

Rooted and Reaching

HCS Highlights
December 2024



Houston
Christian
School



Educate, Engage, Equip...to the Glory of God.

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OUR COMMUNITY

➤➤➤ HCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Chairperson**
 - Daryn Kobes
- **Vice Chair/Building Maintenance**
 - Tim Dykstra
- **Secretary/Employee Relations Committee**
 - Brenan Mayer
- **Education & Task Force Committee**
 - Kari Vanderwoerd
- **I.T. Committee**
 - Collin Peters
- **Finance Committee**
 - Kevin Alles
- **Long Rain Planning Committee**
 - Sean Delege



We are thankful to these men and women who serve HCS. Please remember the board members in your prayers.

➤➤➤ NEWS FROM THE FALL/WINTER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At this year's Fall AGM, 46 society members gathered, marking an impressive turnout that pleased the board. Financial statements for the 2023/2024 year had been distributed in advance, allowing members time to review them prior to the meeting. The AGM was opened by Daryn Kobes, Board Chair, with the financial statements as the primary focus of the discussions.

The finance committee reported that the school remains on track to implement a 3% annual tuition increase to address the rising costs of operating the school. This adjustment is seen as more than reasonable, considering British Columbia's inflation rate of 2.4% and projected salary increases in BC of 3.9%. The proposal received strong support from society members, with several expressing gratitude for the board's efforts to maintain affordability for all families while ensuring the school's sustainability.

The meeting concluded with the School Board and Administration offering prayers of thanks to the Lord for His continued care of Houston Christian School, especially during these uncertain financial times. They acknowledged the Lord's hand in guiding the school through challenges and providing wisdom in every decision. The leaders expressed their deep gratitude for His faithfulness and reaffirmed their commitment to seeking His direction as they continue to steward the school, trusting that His guidance will sustain and bless HCS in the years ahead.

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” –

Proverbs 16:3

HOUSTON CHRISTIAN WILDCATS

»»» VOLLEYBALL

It has been an exciting volleyball season at HCS! A season full of growth, determination, and school spirit, and we couldn't be prouder of all our teams!



- The Senior Boys' team won a silver medal at the Northwest Volleyball Zones Championship and competed in the A Boys' Volleyball Provincial Championship, where they finished in fifth place.
- The Senior Girls' team secured third place in the Northwest Volleyball Zones Championship.
- All Junior teams won silver medals at the Northwest Volleyball Zones Championship.
- In November, our Grade 5, 6, and 7 classes participated in the SD 54 Volleyball Tournament at HSS and Twain.



THANK YOU
TO ALL OUR
VOLUNTEER
COACHES!

»»» ELEMENTARY CROSS COUNTRY RUN

On October 10th, our students aged 8-12 participated in the annual cross-country run at Riverside Park in Smithers. This exciting event brought together ten elementary schools and was a wonderful opportunity to introduce our young athletes to the joy of organized sports. The race distances were tailored to each age group: students aged 8 and under ran 1 km, those aged 9-10 ran 1.5 km, and participants aged 11-12 tackled a 2 km course.

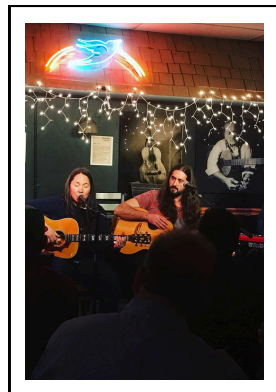


Jill DeZwaan

An interview with an HCS Alumnus

Talk about your life journey after graduating from HCS.

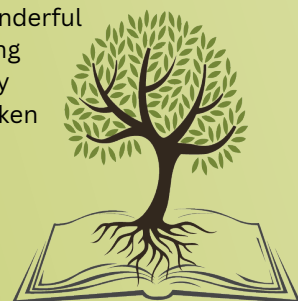
After graduating from HCS, I went on to Prairie Bible College. Originally, I planned to enroll at Columbia College in Abbotsford, but two weeks before the semester began, I felt led by the Lord to choose Prairie instead. My family spent a lot of time in Alberta growing up, and I have extended family there, so that didn't feel like too far of a stretch for a test flight. Plus, the fact that it is located in the very small town of Three Hills appealed to me. I moved to Three Hills and pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Intercultural Studies. While there, I found some very interesting doors opening along the way. Ultimately, I ended up with an associate's degree and toured with a worship band formed on campus by several other musicians. We had the opportunity to write and record original music and travel across Canada and down the western United States. I went to Three Hills, imagining that I would be a piano teacher and pursue classical music. I ended up being offered the opportunity to write and record original music and work with a record company in Nashville, TN. This was all so outside of anything I could really comprehend, and looking back, I see how it actually felt surreal most of the time. God is so good and so faithful in His care for me. I was 18 when this all started and 21 by the time I moved to Nashville with no idea what to expect! He surrounded me with people who looked after me and invested in me, and I was truly adopted by the most wonderful and loving family, who had me live with them just outside of Nashville. They are dear to this day. I met many wonderful people and had some amazing opportunities.



After recording an album with Reunion Records, I realized that I wasn't quite ready to fully commit to a career in Contemporary Christian Music. I stayed in Nashville, collaborating on songwriting with other artists and working as a session singer for songwriters. I also had the opportunity to perform at some amazing venues, including the Blue Bird Café. After 5 years in Nashville, I met my husband Greg through a mutual friend, and we got married and moved to his hometown in Illinois. We spent nine years in Illinois until the call of the Rockies became irresistible, leading us to move to Colorado. We have three wonderful kids, and we are truly enjoying these years. We are currently



homeschooling, driving places, and thanking God for it all. Music has taken a back seat in many ways over the years, but it has been a joy to serve where I can. I have accompanied school choirs, taught some lessons, worked with songwriters and helped on the music teams at church. My kids are musical little critters, so it's been fun to watch as they develop their own musical talents while we play together. God is so good.



How did the education you received from HCS impact this journey?

HCS played a crucial role in shaping my self-expectations and also in determining what education would look like for my kids. In hindsight, I appreciate the educational and spiritual formation that the leadership of HCS has cultivated. What a gift to have believers to guide and cheer for you through the teen years, those years were a gift in so many ways. The teachers truly valued our development, providing us with a quality education and setting clear expectations to meet. There was an environment of mutual respect and high standards. I share with my children what my school experience was like growing up, highlighting how we were able to challenge ourselves while having fun! I have carried those standards with me, raising my kids to be critical thinkers, take on challenges confidently, and remember to have fun along the way.

How does your faith impact how you see your role as a Mother?

"Christ is my firm foundation" is a worship song lyric that really sums it up and Luke 6:47-49 really speaks to how the Lord has led in my life. I have not always walked closely with the Lord, but the testimonies of faith, sacrifice and hope I was surrounded with in my school years were a huge anchor that never really let go through it all and drew me back to ultimately surrendering my life to Christ. Of all the interesting jobs I have had, I can say with confidence that none has required me to adapt as quickly and frequently as being a stay-at-home mom. That is my profession, and I have been doing it for 15 years now. I am so thankful to have this time with my kids and to have the opportunities that it affords. Making the change from full-time musician to stay-at-home mom in a new town surrounded by strangers was a huge change, and motherhood has been the great revealer of where I place my faith, how I respond to trials, and how I quantify success.



What about HCS has stayed with you?

Honestly, the fun! I love how the teachers shared about their life experiences and how God worked in their lives. I also love how if we showed the teachers we could work, they would also let us play! Having been through several different school systems with my own family it is now so clear what a blessing that whole environment was.

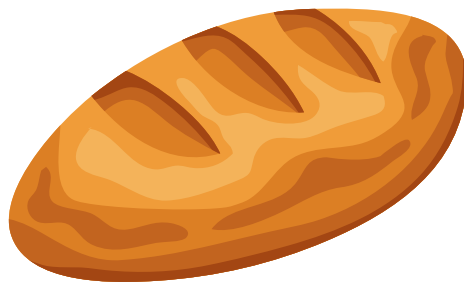
Recall a fond memory of your time at HCS.

Miss Gunther was so special to me. I'm still so thankful for her part in my life. I have a core memory of the whole school in the gym (the old one). Miss. Gunther had taught each class a couple of rounds of a song, and she led the entire school in joining the rounds together like a well-oiled machine, acapella. The beauty of it is still with me.

I was part of the first Grade 11 and 12 classes at HCS and I helped my dad build the high school addition. Man, there was a lot of tile in those high school shower rooms!

I was part of Chi Rho getting started (Thursday Morning Sing); singing and having chapel time together was amazing.

HCS PRESENTS
WE KNEAD
 a little
Christmas



Bethlehem was called “the house of bread”, so no wonder that the little town’s best bakery is “The House of Bread”. Owner Ezekiel, along with his wife Naomi, and daughters Challah and Dora, are busily baking up fresh delights for the residents of Bethlehem, and all the visitors in for the census, when their son Babka, the shepherd, bursts on the scene with tales of angels appearing in the night sky. Excitement rises along with the bread dough with news of a baby born that very day — a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!





MERRY CHRISTMAS



FOSTERING FOCUS AND FAITH: HCS CELL PHONE USE POLICIES

Across British Columbia, schools have introduced updated cell phone use policies in response to new government guidelines aimed at enhancing the educational environment. At HCS, we're committed to fostering a positive and productive learning experience rooted in our shared Christian values. Our cell phone policies are designed to support our students' success both academically and spiritually, encouraging them to use technology responsibly and with discernment. Cell phone policies are crafted to balance the rights of students with the expectations of parents, who play an essential role in their children's growth. By limiting cell phone use, we can ensure a safe, respectful, and focused learning atmosphere. These policies also address challenges such as classroom disruptions and the misuse of devices, helping students better engage with their lessons while maintaining appropriate boundaries for personal technology.



Responsible Cell Phone Use at HCS

HCS has taken a thoughtful approach to cell phone use, tailored to the unique needs of our students. For elementary and middle school students, personal electronic devices are discouraged during school hours to create a distraction-free environment that supports their social and academic development. High school students, recognizing their increasing independence, are permitted to use their phones during non-instructional times. This approach strikes a balance between encouraging responsible device usage and maintaining focus during instructional periods. Teachers often say “permission is key” when it comes to using cell phones out of dedicated time.

To ensure the effectiveness of these policies, consequences are clearly outlined. Phones used inappropriately will be confiscated and securely stored until the end of the school day. Repeated violations will involve parental notification to foster a collaborative effort in guiding responsible phone use.

**“BE VERY CAREFUL,
THEN, HOW YOU LIVE—
NOT AS UNWISE BUT AS
WISE, MAKING THE MOST
OF EVERY
OPPORTUNITY.”**

EPHESIANS 5:15-16



A Biblical Foundation for a Christ-Centered Cell Phone Policy

As a Christ-centered community, we draw inspiration from Scripture to guide our actions and decisions. These policies align with Biblical principles that encourage wisdom, self-control, and putting others first:

Wisdom and Discernment:

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity." (Ephesians 5:15-16)
Limiting cell phone use during instructional time helps students make wise choices by focusing on their education and making the most of their learning opportunities.

Self-Control:

"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline." (2 Timothy 1:7)
Learning to manage personal technology use cultivates self-control, a critical skill for personal and spiritual growth.

Respect for Others:

"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves." (Romans 12:10)
Reducing cell phone distractions demonstrates care and respect, creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere for classmates and teachers.



A Community Effort for Student Success

Navigating the role of cell phones in schools requires a collaborative effort. Teachers, parents, and students all have a part to play in supporting policies that promote achievement and well-being. While there may be diverse opinions on this issue, our shared goal remains the same: to provide a safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment where every student can thrive.

We appreciate your partnership as we work to create an environment where students can grow in wisdom, knowledge, and faith. By collaborating, we can ensure that HCS remains a place where students glorify God through their learning and choices, free from unnecessary distractions.



WORDS OF WISDOM: FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

HOPE IN CHRIST

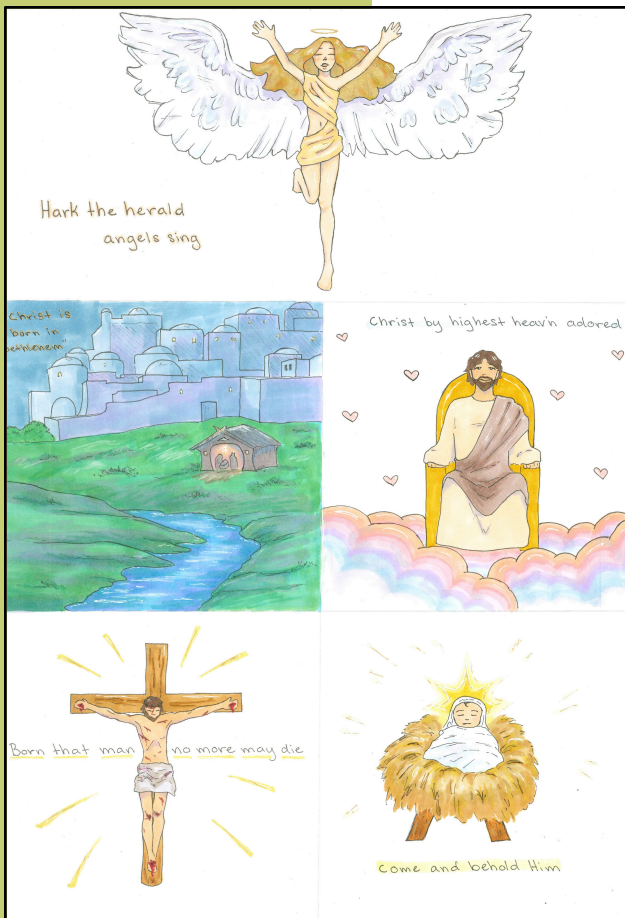
by: Pastor Martin Vellekoop

H stands for Houston, of course—our home and community.

S stands for School because we are an educational institution.

And C? C stands for Christian. Being a Christian means following Jesus Christ.

This school in this town stands on Christ as its foundation—a core value. He is the Lord and Master of all we do. It's no surprise, then, that when HCS speaks and lives with hope, that hope is firmly rooted in Jesus Christ, whose birth we joyfully celebrate every Christmas.



By: Abigail Turner

There is something in the word “hope” that has an incompleteness about it. In Romans 8, the apostle Paul describes it this way: “For in this hope [redemption] we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” I remember once hoping to receive a bicycle as a gift. That hope became a reality, and the moment it did, I stopped hoping for it. Funny how that works. On the other hand, I had another gift on my Christmas list for years but never received it. Eventually, I stopped hoping for it, though it took longer. In the process, I grew up. It would be strange to ask for it now. Hope for something can be like that. It evolves with time, shaping our desires and expectations. When hope is fulfilled, it gives way to gratitude and joy. When it is left unmet, it can teach us resilience and the bittersweet art of letting go. But true hope—the kind of hope Paul speaks of—goes beyond material desires or fleeting wishes. It anchors us in something deeper, something eternal. This kind of hope isn't meant to fade or be outgrown.

The Bible frequently uses the word hope. And when it's not being used, hope is active in the background of everything in the Old and New Testaments. Often, the word hope is used in the everyday way all people use it. "I hope for this gift," "I hope the economy improves," or "I hope I get a good grade—I did my best, after all." But then there's the hope for God's full redemption in the coming of the Messiah—a hope the people held on to for generations. At last, Jesus was born. God's promise "to save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21) became a reality.

The Apostle Peter wrote to Christians who were going through hard times, which he described as a "fiery ordeal." He wrote, "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have" (1 Peter 3:15). Maybe the H in HCS can also stand for "Hope. In Christ, we always have hope, "for what we do not yet have." As students, staff, board members, parents, and supporters, we lean on Christ. We trust in His plan of grace, even when times seem bleak. No matter the circumstances, we find comfort in knowing He is always with us, and we are always with Him. He is alive today, and we know He is coming back. This hope inspires us—and it's a hope we can share.

During this season, may the celebration of God's gift of salvation from sin in Jesus Christ bring peace and comfort to each of us. At the same time, let's ground our ongoing hope in God's daily faithfulness and love as we await Jesus's promised coming again to make all things new.



"MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE AS YOU TRUST IN HIM, SO THAT YOU MAY OVERFLOW WITH HOPE BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT."

ROMANS 15:13

9th annual DEEP ROOTS CAMPAIGN

Our 2024 Deep Roots Campaign is to raise \$15,000 to fund small items that make a BIG impact.

By contributing you will be playing a vital role in our mission to Educate, Engage and Equip all students to the glory of God.

WAYS TO DONATE

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deeproots@houstonchristianschool.ca
Please include your email address and 'Deep Roots' as the password.

IN PERSON

We are happy to accept cash or cheque written out to Houston Christian School at the office.

ON OUR WEBSITE

Visit houstonchristianschool.ca and click on the DONATE tab at the top of the page.

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*Educate, Engage, Equip...
to the Glory of God*