculars and walked around the playground and woods, and then drew a map of what we saw. The maps came out amazing!

Our Kindergarten class will continue to work on our fine motor skills, using tools such as play-dough and clothespins to help strengthen the small muscles in their hands and wrists. When these muscles are strong, it becomes easier and more comfortable to hold pencils and cut paper. Let's not forget that our gross motor skills are just as important as our fine motor skills! These skills are especially important when we are not able to go outside because of temperature and/or weather.

Everyone is excited for all we will learn in Term 3. Please continue to ask your children what they are learning in the classroom so you can see firsthand their skills and outstanding accomplishments.

Grade 1 Update from Mrs. Richardson:

Valentines Day, the 100th day of school, and LOTS of learning have taken place in Term 3. To celebrate the 100th day of school, First Grade counted and strung 100 Fruit Loops. This was such a great way to practice counting, as well as practice fine motor skills.

First Graders have been busy bees in Math! We are already on the second half of the curriculum. Students have learned place value (identifying the hundreds, tens, and ones place), mastered different ways to add and subtract, and tackled word problems. Coming up in Math, we will be tackling measurement, graphing, and how to read clocks.

In FUNdations, we are currently working on unit 9! We are learning vowel teams, and will get to the ‘silent e’ rule very soon. Mrs. Lucier and I continue to lead reading groups 1-2 times a week. First Graders’ reading is really SOARING! We are so proud of their hard work in FUNdations!

History class has been a blast - learning about what pioneers and explorers are. After learning about Lewis and Clark, Grade 1 can now tell you the difference between a pioneer and an explorer. We talked about what we would need to observe if we were either a pioneer/explorer. We even made our own binoculars! Grade 1 used their binoculars to seek out new land outside around the playground.

During Bible time, we have been tackling the Old Testament. We have learned about King David, Daniel, and many other friends from the Bible. Looking forward, we will be heading to the New Testament by the start of Term 4.

Enjoy your winter break and praying you all stay healthy!

Grade 2 Update from Mrs. McGrail:

Is anyone else in utter shock that we are already at winter break?! I think the mild winter temperatures are making this year feel like it's going by so fast! I hope you all have enjoyed seeing your children's work flowing in weekly and the great progress they have made! Upon arrival from break, we will officially be in the second half of Term 3. It will continue to be busy and full of fun! Here's what's to come in our core subjects:

Math: We are completing Unit 7 this week (everyone has done beautifully with the content in this unit! I am SO proud!). In Unit 8, we will learn different ways of counting and comparing to 1,000, and to wrap up Term 3 we will master adding numbers to 1,000 in Unit 9.

FUNdations: We are already in Unit 11 of 16!! Upon returning from winter break, we will wrap up unit 11. Units 12 and 13 will likely be completed before the end of term three as well.

History: Sakakawea, traveling by covered wagon, life of the Pioneers, and David Crockett!

Science: Continuing to learn about the human body and senses

Bible: Continuation through the Old Testament and entering the New Testament!

I pray you and your family have a blessed winter vacation that is full of fun, relaxation, and fellowship! See you all soon!



Grade 2 with their "binoculars",
trekking the property like Lewis & Clark



Team B News!

FROM MS. RENNIE'S DESK:

Third and Fourth grades have enjoyed sharing our Science time, learning more about our five senses together. Last week, we challenged our sense of smell and learned that our sneezes move at 100mph!! We looked at and created some cool optical illusions for sight, and this week we are learning about the anatomy of our heart and our heart's desires. We are using Dr. Howard Gardner's 12 Multiple Intelligences and matching them to God's Image Bearers. Here are some other things happening in Grade 3:

- Third grade is excited about our peach tree that we planted.
- We are learning about amazing Black American inventors and scientists.
- We just started fractions, but please continue to practice those multiplication facts.

Mastering them really matters!!

- Ask your kids what a 'schwa' is and how we say that word in class
- Mrs. Heenan came in and did a really fun activity about Lewis & Clark and Sacajawea.
- We continue to study about Moses and working our way through Exodus.
- Mint Tin Book Reports are due after February vacation on the 27th . All that they need is in their binders.

We are learning about amazing Black American inventors and scientists who have revolutionized our health care. Here are just a few of the many things we use, enjoy, & are blessed by these incredible people: three-light traffic lights, automatic elevator doors, color IBM PC monitors and gigahertz chips, super soakers, peanut butter, clothes dryers, & SO many more!! We will dive into the Industrial Revolution after vacation and continue our study of the heart.

Blessing to you and your family and I hope you all have a wonderful February vacation!!

~Ms. Rennie

A NOTE FROM MRS. VELARDE:

4th grade has been a bundle of energy these past few weeks! This week we celebrated Valentine's Day and had our 100th day of school. The excitement leading up to break along with these days of celebration has certainly created an energized group of students. We have been working to harness that energy and have succeeded. The 4th grade students have been learning about the time between Joseph and Moses and what it was like in ancient Egypt in Bible class. We have been studying the 5 senses as well as the immune system. We have also focused on the 12 intelligences, and have combined that learning with Language Arts to write friendly letters to each other, noting the things we appreciate about each other & the ways we see God in each other. We have begun the fun of learning about fractions and converting improper fractions to mixed numbers. 4th grade has really hit their stride and has come together in unity over the past few weeks. I am so proud of these students for working together to solve their disagreements and for agreeing to pray together before recess play begins. It has been such a joy to watch the ways God has been moving in their hearts over the past year and I look forward to seeing Him continue His work in them.

~Mrs. Velarde



Middle School News!

Fifth Grade Update from Ms. Legro: Devotions, Math, and Food for Life Fun

Who said devotions and Bible memorization had to be boring? After the Preschool and Kindergarten teachers shared what they learned at the ACSI Early Childhood Conference at a recent staff meeting, we have added elements of play to our morning devotions. It has been fun listening to the fifth graders' reactions... "I haven't played with play-doh in forever!"... "This is so satisfying"... Can we do this again?"

Who said Math has to bring anxiety? After a recent Algebra lesson on linear equations (specifically slope-intercept form), one of the eighth graders said, "This is fun." On another day, I walked into my classroom and found a note on the whiteboard from a fifth grader that read, "Thank you Miss Legro for making math fun." On their 100th day of school, I had a sweet conversation with some of our team A students where they remarked, "Math is my favorite subject!"

Who said that history is just memorizing names and dates? My Hamilton (musical) loving crew have been learning about the real Alexander Hamilton as they work on their "Founding Gardeners" project—a fun, school-wide project that integrates History, Language Arts, Science, and the gardening aspect of Food for Life. A special thank you to Mrs. Heenan for her willingness to share her creativity as the students research and prepare to mail seeds to John Jay (Eighth Grade) via the Pony Express (Kindergarten) next month.

Have fun!
Miss Legro



Sixth Grade Update from Mr. Shea:

Hello Parents,

As we are heading into our February Break, students are wrapping up a small unit on formal letter writing. In these letters, students are incorporating things that they have learned about George Washington from Mr. Curtis's History classes, with some Food for Life topics on how to read and create growing instructions for a particular plant (My Grade 6 homeroom learned about Brussel Sprouts). Students will be writing their letters while pretending to be George Washington; and will be writing to James Madison (represented by Grade 7). These letters are part of a school wide project to teach students how our country's founding fathers communicated and helped each other survive and thrive.

Students will be heading into a literature unit on theme and symbolism after we return from break. Students will be working with primary documents from the Early American period to get an idea of how early Americans thought and felt about the world around them. We will then read through a contemporary novel with similar themes, with the goal of comparing and contrasting the ways those themes are presented.

Over the break, please help students work on their research for their Science Fair Projects! This week is their best chance to complete their research without the extra stress of classes, additional studying, and other homework assignments. Please encourage your students to be proactive in completing their work.

I hope that you all have a wonderful break!

In Christ,
Jeremiah Shea
Grade 6 Home Room



Mr. Curtis' Corner:

Welcome back to another episode of Mr. Curtis' Corner. In this episode we will take a look at middle school happenings in both Bible and History class. After easing back into the rhythms of the school routine, the Middle School is off and running in Term Three. H.C.A. has just recently kicked off our February fundraiser, which is a departure from the normal 'Read-a-Thon'. Instead, we launched an all new 'American Challenge', where students have been tasked with completing age-old traditions from years gone by. This fundraiser provides a unique opportunity to unplug, come together with family, and complete tasks while earning money for our school. Hopefully it is providing some opportunity to, yes, have some fun, but also reflect on how some of these tasks bring us together. Maybe your student will discover a new hobby or family tradition one that can be relived year after year. This is not just a fundraiser it's an opportunity to connect with our own history and heritage!

Recently in Bible class, we have been journeying through the rollercoaster life of Joseph, who starts off as the youngest brother, the apple of his father's eye, and maybe lets it go to his head a little bit. Before he knows what hit him, he finds himself in a foreign land, enslaved to a very powerful man, and somewhere in there he has learned to humble himself and find favor with his master. We see how God uses all things together for his good and has Joseph right where he needs to be. Joseph, as you very well may know, gets elevated to second highest position in all of Egypt, where he is eventually reunited with his older brothers and is later reconciled to them. There is a lot we can learn from the story of Joseph. Students culminated all they had learned about Joseph's story by creating their own stories about Joseph in the 'choose your own adventure' format. Each class voted one of their peers as a 'class champion' and they had the privilege to present their story in front of the entire Middle School. We really do have some super creative and imaginative students and it was a lot of fun to hear their stories!

History class has also been quite the rollercoaster ride as well. We have been fully immersed in the American Revolution. Last week, students took a closer look at some of our Founding Fathers who helped shape our republic. Think George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Jay, James Madison. Students also learned that not everyone in the colonies wanted to throw off their British relatives and become independent. Maybe one of the most important take-aways from the American Revolution so far, is the resilient spirit of the 'Americans'. Time and time again we see examples of individuals who continued to press on and fight for freedom in the face of adversity. This is something that all Americans' can appreciate even hundreds of years later. So as we continue our study of the past and the events, people and circumstances that shaped our country and lives today hopefully we can appreciate all they endured in order to provide us with this unique and beautiful country.

Until next time.... ~Mr. Curtis

Science Update from Mrs. Gordon:

The Middle School is now diligently working on their Science Fair projects daily. We developed research questions and started gathering credible sources for finding answers to those questions. Next step: write the research papers! Though this work is sometimes boring, and there don't tend to be shortcuts to understanding, this will prove to be an exceptionally valuable piece of the process for those who devote effort to it.

On another note, the 8th grade class hosted a Middle School wide Stay, Play, & Pray event. The next one will be on Friday, March 24th. It was a wonderful time for the Middle School to have some extra time together for fun and deeper connection, and we are all looking forward to the next one!

Finally, one American Challenge recommendation for "Explore a place you have never been before and sketch it" (798 points): if you have never visited Purgatory Chasm in Sutton or Cascades Park in Worcester, either one is worth your time!

Have a wonderful February break.
~Mrs. Gordon



We love our Middle Schoolers!