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> **SCHOOL FOUNDATION**

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Spiritual

Emphasis

Week

2016-2017

Building a community of worship and spiritual growth

BY GORDON PARK, SPIRITUAL LIFE DIRECTOR

As a Christian school, we provide students with many opportunities to experience worship and the presence of God as a normal part of their studies. Daily devotions and prayer, weekly chapels, and high school curriculum taught from a Biblical perspective are all regular

elements of fostering our Christian school environment. But once a year we set aside even more time for building a community of worship spiritual growth: Spiritual and **Emphasis Week.**

This year, we celebrated Spiritual Emphasis Week, known as SEW week (which, I know, makes the 'W' redundant) in late November.



Continued from page 1...

During SEW, we enjoy daily chapels, thanks to the flexibility of our administration and staff. Daily praise and worship are led by one of the school's three student praise teams, supported by the student-run AV crew.

This year, we were privileged to have Laura de Jong, a seminarian at Calvin Theological Seminary, as our SEW speaker. She provided daily messages based on the book of Jeremiah. You can read a summary of one of her talks on the following pages, and the remainder can be found on the school's blog, accessed via the school's website. Laura shared many important Biblical truths. One powerful message reminded students that they are called by God to be salt and light wherever they may be; their calling is to make wherever they are God's place.

This year, the daily break-out discussion

groups took place right after lunch in third period classes. Student volunteers also transformed the staff room into a Prayer Room, open to students all week – a place to speak with Laura, to encourage one another and, of course, to pray.

The week ended with a visit from a Christian band, FM Reset, who presented a concert for the students on Friday afternoon. It was a great end to a terrific week!















Why Bother? What's Next?

It often takes many years to learn what impact these weeks have upon students. Sometimes Grade 12 students mention it during their portfolio interviews, or we hear from parents, or from alumni many years after the fact. The point is, these weeks DO have an impact on the spiritual growth of our students, and we are so grateful to God for his faithfulness to us in all that we do here at Smithville Christian, including SEW.

As soon as one SEW ends, we begin planning another. If you have any thoughts about what could add to our SEW experience, feel free to drop me a line: gpark@smithvillechristian.ca

Blessings.











It looks like nonsense but it's really hope

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, Director of communications and admissions



Sometimes Christians do goofy things, students at Smithville Christian High School were told during the fourth chapel of Spiritual Emphasis Week 2016-2017.

"One of my favourite coffee table books is 'Stuff Christians Like,'" said seminarian Laura de Jong. The book contains descriptions of things Christians do that might seem baffling to others, she said. Side hugs, knowing how to avoid being asked to lead a group prayer, leaving room for the Holy Spirit at a high school dance or using a Christian pick-up line like: "I was reading through the Book of Numbers and realized I didn't have yours."

Sometimes these things are funny but often they make no sense to others, de Jong said. That is what was happening in Jeremiah 32. The prophet was asked to do something – buy his cousin's field – that made no sense.

Jeremiah had run afoul of the king and was under a form of house arrest, the Babylonian king was about to invade and make the land worthless, yet Jeremiah obeyed God and fulfilled the Israelite custom of redeeming a family member's property.

But Jeremiah's "nonsensical economic exchange made a bold statement about the future," de Jong said. The Israelites were in trouble, but Jeremiah's purchase "was a concrete, tangible sign of hope."

There are more things – not in the coffee table book – that Christians do that do not make sense to the rest of the world, she said.

- They believe that to receive, they must give.
- To gain strength they must surrender.
- To succeed they have to learn to fail.
- To find themselves they must lose themselves.
- To fulfill themselves they must forget themselves.
- To live is to die to self.









- To be first is to be last.
- They give away 10 per cent of what they earn.
- They spend hours a week in church, and look for answers to today's problems in a 2,000-year-old book.

Sometimes, she would prefer to focus on clothes, music or popularity instead of a relationship with Jesus, de Jong admitted.

"I want to fit in to this me-first, celebrity-driven, power-hungry world." But it's better to live more like Jeremiah.

"We are people who anticipate a future beyond the realities of this world," she said. "We know that the day is coming when the backwards, upside-down kingdom of God" takes over and makes all things new.

"We live in the hope of a fully restored earth, a new creation."

Until then, we live as "already, but not yet" citizens of a kingdom, opening ourselves up to the power of the Holy Spirit, and living not for personal advancement or fame but in order to tell the whole world that there is hope.

Speaker Laura de Jong based all five of her Spiritual Emphasis Week sermons on the book of Jeremiah.

- **Day 1** We lace up our shoes and we move forward, even when we feel inadequate (Jeremiah 1).
- **Day 2** We remind ourselves every day who we are (Jeremiah 2).
- **Day 3** We seek the peace and prosperity of our city (Jeremiah 29).
- **Day 4** We do foolish things of faith that don't make sense to the rest of the world (Jeremiah 32).
- **Day 5** Things might seem to be going badly but we know how the story ends because God is faithful and he loves us (Jeremiah 52).

To read summaries of all five messages, see the school's blog: www.smithvillechristian.blogspot.ca.

Get to know Laura de Jong

Laura de Jong grew up in St. Catharines, and graduated from Beacon Christian High School, Class of 2009. She studied History, English, and Congregational Ministry Studies at Calvin College in Grand

Rapids, Michigan, where she also led worship and worked in residence life. Laura is finishing up her Masters of Divinity at Calvin Theological Seminary, and hopes to do church ministry after graduation. She's a staunch defender of all things Canadian, is enjoying finally learning how to cook, and believes this year belongs to the Blue Jays.



Putting aside a life of ease

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

I have been spending a fair bit of time lately planning to make sure that our bursary fund has what it needs in order for us to open our doors to more families who would otherwise not be able to send their kids here.



I have been motivated by a message on Luke 9 I heard recently, where Jesus challenges his followers and would-be followers that following him will not be easy. Jesus' disciples were not promised a firm footing, a trouble-free path or even a place to sleep. Jesus essentially told them, "I have a mission, and being comfortable is not part of it." Pursuing the kingdom of God is not about achieving stability or ease.

We spend a lot of time thinking about what comes next for our school. That comes out in strategic planning, program initiatives and leadership conversations all the time. There are always obstacles that stand in the path between where we are and where we need to go. One of these obstacles is a feeling that we have achieved something and that we should enjoy it and keep it to ourselves. But then come the words from Luke 9:62: "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." It is clear that God is on the move, and our call is to follow him wherever he goes.

Many of us have been tremendously blessed in offering our children a Christian high school education. As we have seen God using our school to unite Christians from a wide variety of







faith communities, we have become convicted of the urgency of giving what we have away. So where is the discomfort in this? For starters, this shift requires us to consider whether our talk and actions include and enfold others, as opposed to signaling that we have insiders and outsiders. This can take struggle. In addition, we need to bring down the financial barriers that keep families out of our school. That's why we hosted a bursary bash on March 3. That's why we will be inviting our supporters to begin or continue giving sacrificially to our bursary program.

How has this led me into an uncomfortable space? First, as a family finished paying Christian school tuition, we need to put aside the idea that my time of sacrifice is done and that it's time to pursue something resembling a life of ease. A routine of giving to the school's bursary program will be a part of that for me and my wife. Second, I have bent my work toward this

idea of giving away the inheritance. A considerable percentage of my leadership time is spent building a bursary fund and facilitating a process for giving the funds to families who can be blessed by it. Principals aren't really trained for this sort of thing, but I have felt called to this work and have taken on training to help with it.

As our school constantly seems to have more students than we anticipate, I am overjoyed that Christians keep discovering our school. At the same time, I am deeply touched at how our supporters keep giving to build our bursary fund, which builds our capacity to share what we have discovered to be a blessing. I encourage all who are able to join us in considering your ongoing participation in what we are now calling our Annual Bursary Campaign.





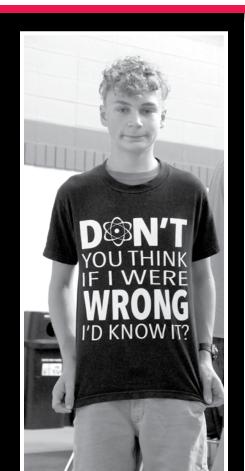








Grade Mine









Career Day – truth and hope, along with helpful advice

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS









Twice during a typical high school student's four-year career at Smithville Christian High School, students experience Career Day, a full-day festival of learning about themselves, exploring options and eating excellent food.



"It's a huge undertaking," said Linda Booy-Korvemaker, head of student services, who organizes the day with the help of a team of colleagues. In helping students identify their gifts and develop Christian vocation and character, Booy-Korvemaker said the goal of Career Day is giving students both information and hope.



"Many teenagers are overwhelmed with making choices for their future because they think they have to know the mind of God," said Booy-Korvemaker. But instead of focusing on the perfect career path, Booy-Korvemaker said she and her guidance department colleague, David Wonder, encourage students to focus on their calling. "Your calling is who you are as a person," she explained. "You could do many different

jobs, but your calling is your personhood, your character. Do people see Jesus when they see you?"

This year's Career Day keynote speaker was Dr. Gideon Strauss, associate professor of worldview studies at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

Speaking at the opening chapel, Strauss told students he would smash a myth, tell a truth and teach a trick.

The myth he smashed was that there is only one right career path, and that you have to find it to be happy.

The truth he told is that "you are what you love" and that it's important to orient your identity towards a worldview that is worthy of your affections.

The trick he taught was what he called a "good-times journal." Strauss said that at the end of each day you should make a list of seven or eight things you did and then rate them on a scale of one to five, with one "if it sucked" and five if it energized you. At the end of every week, or month or year, take a look at your fives and begin planning how you can organize your life with less of the things that suck and more of the things



that rated a five. The goal is to orient the direction of your career towards the things that energize you.

Close to a dozen morning sessions included information on topics such as finances, vocational interests, apprenticeships, mental health, and finding Christian community on a university or college campus. More than 30 afternoon sessions included presentations from alumni, parents and other guests from a wide range of careers and professions.

Booy-Korvemaker said Career Day is "about hope, dreaming, creating and goalsetting" and teaching students that their ultimate goal is making the world a better place.

"We are breathing life and hope into people," she said.

Among the guests at Career Day was Alexandra Heck, a reporter from Niagara This Week, who covered the Gideon Strauss keynote and also interviewed several students afterwards. Her story can be found at: www.niagarathisweek.com/community-story/7012310-no-such-thing-as-the-perfect-path/



Career Day Who's Who?

Presentations included:

Accountant **Agri-Business owner** Artist **Canadian Armed Forces** personnel **Construction contractor** Doctor Electrician **Engineer** Entrepreneur Financial planner **Firefighter** Geothermal engineer Information technology professional **Journalist** Law Clerk Lawyer Mechanic Millwright Mission worker Nurse practitioner **Paramedic** Pastor **Pharmacist Physiotherapist** Plumber Police officer Real estate agent Salesperson Scientist Social worker Sustainable farmer Teacher Veterinarian

21st century learning: Individual pathway planning

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

In high school in Ontario, students earn compulsory and elective credits. The compulsory credits are required credits to achieve the diploma – the elective credits are all the rest. Often elective credits can be requirements for entrance into a specific program or institution. This requires students to have some idea of what they hope to study after high school and then do "backward planning" to achieve their goals.

One thing I have learned is that requirements for university and college entrance, or prerequisites for job and apprenticeship applications can change – sometimes yearly. It is so important for each student to create a plan that meets his or her individual needs.

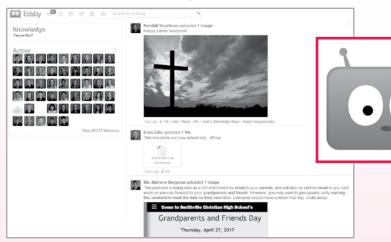
In guidance we used to call this plan a student's "Educational Plan." Recently, the terminology has changed to "Individual Pathway Plan" or IPP – for good reasons. Sometimes high school students influence each other's choices of courses. Sometimes parents affect student decision-making by giving their teenagers whatever they want – a phenomenon sometimes called "Entitlementality." The problem with these two types of influence is that students may make decisions that end up with them facing self-induced barriers after high school. Students need to make choices that are best for their IPP. When students are following the plan best suited for their individual gifts and talents they will flourish and have many post-secondary options open to them.

Students in high school today are faced with important choices that will impact their futures. At Smithville Christian High School we work hard as guidance counsellors to encourage students to use their individual God-given talents to explore post-secondary pathways that will enable them to contribute to society's needs while doing kingdom work. This is 21st century post-secondary planning.



Living now

BY BRENDAN MASSELINK, STUDENT COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT





The spiritual theme that Student Council has chosen for this school year is "Living Now." This theme was inspired by the song "This is Living" by Hillsong Young and Free (featuring Lecrae).

The idea of living for Jesus right now can seem a little complicated in a post-modern world where the internet and technology have taken over. Media and culture are constantly influencing our thoughts and decisions, telling us what we should do, what we should wear, what we should eat, etc. How can we embrace living now with all this negativity in what makes up the groundwork of our world today? How can we use media and technology to honour God and continue in our growth together? Smithville Christian High School provides some answers for these challenging questions. At Smithville Christian, we embrace the beauty of technology and media to boost student engagement, productivity, and school community.

Teenagers today love media. The average student can easily spend hours online, either watching their favourite Netflix series or even just checking out the latest posts on Instagram. Teachers at Smithville Christian take advantage of this screen captivation by utilizing technology in our everyday lessons. One of the most recent introductions to Smithville Christian is Google Classroom. Google Classroom is an online program that allows teachers to post assignments online for students to complete and turn in, all on their computers. This creates a more comfortable space for the students to learn and be engaged.

With programs like Google Drive, students are taught how to collaborate with each other, all through the power of technology.

This program allows many students to work on one document at the same time while automatically saving their work as they go. This program increases the productivity of student group work, allowing them to focus more on the depth of their assignments/projects.

The key to a good school is a healthy and close school community, and Smithville Christian is using technology to build community too. Three years ago, Smithville Christian implemented a schoolwide online learning management tool by the name of Edsby. This program allows teachers to communicate with their classes, students, and the rest of the school more easily. One of the groups on this program is called "School Talk" to which every student and teacher is automatically added. "School Talk" has helped form a school community in ways that are perfectly applicable to the era we are living in. Students are able to post polls about their favourite sports teams or events, post about their lost cellphone, or even congratulate each other on their athletic or academic achievements along with important announcements being posted. "School Talk" has created a healthy atmosphere for our school community to grow and share together in a way that the Millennial generation feels comfortable with.

Our world is constantly changing. In order for us to change the world, we first need to be able to connect with the world. The use of media and technology is a perfect way of achieving that. Smithville Christian fully embraces this through many recent additions. Not only does it connect our school with the world, but it also connects the teachers with the students, allowing them to relate in new and innovative ways. Together we can change the world. Together we can live now.





Smithville Christian and the Christian School Foundation

HOW THE PARTNERSHIP WORKS TO STRENGTHEN THIS SCHOOL

BY TONY KAMPHUIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION

Christian education is a bold endeavor. It isn't something for the faint of heart. After all, schools are complex, multiorganizations lavered and operate, that doesn't even factor in the financial aspect excellent providing Christian education.

Even in places with some level of government support, most communities do not attempt to operate independent schools. Why? Because operating strong schools that are flourishing – and that enable their students to flourish – requires dedication, innovation, solid leadership, and

well...boldness.

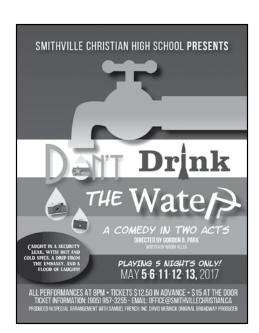
Over the years Smithville Christian has witnessed first-hand God's abundant provision. Through His people, God has demonstrated again and again that when they step forward in faith, God blesses their efforts.

Smithville Christian High School has a successful bursary fund, but the Christian School Foundation is pleased to partner with this school to make it financially accessible to even more people who would otherwise have found it difficult to enroll. This year, Smithville Christian students received \$4,500 through the Foundation's Recruitment Scholarship Program.

Because we know that God provides blessings through His people, the faithful supporters of your school, the Foundation continues to work with Smithville Christian donors to arrange flow-through planned and gifts. This year, planned and flow-through gifts have blessed Smithville Christian with \$30,000 in support, in addition to a disbursement from your Growth Fund for just over \$63,000. This does not include the much higher level of planned gifts arranged through the Foundation that will come into effect at some point in the future!

Why does this matter? Christian schools are an increasingly important witness in our world. If

Continued on page 15...



Continued from page 14...

partnering together with the Christian School Foundation can mean that your school is open to God's blessing in additional ways, and that enables you to be bold in working out how best to educate your students, then everyone benefits: vour students, your families, your school, and our society. What we do together enhances the public good, and the partnership helps all of us be bold in how we do it!



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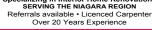


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