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# ECHOES

Ambassadors for Christ and agents of reconciliation: What it means to be a graduate of Smithville Christian High School

BY JOHN VAN RYS, CHAIR OF THE SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS



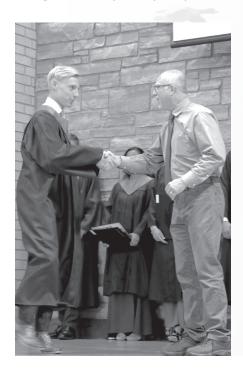
Congratulations on being a graduate of Smithville Christian High School! After years of classes and homework, projects and guizzes, and tests, papers and exams — you've made it! I also congratulate your families, who supported you through this time with prayers, words of encouragement and, of course, tuition payments. And thanks to the entire staff of the school for contributing with diligence and care to your education.

Continued on page 2 ...





Because of the education you've received, you've matured in your minds and your hearts; you've gained both the knowledge and the insight needed to move into the next phase of your lives. You've been challenged and nurtured in your faith so that you can enter the larger world with the comfort and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Some of you may be entering into your first full-time job; others may be joining the family business or the family farm; some of you may even be hoping to start your own enterprises. Still others of you are off to college to learn a specific trade or occupation. And many of you will be entering university as the next phase of your education, and the pathway to a calling and career you may not yet see.



# "Wild Geese"

BY MARY OLIVER

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees

For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body

love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain are moving across the landscapes, over the prairies and the deep trees, the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air, are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting —
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

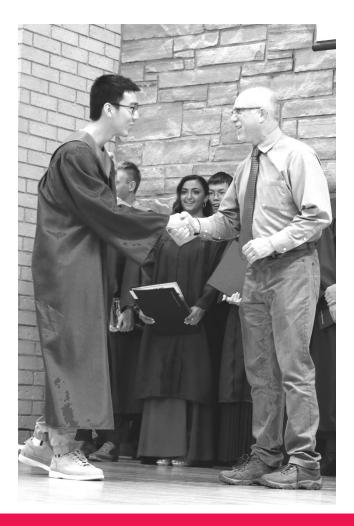
I teach English at Redeemer University College, and, as you make this transition, I would like to share "Wild Geese" – a poem by the much-loved American poet, Mary Oliver (see poem on pg. 2). I hope you hear in it a call to enter fully into your adulthood, to leave behind childish things while keeping a childlike faith and wonder, to find your place in the marvelous world God has made and that he sustains day by day.

As Christians, we know that God speaks to us through His creation, even through the voices of wild geese pointing to our place in this world. As God's creatures, we know we are made of dust but also that we are made in His image, that we are called the crown of creation. My encouragement for you, graduates, is to find the place God has prepared for you, this place in the family of things. Pray about it; seek the wisdom of your family and friends and teachers and elders; use the discernment God has given you; look for guidance in Scripture—God's special revelation to us, in addition to Creation.

What does finding your place in the world mean for you as young Christians? We know that the Bible tells us to be in this world, but not of this world—a challenging thought that may take you a lifetime to sort out. I know I'm still working on it!

As a starting point, let me suggest it means that each of you is an ambassador for Christ and his agent of reconciliation. Reconciliation is about healing; it's about bringing people and things together that were once estranged or separated; it's about restoring things to their original sacred uses; it's about bringing people and things back into harmony. Here is what 2 Corinthians 5 teaches us about reconciliation: "if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting our sins against us. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."

So, graduates, as you leave Smithville Christian High School and find the place God has prepared for you in His world, in the family of things, I encourage you to become Christ's ambassadors, to be agents of reconciliation wherever you are and with whomever you find yourselves—in your families and relationships, in your workplaces, in your churches, in your towns and cities. And may God bless you and uphold you in the days and months and years to come.



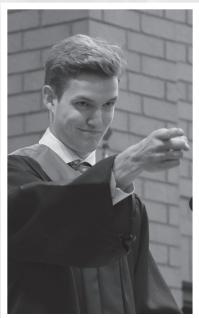
# Finding our voice and being the voice of God

BY JEREMY DEBOER, VALEDICTORIAN CLASS OF 2019

(Excerpts from the Class of 2019 valedictory address.)

"...my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

Our graduation theme this year is "Finding our voice." Pretty fitting for us – dubbed "the quiet class," by some of our teachers.



The passage to go along with that is Isaiah 55:11, "My word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." It is our duty to carry out God's word. His word is not some huge complex system of loopholes and whatnot. When it comes down to it, God's word is love. When God sends us out. He does so knowing the potential we carry. Now that we're moving on to bigger things and interacting with new people, we need to reflect God's love, and prove to everyone that our school sends out awesome people.

We've been through so much together. Both good and bad. If one of us was going through a tough time, they could be assured that their classmates would be there for them.

The community we made is one that can never be replicated; it wasn't forced, and it wasn't fake. Some people can search for it their whole lives and never find it. It was genuine.

The following quote is from the famed poet and entrepreneur Snoop Dogg, "If it's flipping hamburgers at McDonald's, be the best hamburger flipper in the world. Whatever it is you do, you have to master your craft." Now as we go our separate ways, some of us to be lawyers, maybe doctors, Walmart executives, I encourage you to find your own voice. Live as a disciple of Christ and make it clear that you serve Jesus. Whatever you're doing next year, make it your own. Give it your all so when people start to take notice, you can use your voice for good. Being a servant of Jesus is to be the voice of God. Set an example for others. Learn from your mistakes. Take the lessons you've learned at Smithville, and apply them to whatever vou do.

BELOW: Jeremy DeBoer, giving his valedictoy speech to Smithville High School during graduation.







# Be so good, they can't ignore you

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

(Excerpts from Mr. Harris's comments at the graduation of the Class of 2019.)

The students of the Class of 2019 gained more of a reputation for what they did, than for what they said. They were serious and hardworking, but quiet. Their teachers often traded tips about strategies used to generate conversation in class.

The students' work ethic fits with the title of a recent book, "Be so good they can't ignore you."

Comedian Steve Martin was known for giving aspiring young actors and comedians the same advice: "be so good they can't ignore you." The advice could be given to someone preparing for a job interview or for an audition. But it can also be connected to Smithville Christian's purpose statement: "To train students to live as responsible disciples of Jesus Christ."



Disciples come in many shapes. sizes and personalities. The Class of 2019 may have been quiet but it is fitting to echo Steve Martin's words to them: Be so good they can't ignore you. Many people may be low-key, many may not be the first to volunteer a response in class, many may be a little on the quiet side. But it is my hope and prayer that the goodness of the Class of 2019 will be hard to ignore: their skill, diligence, loyalty, ethic, devotion, and love. I encourage each of these students to find their voice.

The class chose Isaiah 55:11 as their theme verse. The Smithville Christian alumni who have gone before them are evidence that God's word does not come back to him empty. And God's plans for the Class of 2019 will not be compromised. Walk in step with him, and you will find your voice. You will even become his voice for others. You will speak volumes by what you do and by what you say.

It was impossible for the teachers to ignore how terrific you folks are. I hope that you continue to be so good they can't ignore you. I say this for your sake, but much more significantly for the sake of Christ. May it be impossible to ignore how Christ lives in you.

# "Finding our Voice"

The Class of 2019 may have had a reputation for being quiet, but they certainly found their voice when it was time to make Plans for grad. School administration briefly considered holding the graduation exercises in a smaller venue, but when students learned this might constrain the number of guests each could invite, they presented a well-worded argument for continuing to use the 700-seat sanctuary at Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in Grimsby. They had earned a celebration and they wanted to make sure there would be room for all.

# Rumoured, but is it true?

The class of 2019 is so quiet that when students decided to take a "beach day" during the last week of classes, there were some teachers who did not even notice the Grade 12s were missing until the end of the day.

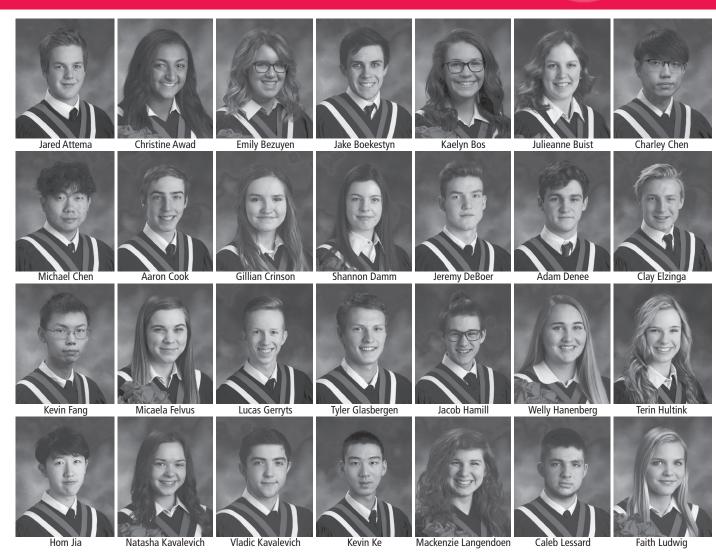
### MISSED GRAD? OR LIKED IT SO MUCH YOU WANT TO ENJOY IT AGAIN?



You can watch it on YouTube at: **youtube.com/ watch?v=Qp0A7ExLRy0**. Or click on the link from the bulletin board of the school website, **www.smithvillechristian.ca** 

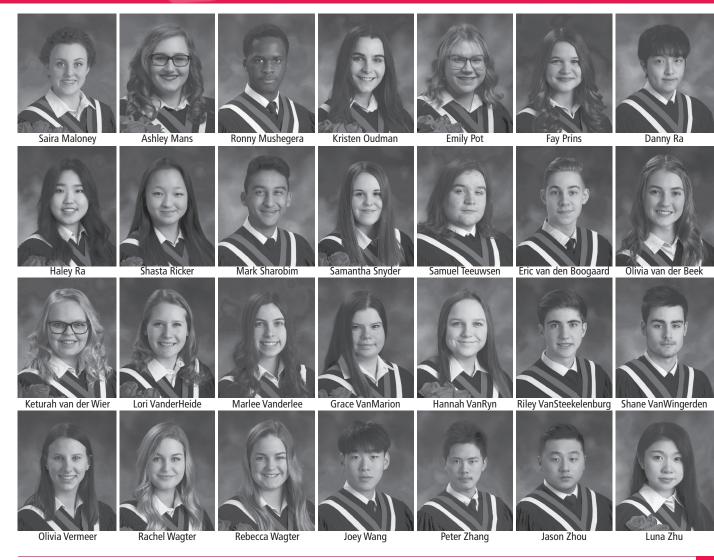
# CONGRATULATIONS

"...my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will



# CLASS OF 2019!

accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)



# Awards and Honours

Congratulations, graduates! And many thanks to the kind and generous donors who sponsor the awards that celebrate our students' character, accomplishments, and goals. Do you have an idea for an award?

Contact us to find out how you can encourage a teenager in the pursuit of their calling.



# Canadian Citizenship Award – Saira Maloney

Given to a student who has provided community or volunteer service in and outside of our school community, has participated in a number of extra-curricular activities, and has achieved an academic average of 75% over 3.5 years.



# Royal Canadian Legion Branch 393 Poppy Fund Bursary – Micaela Felvus

\$300 awarded to a student who shows strong self-discipline and clear leadership qualities, whose forebears have been involved in a war as allied forces, and who is continuing their education at a post secondary level.



# West Lincoln Town Council & Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award – Christine Awad

\$100 from the West Lincoln Town Council and a certificate and pin from the Lieutenant Governor given to a student who has displayed exemplary community contribution or outstanding achievement through volunteer activity.



# Top Marks Scholarship - Mark Sharobim

\$250 given to a student who has made a significant contribution to the quality of student life, and whose character and accomplishments exemplify the core purpose and values of the school.



# Smithville Christian High School International Student Award – Natasha Kavalevich

\$250 given to a graduating international student who has contributed to the life of our school community, has maintained a positive relationship with staff and students at Smithville Christian High, and is graduating with an average over 80% in Grade 12.



# Smithville Garden Club Scholarship – Jared Attema

\$175 awarded to a student who is dedicated to pursuing a program in agriculture, horticulture, or landscaping at an accredited college or university, and has accumulated the highest average over 3.5 years among those who are eligible for this award.



# Niagara Peninsula Energy Inc. Student Award – Ronny Mushegera

\$1,500 awarded to a student who has been accepted into a College or University and is entering a field of study that is in line with the business of Niagara Peninsula Energy.



## Michael VandenDool Scholarship – Keturah van der Wier

\$250 in honour of Michael VandenDool, awarded to a student who has displayed the qualities of servant leadership and a caring heart.

# for the Flass of 2019



# Governor General's Award - Gillian Crinson

A bronze medallion awarded to the student who achieves the highest average upon graduating from secondary school.



# Stranges & Associates Excellence in Mathematics Award – Eric van den Boogaard

\$250 to a student who demonstrates excellence in mathematics, and whose character aligns with the core purpose and values of Smithville Christian High School



# Stranges & Associates Excellence in Business Management Award – Shannon Damm

\$250 to a student who demonstrates excellence in business management, and whose character aligns with the core purpose and values of Smithville Christian High School.



## Stanpac Science Award - Gillian Crinson

\$250 to a student who demonstrates excellence in science, and whose character aligns with the core purpose and values of Smithville Christian High School.



## Niagara Pallet Construction Excellence Award – Jake Boekestyn

\$250 given to a student who demonstrates excellence in construction technology along with demonstrating initiative, motivation, and work ethic through the use of their hands.



### Smithville Christian High School Music Award – Keturah van der Wier

\$250 to a student who demonstrates excellence in musicianship, who uses their gifts to benefit others, and whose character aligns with the core purpose and values of Smithville Christian High School.



# Smithville Christian High School Visual Arts Award – Mackenzie Langendoen

\$250 to a student who demonstrates excellence in visual arts, who uses their gifts to benefit others, and whose character aligns with the core purpose and values of Smithville Christian High School.



## **ISSERVICE Computer Award – Lucas Gerryts**

\$250 awarded to a student who demonstrates excellence in computer programming and/or computer design, who shares that expertise to the benefit of others, and whose character aligns with the core purpose and values of Smithville Christian High School.

## **Athletic Plaque**

Awarded to students who have accumulated 45 extra-curricular athletic points, having been involved in a wide variety of sports throughout high school.

Jared Attema Terin Hultink
Christine Awad Faith Ludwig

Clay Elzinga Eric van den Boogaard

Tyler Glasbergen Olivia Vermeer

### **Activity Plaque**

Awarded to the students who have accumulated 25 extra-curricular, non-athletic points, having been involved in a wide variety of activities throughout high school.

Keturah van der Wier Saira Maloney

Tyler Glasbergen Mark Sharobim

Hannah VanRyn Mackenzie Langendoen

Faith Ludwig Jeremy DeBoer

## **School Plaque**

Awarded to students for outstanding performance and participation in both school athletics and school activities.

Tyler Glasbergen

Faith Ludwig

Olivia Vermeer







# Sought-after graduates

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT

araduate Smithville of Christian High School is wellprepared for an academic life beyond high school something well-known by the post-secondary institutions that are trying to recruit our graduates. Every year, colleges and universities in Ontario and across North America offer scholarships to our graduating students in the hope of enticing them to attend.



The Class of 2019 was no exception. Students were offered scholarships to 15 different colleges and universities, for a combined monetary value of over \$200,000. The smallest scholarship offered was \$500 and the largest was \$60,000 – offered to Mark Sharobim by the University of Massachusetts.

Speaking at the graduation ceremonies, Linda Booy-Korvemaker, head of student services, gave guests an overview of the students' offers. "It is important for our supporting community to know that the education students receive and the people who they are is valued beyond this gathering," she said.

But the real value of a Smithville Christian high school experience is not about how much money is offered to graduates, said Booy-Korvemaker.

"It is my hope, that all graduates recognize that being here tonight – graduating from Smithville Christian High School - is a valuable accomplishment and a symbol of your personal success story. I would like to congratulate you ALL on this accomplishment. May you follow Jesus in your journey, and may he be your guide and friend wherever you go."

Smithville Christian graduates who were offered recruitment awards and entrance

scholarships include: Jared Attema, Christine Awad, Emily Bezuyen, Gillian Crinson, Clay Elzinga, Tyler Glasbergen, Terin Hultink, Saira Maloney, Ronny Mushegera, Kristen Oudman, Emily Pot, Mark Sharobim, Eric van den Boogaard, and Marlee Vanderlee.



# Want to leave a legacy for Christian education?

Save the date, October 10, 2019, 7:30 p.m., for a planned giving workshop.

You don't need to be old or wealthy to have an impact that will shape the lives of young people for generations to come.







18 holes of best-ball golf with cart, lunch, dinner and prizes!

Putting, hole-in-one, longest drive, and closest-to-the-pin contests



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All proceeds benefit the students of Smithville Christian High School,
John Knox and Covenant Christian Schools

To register or for sponsorship opportunities visit www.smithvillechristian.ca or www.nace.ca

Registration Deadline - September 15, 2019



\*Register by September 3<sup>rd</sup> to receive a free entry to the putting contest!

# It takes a village

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Holding the 39th graduation exercises of Smithville Christian High School and celebrating the students of the Class of 2019 is also a celebration of God's faithfulness to our school. Many thanks to all who supported our students this past year – which is really the faithful support of the next generation of servants of Jesus.

Please keep supporting us. There is an urgency to what we do together, when we consider all that young people face in their journey through adolescence. Keep Smithville Christian high on your prayer list. And please keep us high on the list of causes you support. Our bursary program has allowed three of every ten students to attend our school, and we can't do it without the support of you -- believers in the kingdom impact of Christian education.



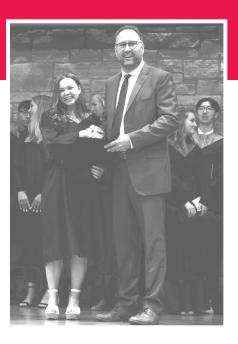


# **DONATE YOUR YEAR**

For the first time ever, some of the graduates of the Class of 2019 are donating their year so that students who come after them will continue to be blessed by a vibrant Christian education. Please consider joining them.

If you are an alumnus of Smithville Christian High School or an alumni parent, please consider donating your year too – the year you graduated or the year you made your last tuition payment. You can donate it once a year, or once a month. You can put the decimal point wherever you want.

We need to raise approximately \$200,000 a year to enable our bursary fund to meet the annual need. If half of the alumni from each graduating year would set up a monthly gift, donating their year every month, and the rest gave just once a year, we would exceed our goal. That would be awesome!



Your gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. The students of Smithville Christian High School are grateful for you.

How to set up monthly giving or make a one-time gift to Smithville Christian High School:

Go to the school website at smithvillechristian.ca and click on Fundraising – How to Donate. Clicking on the Donate button will take you to the Christian School Foundation, where you can make a secure gift by credit card. To arrange an automatic withdrawl, contact finance@smithvillechristian.ca. Or you can send cheques to Smithville Christian High School, P.O. Box 40, Smithville, Ontario, LOR 2AO.

# **SAVE THE DATE** - October 10, 2019, 7:30 p.m.

# **Planned Giving Workshop**

You don't need to be old or wealthy to have an impact that will shape the lives of young people for generations to come.



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