



# The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy  
1820 Franwall Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20902  
Tel: 301-649-1070, FAX: 301-649-9863, [www.wca1.org](http://www.wca1.org)

## THANKSGIVING

According to our yearly custom, several classes celebrated Thanksgiving, complete with Pilgrims and Indian outfits and feasts. Part of our mission is to pass unto the next generation the godly heritage of our forefathers. Thanksgiving Day is one such worthy tradition. The charter of the first English settlers required that the day of their arrival in 1619 is observed yearly as a day of thanksgiving to God. Other groups had their thanksgiving celebrations in the ensuing years, and finally, Abraham Lincoln declared it to be observed officially, nationally, in 1863. His declaration, which follows, is worthy for all of us to cherish and pass onto our children.

*Kati Korossy, Editor*

“It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord.

“We know that by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these

blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

“Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people.

“I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday on November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father, who dwelleth in the heavens.”

## OUR TEACHERS AND STAFF

**Christmas.** “He suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, died, and was buried.” Is this really a part of the Christmas story? It certainly is. The students of WCA this year focused on this portion of the Apostles creed and reflected on the passion of Christ while the majority of the world focused merely on His birth. We learned that the birth of Christ was significant, but not for the typical reason we celebrate every December.

When angels heralded Jesus’ birth, they were announcing the birth of the Savior of the world. Jesus Christ had given up His throne of heaven so that He could assume the likeness of man and live a sinless life. He would become the perfect sacrifice required by God. His death was not a defeat at the hands of Satan, but the final victory won over sin.

But why is this important to us? Couldn’t we just be satisfied with Christmas carols and candlelight services and brightly wrapped presents? As children of God we have more to celebrate than a miraculous birth. Indeed we celebrate each Christmas season because a

“Savior has been born” to us.

Just as Christ came for a purpose and never lost that focus, we too have a purpose - to “glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” At the heart of the Reformed Christian education is to help our students understand that God became man so that He could live a perfect life and die as an atoning sacrifice, and therefore He can “make us wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.” Only then can we enjoy Him, now and forever more. Our celebration of Christ’s birth is thus not limited to December. We celebrate our dear Savior’s birth, life, death, and resurrection every day of the year, singing with the angels “Gloria in excelsis Deo.”

*James Koan, II  
Headmaster*

**“Why Latin?”** From time to time, we are urged to “just teach the more practical Spanish and forget about Latin, a dead language!” Yet at WCA, we teach Latin because we believe that it helps us reach the goal of Reformed Education: to teach students to glorify God by training their minds to appreciate and understand God’s world. We now have a curriculum that exposes our students, starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, to the best works of ecclesiastical and classical Latin.

We live in a postmodern world, where many evangelical Christians have unwittingly absorbed the views of our culture. This jeopardizes the Christian testimony and undermines the duty of each generation to pass unto the next generation the godly wisdom and knowledge God entrusted to them. Our children learn the biblical/Christian worldview, in part, by reading the works of those who went before them. To ignore the wisdom of our great thinkers before us is to ignore the work of the Holy Spirit in the past centuries. Even secular classical writings reflect and impart a worldview influenced by biblical standards and the search for Truth. C. S. Lewis wisely recommended that we should read at least one old book for every contemporary book we read. Large portions of these writings of the past, ecclesiastical or classical, were either written in Latin or contain many Latin words and expressions. These writings from our Western heritage cannot be understood and/or delighted in without some Latin knowledge! Latin was the language of the Church, both Catholic and Reformed, and today, the only “living” Latin is found in the church, especially in her music.

Latin not only gives us access to our heritage, it also has significant secular benefits, allowing

our students to fully develop their minds! Briefly stated, here are some of the benefits:

1. Latin enhances problem-solving skills, as the logic required for the understanding of Latin syntax exercises the mind, developing new anastomoses (connections) in the brain.

2. The analysis of Latin syntax leads to better understanding of English grammar. Our teachers work together to integrate the teaching of Latin and English grammar in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This will improve the writing skills of the students.

3. Latin increases English vocabulary and comprehension,. The student can understand new words or phrases by identifying the Latin root, e.g. “bene” is the root of benefit, benevolent, beneficiary, benefice, etc. Yes, this does produce higher SAT scores, and the single most important factor for success in college is a strong vocabulary! Many of our legal, scientific, commercial and medical phrases are from Latin, e.g. caveat, nolo contendere, etc.

4. Many languages are the “daughters” of the Latin language. Knowledge of Latin facilitates the learning of modern foreign languages and will increase the likelihood that some WCA students will study more than one foreign language! German, French, and Spanish are offered to our WCA students, and it is our goal to continue these languages through the AP (Advanced Placement) level. Did you know that while Spanish is frequently identified as the second language of the USA, it is not widely used on the other continents? If we expose our students only to Spanish, they will fall “behind” other citizens of the global economy.

5. Latin phrases are common in the literature of all Western cultures. Understanding these phrases is necessary for appreciation and learning from the standard, classical works of literature, history, sciences, art, philosophy, etc. The appreciation of the classics is the foundation for the truly well-educated person, because the classics teach virtue and noble character, broaden our horizons, provoke us to think more deeply, and develop new ideas.

Without understanding our culture and its past, we cannot understand the present, and we will have no hope of influencing the future, creating and shaping the culture for the benefit of all humankind, a culture which brings glory to God!

*Janice B. Adams  
Associate Headmaster for Academics*

**Homework.** The teachers at WCA embrace and welcome the opportunity to partner together with the parents in the important area of homework completion. Their mutual goal is to encourage educational growth and maturity in the student. In her article, “Whose Homework Is It?” C. Gedzelman gives the following valuable advice to parents:

“The first thing to remember is that homework is not your job; it’s your child’s job. It is important to teach your child responsibility and reward him accordingly. Praise him for being responsible. Be impressed with the work he does. Reward him with privileges as appropriate. But do not give your child too much responsibility. Although homework is your child’s job, he may still need some help now and then. Not all children are mature enough to impose their own discipline. I recommend having a set homework time every day when an adult is available to help the child if needed. Homework should be completed in a quiet place with as few distractions as possible.

How can you help your child with homework? Your goal should be to help your child work as independently as possible. You are available only if needed. If asked for help, do not give away the answer. Ask your child to read the directions again. Ask him what he thinks the teacher is asking for. Give hints. Make him work. In this way, he will learn to think for himself, and it will not be particularly convenient to ask you about every little thing.

Should you check your child’s homework? At the beginning of the year especially, this is important. With the guidance of the teacher and along with your child, set standards for acceptable quality and neatness. Then, assess the situation. If he consistently seems to be completing homework neatly and completely, you may not need to do regular checking. If he rushes to finish early however, insist that it be done properly. If this becomes too much of a battle, make homework time a set amount of time, allowing about 20 minutes more than he usually takes. If he insists that he is finished, tell him that he could use the rest of the time to read or study. He probably will realize that he might as well take his time and do a good job.

Sometimes, working with your child regularly on homework has a tendency to interfere with your emotional relationship, especially when the subject is one in which he struggles a lot. This is the time that you may want to consider the advantages of a tutor for your

child. Even the assistance of a capable high school student to spend a little time coaching your child might provide a bit of “space” emotionally for the two of you.

Most importantly, do not wait too long before dealing with the homework issue. If your child falls too far behind with assignments, it will be very discouraging for him. Based on previous school years, you know your child and will be able to recognize patterns of behavior.”

*Carol A. Parent  
Director of Teacher/Student Development.*

**But What Does Diversity Mean?** One of the students who spoke at our Upper School Information Night on December 7 made an interesting point. “Lots of schools claim to have diversity,” said senior Michael Hollis, “but what does that mean?” He went on to testify that at WCA he finds real diversity—an environment in which we associate closely with all kinds of people without regard to the boundaries that so often separate people from each other.

Our founders saw the school’s mission as encompassing all types of covenant children. We usually think first in terms of race when we think of diversity, and our founders fostered that kind of diversity early on. But schools make many choices about whom to include in their mission. As a covenant school, WCA is not diverse in terms of basic commitment to Christ, but is very diverse in terms of Christian traditions. Did you know that our students represent about 100 different churches? And the friendships certainly don’t fall along denominational lines! At WCA, Baptists and Presbyterians, black and white, wealthy and economically challenged students choose to “hang out” together every day.

I am often asked by prospective parents, “Do you think my child can get into WCA?” This question arises because our success with SATs and National Merit recognition suggests to outsiders that we are not diverse in academic performance levels. Schools with very high SAT averages usually are highly selective, admitting only A- or B-level students. I love telling visitors that this is not the case at WCA. Our mission is for all the covenant children that we can successfully educate. Our students are academically diverse, as well as in other ways. We believe that offering a rich intellectual feast is the best way to educate all kinds of students. The feast is nourishing enough to prepare the most able and motivated students for the best universities in the country. At the same time, struggling students find the feast so nourishing

that they are strengthened to get into and succeed at four-year colleges.

Our mission is to take all the kinds of covenant children and hone their intellectual abilities beyond what they thought they were capable of. One of our 1998 graduates, Jana Holiday, has changed her major at Cedarville College. She had always wanted to be a nurse. But when she got through a year of the nursing program, she found herself unsatisfied. She has changed her major to philosophy, and feels she has found her niche. Now, did Jana imagine herself going into philosophy when she was in ninth grade? Probably not. She credits WCA with teaching her how to think deeply about things and enjoy it.

God is good to bring us so many kinds of students and to foster affection among them for one another.

*Robin U. Gropp  
Director of Advancement*

Many thanks to our generous donors who have already given over \$60,000 in this fiscal year in cash, stocks, and the purchase of needed items. The matching offer for first-time gifts is effective through December.

Mary poured out spikenard oil with abandon, as Judas criticized her gift. Would that we had the feet of Jesus on which to lavish love! But as He said to Judas, "You will not always have me." We must give with abandon elsewhere. Nurturing the minds and hearts of the covenant children is a wonderful option for your liquid assets, stocks, and bequests.

**The Game of Kings.** Once a game for only nobility, chess has become one of America's favorite pastimes. Now it has found its way into the hearts of the students here at WCA, hence the birth of our Chess Club.

Initially, we neither seek official club status nor competitive play with area chess clubs, but both are goals for the future.

No doubt, as parents, you want the best education possible for your children, that is our desire as well. In this regard, and in keeping with our tradition of excellence, chess will be used as a learning tool. According to the National Scholastic Chess Federation (NSCF), chess has many educational benefits:

\*Chess involves all levels of critical thinking (knowledge, comprehension, analysis, evaluation);

\*requires forethought and cultivates visuali-

zation skills;

\*improves problem-solving skills;

\*encourages children to overcome the fear of risk-taking;

\*teaches concentration and self-discipline;

\*enables children to assume responsibility for their decisions;

\*rewards determination and perseverance;

\*promotes good sportsmanship and enhances self-perception;

\*encourages socialization skills that extend across cultures and generations;

\*and, chess is fun!

Hardly any educator would disagree that the disciplined thinking skills which chess teaches are applicable to other intellectual endeavors, and therefore, highly beneficial to students.

Feel free to join us on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 2:30 for a game or two of chess.

*Marion D. Wardrick  
Chess Instructor*

**Athletic Program.** As we enter the fall basketball season, I want to thank the parents and students for their support and encouragement through the various challenges we have had to overcome this year with the athletic program. I especially want to thank the parents for their patience, as I have had to implement the athletic schedule in the middle of the fall season. Despite the problems, however, our students showed great heart and spirit this season in soccer under coach Bratt and others, in cross country with coach McGlone, and in our first season of volleyball under Ms. Boscher's coaching.

Looking forward to the rest of the school year, I am very excited about the foundations that are in place for a fantastic program. Specifically, as we enter the winter sports season it amazes me to see the growth that our basketball teams have exhibited over the past three years. This year we have four teams: middle school boys with coach Crawford and girls with coach Shoemaker; and J.V. boys with coach McGlone and girls with coach Watley. With the addition of a number of new students, some of whom have never played basketball at the school, each of the teams have developed a unique character. Each of our teams will be playing more schools this year as a result of our joining the MISL (Maryland Independent School League) which also includes Spencerville, Calverton, Chelsea, and Newport.

In the spring, we will also offer track and tennis for grades 7-12, and we have added matches and meets for both of these sports.

If you have any questions or concerns about

the sports program, feel free to contact me either at school or at home. To God be the glory.

*George Sanker  
Athletic Director*

**God's Truth Revealed.** God's forgiveness and grace became a wonderful truth for one of the third grade classes. During the study of Abraham and the lie he told about Sarah, a comment was made by one of the children - "Abraham lied and still God made him a great nation." There was a period of silence, and slowly, in the eyes of the children reflected the discovery of the truth about God's forgiveness and grace. The majority knew from church and from their parents that sins can be forgiven. But now they could see a "living" example played out before them. Here was a man we have been studying, a man of faith, a man of many nations, who lied and yet God kept his covenant promise to him. These are the precious moments that can occur only in a Christian school, where God's truth, revealed in His Word, is taught in the classroom. A total blessing!

*Susie Robinson  
Third Grade Teacher*

## **OUR STUDENTS**

**Weather Station.** Last month, we set up the display for a weather measuring station in the Library. Matthew Bushouse (7<sup>th</sup> grade) helped to run the wires for it, and Mr. Vander Haak installed the station's sensors, which sit upon a 15 – 20 foot tall pole, right outside the library's back door. The station can measure wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, wind chill/heat index, outside brightness, dew point and daily/monthly/yearly precipitation. It was a gift from a WCA family and from Channel 4. We are grateful to them for it, as this weather station is going to be a very useful educational tool at our school. Eventually, *Deo volente*, we will even hook it up to the internet, and then it will be used to aid local weather forecasts.

*Alex Bender and Laszlo Korossy  
8<sup>th</sup> grade*

**DNA Project.** We have been studying biotechnology recently in Mr. Schaefer's 9th grade biology class. We have been working with certain instruments such as electrophoresis systems and micropipettes. We completed the lab, "Restriction Analysis of Lambda DNA," in which we loaded DNA cuts with restriction enzymes into gel boxes and used electrophoresis to separate the DNA segments according to size. We received equipment from The University of

Maryland/Baltimore Campus, and from a WCA parent, Dr. Esther Harford. We are very thankful, for this was truly an experience that cannot be forgotten!

*Tinisha McMillan  
9th grade*

**Christmas Letters.** Here are some excerpts written to our Lord by our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Some are appropriately childish, and some reflect beautiful spiritual maturity: *Dear Jesus, in the past few years I have been ungrateful. Please, forgive me.*

*In the last seven years whenever I didn't get the things I wanted I pouted, but this year I will say "thanks for thinking of me." This Christmas I will not fret or fuss. If my little brother makes something strange, I will say "Thank you. Tell me about it." I am going to love the gifts I get just as they are. Even if I get a sloppy picture from my little sister and I don't know what it is. If someone gives me a toy I don't want, I just will say thanks. I will play toy war with those toys. I need your help, Jesus. What should I give to people for Christmas? I am going to save a present for God and you. I love you.*

**Why WCA?** In a recent survey, we asked our 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders what is it about WCA that brought them here and keeps them here. Here are samples of their answers: *My parents. My friends. It is a small community that allows me to grow and learn at my own pace. The closeness and small class sizes. Friendly atmosphere. The teachers actually have a personal bond with the students. Teachers and guidance counselors who go all the lengths to provide the classes and tuition assistance I need.*

*It gives a good Christian education. Reformed perspective. Has a good Christian influence. Rigorous academics. Wide availability of AP courses and honor courses. The sport programs.*

## **ALUMNI**

Chris Shoemaker, a 1996 graduate of SSCA (the high school forerunner of WCA), is about to finish his studies at the prestigious Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). He continued his German studies, which he started in our high school, and spent the last school year in Switzerland as an exchange student. He enjoyed it greatly, even though it was challenging to learn advanced physics in German. After just one more semester, God willing, he will receive his degree in physics, but he has not yet decided in what

area of science he desires to work. He also grew a beard, and he is still a member of the rapidly shrinking 'still single' club of alumni. Do you want to drop him a line? His address is <cshoemaker@wpi.edu>.

## **BOARD AND SCHOOL FAMILY**

**Booster Club.** As we begin another successful basketball season, we remind our athletes and WCA fans to come to each game with an attitude of good sportsmanship, as we desire to do everything in a manner that brings glory to God, who is our Lord. This season He blessed our school with four basketball teams. We thank our coaches for sacrificing their valuable time to instruct our children. We continue to pray for your leadership.

We encourage the whole WCA community to support our basketball teams by attending one or two games and cheering on our athletes. Your support and prayers mean so much to them. Attending a game is also a good way to fellowship with others in the school community. Need team schedules? Check on the sports bulletin board in front of the school office. Continue to pray for our whole athletic program.

*Yvonne Hollis*  
Parent

**WCA Bazaar.** I noticed many WCA families enjoying themselves at one of our big fellowship events of the year, the Holiday Bazaar. How great it was to relax and spend time with one another. It was wonderful to see moms and dads who don't always have the opportunity to be up at the school, and our teachers enjoying a break from the classroom (they certainly have a way with that Oliebollen!) I noticed WCA alumni, supporters, and I even ran into one of my high school teachers, Mr. John Huff.

There is no doubt that the kids were having fun with the various crafts and activities, and the adults enjoyed the festive atmosphere as well. The Bazaar does make money that goes to support our school; but the purpose behind the Bazaar goes beyond that. It provides an excellent opportunity for fellowship among our brothers and sisters in Christ. What a way to kick off the Holiday Season!

Many thanks to the volunteers who made the Bazaar happen. They planned, telephoned, sweated, worked, and prayed to make it the special day that it was. We were blessed by them and may God's blessings be upon them.

Our special thanks to **Chuckles the Clown**

for bringing his friends and volunteering his talents for the event. We hope that they were also blessed and felt welcome in our unique WCA community. By the way, think of him if you would like to have a professional clown for your birthday party (Joe Fera, 301-424-0831, Chuckles the Clown). The children already know him and love him.

*Karen Lees*  
for the Parent Teacher Fellowship

**Moms-in-Touch.** We continue to meet on Thursdays, 8:45-10am, to pray for the families and events brought to our attention. We uphold the school in prayer, and consider it a high calling. We thank God for the safe arrival of the Koan baby. To the praise of God, Luke Johnston made a classroom visit on November 24. He is trying to catch up on his schoolwork, as he is in remission, but will need chemotherapy for over a year more. Continue to pray with us for him and for his family. Also pray for the Lorenzo children who just lost their father. You may also call us with prayer requests.

*Geri Low*  
Parent

**Future Plans.** God has blessed our school with such a growth that our current building is not big enough. The Board is planning to enlarge our current building, in several stages. A surveyor is currently studying the feasibility of a new gym. Mr. Koan will be talking to teachers and the administration regarding the various needs and potential uses of a new gym. This information will be collected by the Board and will be communicated to David Kitchens, a former WCA parent, who is our architect on this project. With the feedback from him, if the plan is determined feasible and realistic, WCA then will approach Montgomery County to negotiate a long-term lease.

*Julie Linden*  
for Long Range Planning Committee

## **TO PONDER.**

"For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us"

*Isaiah 9:6*

". . .by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us from God wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

*1 Corinthians 1:30*

"'Yes,' said Queen Lucy. 'In our world too, a stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world.'"

*C.S. Lewis, The Last Battle*

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**Coram Deo**