

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:

Dec. 14 - Christmas Program (PK-8), 7pm
Holden Chapel Sanctuary
(students arrive at 6:30pm)

Dec. 22-Jan.1 - Christmas break, no school

Jan. 2 - classes resume

Jan. 12 - Development Day, no school

Jan. 15 - MLK, Jr. Day, no school

Jan. 19 - Chicago World’s Fair Re-enactment (Big Day, volunteers needed - see page 3 for details!)

Jan. 26 - Term 2 ends



PRINCIPAL’S CORNER

Dear HCA Family and Friends,

Merry Christmas! The season is already in full swing with Advent candles, decorations, Christmas caroling, live nativities, and PARADES! Thank you to all who participated in Holden’s Winter Festival last weekend, representing HCA by caroling, participating in the parade, or just your presence! I would like to give a special thanks to Mrs. Velarde for leading the carolers, Ms. Graham and Mr. Cammuso for organizing and creating the HCA float in record time, and to Mrs. Ramirez for the ama-a-a-zing sheep costumes! The school was well represented last weekend in Holden and beyond with special activities that highlighted the celebration of the birth of our Savior. God is honored whenever we point people back to Him and Christmas provides great opportunities!

The Christmas activity continued today with the Christmas Shoppe, sponsored by the Parent Teacher Council. Although this school-wide shopping activity resembles a tag sale more than an Amazon warehouse, it provides students with the opportunity to be blessed by giving. The gently used items that your family donated became the ‘perfect gift’ for another student’s family member at kid prices, ranging from 25 cents to one dollar. Students are grouped into Timothy groups and rotate between shopping trips in the gym and holiday wrapping and fun in a classroom.

“What is a Timothy group?” you ask? Timothy groups are based on the model provided by the relationship between the apostle Paul and Timothy in the Bible. Paul guided, or mentored, Timothy, showing him what it looks like to live out his faith in action. It was an intentional relationship (discipleship) to help Timothy grow in his faith. (You may have even heard your student(s) mention Timothy groups before because the Christmas Shoppe is just one of several ‘Timothy group’ activities the students participate in throughout the year.) As we make an intentional effort to equip students to grow in their faith and be more like Jesus, our hope is that Timothy groups will provide students with an opportunity to lead by example and pass on what they have learned in a very practical way. When your students are in Timothy groups, it is a blessing to see ways this is happening. Even today, the older students cared for the younger students by guiding them with their shopping, helping them manage their coins, and in general showing love as Jesus would. You would be pleased to see your students’ faith in action!

Although the season is a busy one, I pray that the opportunities to live out your faith, point people to Jesus, and share God’s love abound!

Blessings and joy to you and your family this Christmas. I pray that it is very merry and bright!

By His Grace,
Mrs. Nikki Cleveland, Principal



Save the Date!

Friday, January 19, 2024!

Chicago World's Fair Reenactment

Do you hear that humming? It's the imaginations of our teachers and students as they excitedly prepare to reenact the World's Columbian Exposition (aka the Chicago World's Fair, aka the CWF), which will take place on Friday, January 19th. So pull a costume together (1890's style!) and plan to join us if you are able. Closer to the date we will send a Sign Up Genius for any specific helpers we may need, but for now we want to encourage you to mark your calendar and join in the fun if you are able.



Thank you to everyone who made donations to WARM, the Welcoming Alliance for Refugee Ministry. So many generous donations came in (more than photographed here!). Please pray for the refugees who will receive these home goods.



PLEASE TAKE NOTE....

The Parent Teacher Council wants you to know....

- 1) Are any parents interested in leading a 1-hr craft time for younger siblings during Worship Team on 12/11 and 12/18? If so, please contact Ms. Graham.
- 2) Do you know that the PTC has a Facebook page? Contact Anna Harvey for an invite & to see opportunities for some fun winter family field trips!

Be prepared: Snow is coming (eventually!)

We will post snow days on WCVB channel 5 and send a ParentAlert phone call to parent #s on file as the “home” # in FACTS.

If you ever miss a message, dial the Parent Alert Replay # at 866-665-4384 to retrieve the last message that we sent!

WE ARE HIRING!

We are currently praying for God to bring us just the right person to coordinate our After School Program as well as a Middle School Science Teacher! If you know anyone who might be a good fit for HCA for either of these positions, please direct them to our website www.holdenchristianacademy.org/jobopportunities for more information! Please join us in prayer that God will bring us the right people as well. Thank you!



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



Just before Thanksgiving, the annual Turkey Bowl was great fun for the Middle School players and elementary spectators (pictured above) ..and below, our Preschoolers are having a pretend turkey dinner. :-)



Making music, indoors and outdoors! Preschoolers are drumming in nature explore (above) and 1st graders are keeping the beat in the music room (pictured below).



OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE

Please read the following message from our dear Mrs. Olga Goncharenko, and give as you feel led. We will have a coin collection jar in the office for students to donate cash, and parents/ grandparents/friends of HCA may give online by clicking this [link](#).

As we are coming into a Christmas season of Christ birth, our hearts are full of love and thankfulness to God for all He has done for us. It is a season of love and hope. And during this time we want to bring hope and love to many kids in Belarus. We invite you to participate in our Christmas Outreach to orphans and poor unprivileged children. During this season we encourage you to make an extra offering or collection to help the kids. We are looking into several options.

We love Christmas shoe boxes and we prepare those ourselves. So far we have a list of 300 kids from orphanages, shelters and villages . To fill such a box with hygiene items such as toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, deodorant, socks, hats, gloves, underwear, craft supplies, and toys cost about \$20. We will have to buy the necessary items over there as there is no way to ship things due to post office restrictions. And then our volunteers will pack the boxes according to the ages of kids. The distribution will be held at the orphanages, shelters and local club houses with a nice Christmas program and Christian literature/Bibles.

Our second option to help is to buy traditional Christmas Chocolate candy boxes for the kids. The cost is \$5 a box. The kids really like those and are always looking forward to special Christmas candy surprises.

We will provide the photos and videos of our events by the end of January. Because there are two Christmas celebrations in Belarus (due to two calendars) our outreach goes between December 20 through January 10.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email at olya4sor@gmail.com or phone +19785143698

~Olga

Preschool News!

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

Thursday, December 14th
Christmas Concert—wear your Christmas best! Preschool—Grade 8 will perform

Wednesday, December 20th & Thursday, December 21st:
Birthday Party for Jesus (see forthcoming email for details)

November was a beautiful reminder of all we have to be thankful for as we head into the Christmas season. HCA Preschoolers daily spent time learning about what it means to be thankful, and enjoyed telling each other about what makes them feel happy. We received a variety of answers, from “ducks” to “coming to my school.” Of course we snuck in some traditional turkey fun, and the children loved getting to set the table and pretend they were at a Thanksgiving meal! We strived to always point our preschoolers back to the One we are grateful to, for all the blessings He has given us.

We are eagerly anticipating the culmination of the Christmas season, Jesus’ birthday! You can feel the excitement throughout our class and outdoor learning area, Nature Explore, as the children tenderly pretend to be Mary, loving on her baby, or lead the way to Bethlehem, like brave Joseph. We have been bustling about, using our 5 senses to explore gingerbread and make gingerbread houses, following the star (like the wisemen!), decorating our class Christmas tree, building our idea of the town of Bethlehem in our Block Area, and playing games that remind us of the greatest gift, Jesus! You can hear the children practicing our song for the Christmas concert as they play, or leading each other in the [5 Gingerbread Men song](#) and game.

The rest of our month will be busy as we prepare to share God’s good news at our Christmas concert; explore kindness by picking out a gift for a friend and experience the joy of giving; and celebrate with a birthday party for Jesus! We pray our Preschool families are filled with the very presence of Jesus this Christmas season.

Team A News!

TEAM A NOTICE: Thursday afternoon ~ December 21, 2023

Team A will gather in the community room for a classic Christmas feature on the big screen as well as a delicious enjoyment of hot cocoa made with milk from a local small family farm. Having this special treat together will give us the educational connection to all we have learned about cows since we have now adopted our own precious baby cow, 🐮 Amita 🐶. **Alternate options will be available for those with allergies.**

Kindergarten Update from Mrs. Coombs:

Who loves Christmas music?! If you do, our Kindergarten science class may be right up your alley! Do you see what I see? Do you hear what I hear? This Term, our students are working with some of their senses through seeing and hearing. We have discussed the blessings we have right at our fingertips such as electricity which we can physically see by flipping a light switch. We also concentrated our efforts on how sound travels through sound waves by making rice dance! Yes, you read that right...we made rice dance by placing some on plastic wrap on a bowl and then used a box and spoon to create a sound wave which made the rice dance away on the plastic wrap! We have also linked Science to our Social Studies class by discussing inventors! So far we have explored the inventions of Thomas Edison and his lightbulb, as well as Guglielmo Marconi and the telegraph. Next up we are moving on to a unit on force and motion with the Wright Brothers!

Kindergarten is continuing to work hard on our handwriting and letters. We are nearing the end of the alphabet with only a few more letters to learn. Once we finish, we will be moving on to Unit 2 of FUNdations where they will learn to blend and segment sounds in words with three sounds. They will do this through the sound-tapping procedure. We will also work on our capital letters as well as start our letter of the week study.

We just started a five part series for Bible Class. This is designed to help students learn about the birth of Christ and connect it to modern traditions. It consists of five sessions where we will discover how God intricately designed preparations for the first Christmas through the inclusion of God's love which includes the "perfect" Family Tree, Promise, Light, Place, and Gift. I am excited to share God's love through the birth of his Son.

We are getting so close to Christmas, we can barely stand it! Kindergarten will be celebrating the birth of Jesus on Thursday, December 21. We will be celebrating as a class with snacks and fun, festive activities. We will then end the day with the rest of Team A to watch a movie and enjoy some hot cocoa. Parents please be on the lookout for a separate email and print out with all the details for our Christmas party and gift exchange. God Bless, Merry Christmas and see you in the New Year!!!

Grade 1 Update from Mrs. Shand:

Welcome to Term 2! Term 2 is packed with fun learning and we are excited to bring this learning to life as HCA prepares to replicate the Chicago's World Fair in January! Our little historians are researching all about the Chicago's World Fair by reading and learning about inventions—like the Ferris Wheel and the zipper! They are starting to familiarize themselves with who was there and why this fair was important in our country's history.

(Continued on next page....)

In Bible, we are continuing our Old Testament study with characters like Samuel, David, and Goliath. We will be pausing on this sequence to focus on the birth of Jesus—the true reason for the season! To kick this off, students worked in their Timothy Groups to build a Nativity scene to create a foundation of the story of Jesus’ birth with other students from grades K-8. This was a special time when students are fellowshiping together across all grade levels.

We are starting to see growth in our students' reading skills as they read books with learned spelling patterns like digraphs and glued sounds. They have also learned almost 30 new trick words! In Math, students are continuing to collect several addition and subtraction strategies to keep in their tool box. Students are starting to sift through which strategy is best for them. They are also working on explaining their reasoning and working through word problems by showing their work.

Our students have also been very thoughtful scientists! They learned that vibrations can create sound and conducted two experiments—one with a ruler and another with sprinkles. Safe to say, the one with sprinkles was their favorite! They have done a wonderful job observing and recording their observations with pictures and labels. We will be looking at force and motion next.

We are looking forward to our Classroom Christmas Party in the morning of December 21st and a fun Team A movie with hot cocoa in the afternoon! Please be on the lookout for an email from our Room Parent, Mrs. Raley with more information on our classroom party! Merry Christmas!

Grade 2 Update from Mrs. McGrail:

Second grade parents:

It was wonderful seeing you all at parent teacher conferences. Thank you so much for your encouraging feedback and thank you again for partnering with us. I truly enjoyed the laughs and time with you all.

As we all know- December is a busy and stressful month preparing for the grand celebration of the birth of our Savior. Through the excitement and anticipation, we continue to chug through the core academic path in Term Two. Now that we are nearly halfway through Term Two, I hope my “My Sneak Peak of the Week” has truly been beneficial for you all to have a weekly insight of what is going on in our classroom as academics continue to ramp up.

Here’s an outlook for December:

During this month we will continue on for Unit 5 and into Unit 6 for Math. In FUNdations, we will wrap up Unit 6 and begin the three week Unit 7. In Bible, we will continue to focus on growing up where Jesus lived. And lastly both Science and History will continue to touch on Friends of the Past and Sound, etc.

And now, for the grand finale of today’s second grade Pathways...

🔥 HOT TOPIC 🔥

🎄 Christmas celebrations 🎄 !

On Thursday, December 21, we will be having a day-long Christmas celebration before we say farewell for the Christmas holiday. In the morning, we will enjoy fun activities in our classroom. Please keep a lookout for updates from me in regards to lunch that day. In the afternoon, we will gather with all of Team A in the community room for a classic Christmas feature on the big screen as well as a delicious enjoyment of hot cocoa made with milk from a local small family farm. Having this special treat together will give us the educational connection to all we have learned about cows since we have now adopted our own precious baby cow, 🐄 Amita 🐄 .

**We will have alternate options for those with severe allergies.



Team B News!

FROM MS. RENNIE'S DESK:

There is so much excitement in 3rd grade!! The students are becoming more and more proficient with their multiplication facts...it's easy to see who works on them outside of school!! They are continuing to work on Commutative, Distributive, and Associative properties. Now we are working on Area and will be stepping into place value & double digit multiplication.

We put the FUN in FUNdations!! Ask your child what a "SCHWA" is. Make sure your request includes the accent. :-) In Science, we are knee deep in light/sound and will study force/motion soon. The students are so creative in designing our awesome interactive bulletin board and working with 4th grade in hands-on labs. They have two light comprehension sheets in their binders.

In History class, we are studying and preparing for the Chicago World's Fair. Third grade is recreating the Horticultural Building and have already been assigned the people they will represent. All research and building will be done in school, but they will need help from their parents to find a costume so they can dress like their person. We are also looking for donations of BOXES to help us create our "building". Details to follow. The CWF is January 19, 2024. This week we also started brainstorming an invention they'd like to create for the Invention Convention, also in January. Details to follow.

As we enter into this Advent season, 3rd grade will celebrate with their Reading Buddies on the next two Mondays. How blessed are we to have the Hope & Peace of the love of Jesus!

Thursday, December 21st the 3rd & 4th graders will have our all day/pajama/movie Christmas party. Details will be attached to this week's Weekly Peek. Here are the important facts: please choose a \$5-\$10 gift that a boy and/or girl would enjoy; all food will be provided.

Blessings,
Ms. Rennie



A NOTE FROM MRS. VELARDE:

They did it! 4th grade successfully completed National Novel Writing Month! I am so proud of the hard work and perseverance that each student put into their amazing novels. We celebrated the end of the month-long project with a tea party which helped us not only share in the joy of a job well done, but also helped us prepare our hearts and minds for the season of Advent. In Bible class, we have been learning about King David and making connections to Jesus as we discuss the Christmas Story. Our room is decorated for Christmas, hearts are full and energy is high here, but the students continue to work hard.

In Science, the students are making discoveries about light and sound through labs. During the darker months of the year, these labs are a wonderful reminder of the Light of the World and the hope that we have. In Math, we have been working with factors, multiples, and patterns. In Language Arts, we are progressing through Shurley Grammar, reading, and researching about the people we will portray for the Chicago World's Fair (CWF) in January. We are also focusing on writing friendly letters. In History, we are learning about America taking its place on the world's stage as we progress through the beginning of the 20th century. Through the advancements made in technology and communication, and with so many people flooding to America through Ellis Island, the country really began to grow. We are also making preparations for our Chicago World's Fair reenactment. Be on the lookout for upcoming emails about the Team B Christmas party and an email regarding 4th grade preparations for the CWF to be completed at home.

With so many things going on and so much excitement in the air, it is easy to get lost in the busyness of the season. My encouragement for all of us is to remember to take time to focus on the true meaning of Christmas and find some peace during the busy moments. *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”* Isaiah 9:6



Middle School News!

Mrs. Nkrahene's News:

As Christmas approaches, I look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior in our homeroom. We have been reading a lot about God's promise to Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him. As we sing Christmas carols, read select Bible passages, and pray together, we will reflect on that special promise and its fulfillment in our Lord and Savior. We are also looking forward to the concert and the class holiday party.

General Middle School life is going well. Fifth graders are doing a great job with settling into their new routines. Although it has been a big change for them, they are learning to thrive and even enjoy Middle School. The day before Thanksgiving, students competed in an annual football match against their fellow Middle Schoolers. Despite the somewhat cold weather, students played and cheered on their classmates, showing excellent team spirit.

We have already started our preparations for the Chicago World Fair. The fair is scheduled to take place January 19th. Students have selected historical characters for the reenactment. They have started to learn about the World Fair, and the part they'll play in bringing it to life.

Math classes have been going well. Students are learning how to study, glean information from a math textbook, and think through challenging problems. I'd ask that you continue to support your children by encouraging them to complete their assignments well, and carve out time to study so they can develop mastery over the material.

Mr. Shea's Shenanigans:

Our focus for Second Term is the Chicago World's Fair! This enormous world gathering occurred in 1893 and celebrated the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus landing in North America. The Chicago World's Fair was an incredible event where hundreds of influential, historical figures gathered and shared their achievements, ideas, and products.

We will be reenacting the Fair at the end of Term 2, and will be looking for help with the project in many different ways! Stay tuned for how you can help out!

In class, students will be working on an integrated project for both Mr. Curtis and myself. This project will allow students time at school to make progress, but there will be many elements to keep track of and complete at home. The goal of the project is to prepare students to attend our Chicago World's Fair event as one of the famous historical figures that may have enjoyed the venue. Students will be giving a presentation on their character, as well as dressing up as their character. Costumes for the presentation and event should cost as little as possible.

I will also be sending out an invitation to all of the Middle School students about a special project for the Big Day. This special project will be voluntary.

Finally, Christmas is coming up soon! Christmas parties will be held on the Thursday before Christmas break begins (December 21). You students brought home information about the party this week.

I am looking forward to all of the fun we have planned for this Term! I can't wait to see what our students will come up with for the Chicago World's Fair.

Merry Christmas and God Bless! ~Mr. Shea

Mr. Curtis' Corner:

Welcome back friends, I hope this winter edition of Mr. Curtis' Corner finds you warm like a Christmas sweater and waiting in eager anticipation of the Christmas holiday. How does the saying go, "The days get longer but the years get shorter"? I am realizing that there is some truth to that statement, as each year seems to fly by faster and faster. So, having turned the page on Term 1, students have now entered one of the most exciting and memorable terms in their HCA careers - the "Chicago World's Fair Term". A tremendous amount of time, energy, and learning will be devoted to the study and recreation of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Each Middle School student has selected a famous historical figure who was present at the Fair. Students will spend the majority of the term researching their historical person and their contribution to the Fair and society at the end of the 1800's. So mark your calendars and on jump back in time on January 19th as HCA recreates the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

Now what you have all been waiting for....information about the 7th grade Christmas Party. Our Christmas Party will take place on the afternoon of December 21st. Please talk to your student about what food or snack they have volunteered to bring, and determine if that is feasible for them bring. Please be aware we have some food allergies in our class as you consider what your student would like to contribute. In the true sense of the Christmas season, we have decided *it is better to give than to receive* so we have elected to join in with the other Middle School classes and do Christmas stockings for one another this year. Students should bring in a stocking or Christmas bag and a 'stocking stuffer' or a small homemade or inexpensive gift item *for each classmate*. There are 9 students in Grade 7 so, for example, 9 decks of cards or 9 pairs of socks. This is meant to be a meaningful and intentional opportunity for students' to bless one another this Christmas season. Let's refrain from bringing candy and food, as we will already have plenty to eat at the party. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me.

Merry Christmas, Maranatha, and Happy New Year,

Mr. Curtis

Mrs. Gordon's Musings:

Near Thanksgiving our homeroom wrote a heartfelt Psalm of our own based on Psalm 136. We noted that the original Psalm included provisions that were easy to thank God for and other circumstances that were quite challenging. I encouraged my students to reflect on one of each. Here is our Psalm:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks to God for family
His faithful love endures forever.
By showing me the right path with my cancer
His faithful love endures forever.
Thank God that I have family and friends
His faithful love endures forever.
Thank you God for being with all my friends and family in Belarus
His faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks for others being with me through hard times
His faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks to God for giving me the best parents
His faithful love endures forever.
On days it's hard to get out of bed
His faithful love endures forever.
Thank you for everything I need to thrive
His faithful love endures forever.
He allows disagreements and arguments between people
His faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks to God who gave me life
His faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks to God who is with me when I'm down
His faithful love endures forever.
He remembers me when I am weak
His faithful love endures forever.
When I just want to play, but I can't
His faithful love endures forever.
Give thanks to God who lives in us
His faithful love endures forever.
He allows us to make our choices, even wicked and selfish ones
His faithful love endures forever.
In days of strength, creativity, and energy
His faithful love endures forever.
Through days of weakness, weariness, and despair
His faithful love endures forever.

Praise God for who He is! We are currently reflecting on Him as our Eternal King using Christianity Today's advent devotional *The Eternal King Arrives*. Each 8th grade student has their own copy. It would be wonderful to ask them to **choose a favorite one to read to the family** during one of your Christmas celebrations or moments of reflection over the coming break.

Speaking of Christmas, we started planning our **healthy Christmas party** for December 21st!

- We are learning in Health about how food is intended as both our fuel and a source of fun in our lives. We will enjoy food in both ways during our class celebration. **Details regarding which items your child has signed up to bring will come home next week in an email.**
- We will also give gifts in the form of stocking stuffers which students will bring in on the 19th. Information went home in Communication Folders on the 7th.

Science Test: The first Science test of Term 2 will be on **Monday, December 18th** for 5th through 8th grade.

Health Project: All 7th and 8th grade students should be eating their specific healthy food item in a wide variety of forms 30 times between 12/4 and 1/15.