

# The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy

PO Box 9847, Silver Spring, MD 20916

Lower School Tel: 301-388-1070

Middle and Upper School Tel: 301-460-4448

www.washingtonchristian.org

**REFLECTIONS** Larry Danner, Headmaster

## *Called to Revere*

In the pantheon of American values and virtues, a pedestal stands empty. It is chipped and its foundation is crumbling and a thick layer of dust covers the decaying edifice. If you step through the rubble at its base and get close enough, you can just make out on top what was once the place for an enormous statue. What once stood in that place? Reverence. Reverence has been disregarded and disdained in our culture with tragic consequences. Its absence leads to a lesser quality of life than we were meant to live and enjoy.

The Scriptures are filled with admonitions concerning reverence. We are to revere God: "*It is the Lord your God you must follow and Him you must revere*" (Deut. 13:4). That reverence for God compels us to be morally pure (2 Cor. 7:1), persevere in difficult circumstances (Col. 3:22), relate properly to others (Eph. 5:21), respect the elderly (Lev. 19:32), train our children (Deut. 4:10), persuade people of the truth (2 Cor. 5:11), and worship God rightly (Psalm 5:7). To

—Continued on page 5

## **Building the Promise**

For a long time now, your Board of Directors has wanted to write a letter to the entire school community and shout for joy because of the miraculous provision of the Lord for His school, Washington Christian Academy. On countless occasions along the journey to our new campus, we've had the chance to witness what could only be the hand of God intervening on our behalf to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Each victory we experienced was followed by some new difficulty that would put the project in peril. We found ourselves wanting to declare the certainty of success, but were repeatedly compelled to refrain for fear of raising hopes and expectations too high or too soon, only to have them potentially dashed by the next big challenge that always seemed to be around the corner.

We now find ourselves at such a significant milestone on this journey that even the biggest doubting Thomas among us must acknowledge: that the Lord is going to build this new campus no matter what obstacles are thrown in His way. On December 13<sup>th</sup>, our school successfully completed the sale of the tax-free bonds that will provide the financing necessary to

—Continued on page 3



School families, staff, and friends gathered on the site of our future academic building following the Service of Thanksgiving on Friday, December 15.

## Reverent

*Reverent* is perhaps not the first quality that comes to mind when one thinks of the things necessary for academic achievement. We are far more likely to associate words like “diligent,” “persevering,” “attentive,” and “conscientious” with the educational enterprise, and with good reason: such attributes almost always attend success in school. But what is it that best *inspires* students to bring those attitudes to bear upon their school work? One could make a strong case for the quality of reverence.

The dictionary defines reverence as “honor or respect felt or shown” and adds that such an attitude “presupposes an intrinsic merit and inviolability in the [thing] honored.” In other words, we consider the object of our reverence of great value, and we would not dishonor or profane it at any cost. We take great care with those things we deem of great worth.

Now, what would students look like who brought such an attitude to their schoolwork? I expect they would give close attention to the instruction in the classroom. There would not be disruption in the class, for this would be to dishonor the subject matter, their teacher, and their peers. They would probably take great care with the assignments they were given and “go the extra mile” in completing them. I think they would exhort other students who appeared not to have the same regard for the activities to take them more seriously. In short, we would find them diligent, persevering, attentive, and conscientious, and all these traits would be a natural product of their reverence for their studies.

Of course, God is the proper object of our highest reverence, a Being of the greatest “intrinsic merit and inviolability,” and in our devotions and our chapels we seek to build in our students such an attitude toward Him. But a Reformed approach to education, in seeing God’s sovereignty over all creation and by acknowledging all truth as God’s truth, will extend that reverence to all the good things God has given us in this life. And so we will encourage in our students a proper regard—a reverence—for knowledge and virtue, for acts of kindness and courage and service, for good literature, good art, and good music. In a word, we would have them reverence the good, the true, and the beautiful wherever it is found—in academics, in the arts, in athletics—trusting that from such reverence will come minds and hearts determined to give their best in all their endeavors.

—Bill Zimmerman  
Senior Master  
Vice-President of Educational Services

## Winter Gala

On February 3, two former WCA events, the Promise Tree and the Snowball, will merge into one as the new Winter Gala. This is an exciting development as we seek to strengthen both events by combining the ambience of the Snowball with the Promise Tree’s mission of raising money for tuition assistance. In addition, this is a wonderful service opportunity for our senior class. They have been working hard behind the scenes (hoping to defray some costs by winning a Christmas tree decorating contest, which was not realized) and helping with the overall planning and details. They will also be serving at the Gala. In keeping with the tradition of the earlier events, proceeds from the ticket sales will go to the senior class, and all proceeds from the silent auction will support our tuition assistance fund. New this year, guests will also have the opportunity to make donations and designate their preferred area of supporting the school.

The Winter Gala will be held at the magnificent Glenview Mansion starting at 7:30 pm. There will be fine dining with hors d’oeuvres, dancing to lively music, and a fabulous silent auction. This will also be a great opportunity for old friends to reconnect and for new friendships to emerge. We encourage everyone to attend. However, if you cannot join us, we invite you and your family and friends to visit our website to view the auction items online and place your bids there. Bid winners will be notified after the banquet and will have up to 3 days to make their payments after the event.

Again, we hope you will consider joining us for this elegant, fun, yet important event. Invitations were mailed out the last week of December. We look forward to seeing you at the Winter Gala and also hope you will share our great mission with your family and friends.

—LaToya Walker  
Capital Campaign Director



The “Outlaw Word Sheriff” visited the 1<sup>st</sup> grade and arrested a group of words that did not obey the letter/sound rules. After putting them in jail, he deputized all the children so they could make sure those sneaky words did not escape.

## In the Gazette...

In the December 20<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Gazette*, Staff Writer Terri Hogan wrote an article titled, “40-year-promise about to come true; Washington Christian Academy to begin construction of new campus in Olney this month.”

After quoting WCA’s vision of a “reverent, adventurous and academically serious Christian education,” the imminent plans are described: “Construction on the new 60-acre Olney site is expected to begin later this month, and the new campus is expected to open in 2008. The first phase of the project includes a 65,000-square-foot academic building for grades Kindergarten through 12, with 30 classrooms, music and fine arts rooms, science labs, a media center, art/gallery reception area, a chapel and dining facilities. The campus also will include two athletic fields and a gymnasium with seating to accommodate 300 spectators for athletic events and programs. Inspired by traditional academic architecture, the school is being designed by Grimm & Parker Architects, the designers of the new Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda.”

The full article can be viewed at [http://www.gazette.net/stories/122006/olnnew192217\\_31984.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/122006/olnnew192217_31984.shtml).

---

### **BUILDING THE PROMISE**

—Continued from page 1

move forward with construction of the new campus. *It is happening now; it really is!*

This latest achievement again demonstrated God’s provision for WCA. While we entered this process concerned whether there would be any financial institutions willing to take the risk to purchase our bonds, on the day of the sale there was over 20 times more demand for purchase than we had bonds available. This enabled us to arrange for a more favorable interest rate than we had ever expected, something that will be very important to us in the years ahead.

It is now clear that we are heading down the home stretch, toward certain occupancy of our new home in 2008. Construction is scheduled to begin on the site within the next several weeks. Won’t it be an awesome thing to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of Washington Christian Academy in a few years at our new campus!

Of course, we have much work before us. We’ll need an all-out effort to successfully complete our capital campaign; we’ll need to spread the good news of our wonderful program and new campus so that we can achieve our enrollment objectives; and we’ll have many challenges to work through as we complete the construction. But for just this one delicious moment, we can all stop and exhale the breath that we seem to have been collectively holding for five years, and bask in the bountiful blessings that the Lord Jesus has poured out on His school. Blessing and praise be to His name!

—Andy Warren  
WCA Board President

## Memorial Stones

*Joshua 4:4-7*

The old WCS emblem pictured a robust, large tree. It presupposed a strong root system. Our flourishing, growing school is also a testimony of strong roots: the vision and hard work of our school’s founders; the faithful and sacrificial contribution of time, energy, and resources of families, friends, teachers, staff, and alumni of WCA’s predecessors, Washington Christian School and Silver Spring Christian Academy; the faithful prayers, praise, and petition of the generations of these faithful people; and their obedient response to God’s call that God has blessed and is blessing.

God, at times, commanded His people to erect a monument, piled together from stones, to remind them of God’s faithfulness and great acts on their behalf. It is fitting for us, too, to erect a monument of a sort, especially at this monumental time in the life of our school, for future generations to see God at work in the past of our school. This “monument” to remember by would be a compilation of stories and memories of God’s faithful people whose work preceded WCA’s current progress. To build it, we need everyone to contribute their piece of “stone”: all those memories, stories—good and bad, humorous and serious—memoirs, traditions, and historical tidbits (e.g. how and when the Promise Tree started, when WCS moved to Franwall Ave, how WCS became WCA, etc.) that our current or previous families and friends have from the past of WCS, SSCA, or WCA. Large monuments are made from small stones. So, please, **send in your mementos**, no matter how small they may seem, to our school (mail to WCA/“Memorial Stones,” or e-mail to [lwalker@washingtonchristian.org](mailto:lwalker@washingtonchristian.org)).

—The Editor



**Teachers Ms. Langelaar, Ms. Ritsema, staff member Karen Lees, and our WCA mascot Wildcat serve the famous Oliebollen at the WCA Bazaar.**



WCA's champion Varsity Volleyball Team.

## WCA Sports

Hats off to our WCA fall athletes and coaches for a job well done during the fall season. Our students demonstrated tremendous character, and the Lord blessed their efforts with great success. Our Girls Varsity Volleyball team and Girls Varsity Soccer team were both undefeated the entire season and won first place in the MISAL League Championship. The Girls Varsity

Volleyball team also made it all the way to state level, where they won the Maryland Christian School Statewide tournament. Our Boys Varsity Soccer team also worked hard and finished strong as the MISAL League Runners Up.

Many of our students received individual honors throughout the season, and we also won league MVP in every sport. Our MVP's included Jess Lutz for Girls Varsity Soccer, Ryan Bratt for Boys Varsity Soccer, and Allison Campbell for Girls Varsity Volleyball.

Throughout the season, our students had the opportunity to learn and compete under the leadership of excellent coaches. Zach Kousandreas coached the Varsity Girls Soccer team, Chris Channer the Varsity Volleyball team, and Jessica Zeller the Varsity Boys Soccer team. The middle school also enjoyed a successful season under the leadership of Coach Eldred Abbey.

We are thankful for what God has done in the lives of our students this season, as they exercised the virtues of hard work, faithfulness, and perseverance. We now look forward to a successful winter season and, as always, strive to bring glory to God in all that we do both on and off the playing field.

—David Carter  
Athletic Director

## From Here and There

Kindergarteners celebrated the **Thanksgiving feast** dressed as Pilgrims (girls) and Indians (boys).

**Lower School History Night** is scheduled for March 9, with each class covering a different time period with food, projects, and plays.

1<sup>st</sup> graders had a **Nativity Tour** at the National Gallery of Art. They also made paintings in the style of African American Artist Jacob Lawrence.

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders visited the **Walters Museum** to experience Greek and Roman culture, and they also jointly presented a children's adaptation of *Julius Caesar*.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders of WCA and Fourth School held their annual **Roman Festival** together; getting a taste of what Roman culture was like during the time of Jesus. They came to school in togas, prepared Roman foods, lounged on the floor to eat, played Roman ball games, built arches, presented Reader's Theater myths, etc.

3<sup>rd</sup> graders continue the **penny hunt** started by last year's class toward the goal of 100,000,000 pennies to help build our new school. In the process, they practice important math concepts, and learn lessons about giving. Someone

—Continued on page 6

**Mr. Leonard P. Brink, who was the principal of WCS (predecessor of WCA) in the 70's and early 80's, went to be with the Lord on December 30, 2006, at the age of 85. He was known for his deep concern for the soul of every child under his care. In his earlier years, he also taught the Navaho Indians, among whom his father was a missionary.**



*Imagine a Girl*, 18"x24" watercolor, by senior Talia Henderson, influenced by Henri Matisse's Fauve period.

## Preparing for life beyond WCA

Since the school year began, WCA seniors have all been looking ahead to leaving their high school years behind them and starting a new season of life. Given that this transition can be a difficult one for young people, WCA this year launched a new College and Career Preparation Class, taught by Mrs. Karen Frank.

The first thing seniors learned in this class was their “personality type,” as determined by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment. Mrs. Cheryl Piotrowski, wife of WCA Theology teacher Nicholas Piotrowski, is certified to review the results, and she came to the class and helped students understand how they analyze data and work on completing tasks.

During the fall, seniors used class time to work on their college applications, with guidance from Mrs. Frank, and also explored Time Management principles. They have begun a Public Speaking unit, and will also cover Manners and Etiquette, as well as Money Management. When seniors return from Christmas break, they will have a visit by some WCA alumni who will sit on a panel and field questions about college life, everything from the difficulty of college classes to whether or not the food is tolerable. Later in the year, students will hear from panels of parents who will talk about their chosen vocations, and from a panel of local pastors who will discuss challenges to the Christian faith that students will face in college and who will encourage them to be faithful to a local church in their college town.

While most of the class lectures are focusing on practical skills, many of the readings required in the class are somewhat philosophical—designed to help students better understand the culture into which they are about to enter—and will guide them to make Biblical, wise and deliberate decisions as young adults. In the first quarter, seniors read *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in an Age of Show Business* by Neil Postman. They then wrote papers analyzing the book’s thesis that our entertainment-oriented culture has trivialized nearly all aspects of society: politics, religion, education, and the media, to name a few. Currently, seniors are learning from the prolific and profound G.K. Chesterton in Dale Ahlquist’s new book, *Common Sense 101: Lessons from G.K. Chesterton*. And, in the third quarter, students will read essays from Christian students attending secular universities in Abbie Smith’s *Can You Keep Your Faith in College?*

The course will conclude with Mr. Piotrowski guest-lecturing on the ever-confusing topic of “finding God’s will for our lives,” and students will also have class time to work on their thesis papers required for graduation.

Our hope is that through this class, which combines practical skills with topics relating to the Christian worldview, seniors will leave WCA all the more prepared to “occupy their places worthily in society, church and state.”

—Karen Frank  
Teacher

### CALLED TO REVERE

—Continued from page 1

revere God is the proper calling of all people: “*Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere Him.*” (Psalm 33:8).

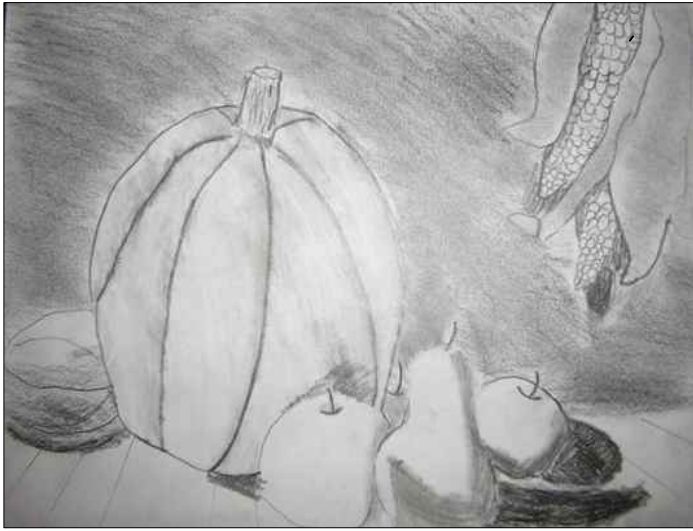
Reverence for God does many things. I want to point out two. First, it provides us with a sense of proportion. When we revere God rightly, we then understand and value everything else in its proper place. This enables us to esteem and enjoy all of creation more fully because we value the right things to the right degree. We treasure and appreciate worthy things more and unworthy things less.

Secondly, a proper reverence for God provides us with a right understanding of our own value. Christians have swallowed and gagged on the self-esteem pill our culture has offered as the cure-all of our personal problems. We read books, attend seminars, listen to tapes, and chant mantras in order to convince ourselves of our own value. When we revere God rightly, our self-image is not founded on our opinion of ourselves. It is founded on this: the God of the universe, who alone is worthy of unbounded adoration, values you and me. Our opinion in the matter does not matter. His does.

Reverence is the appropriate emotional response when we encounter something that is worthy of awe and wonder and adoration. That sensory response is first and foremost a gift of God, but it is a gift that must be nurtured, especially in children. It is our task to put reverence back on the pedestal in the pantheon of things that matter most.



Students enjoyed their fathers’ company at the second annual *Donuts for Dads*, sharing a snack and Chapel together.



*Harvest Still Life*, by Rebecca Pancratz, 4<sup>th</sup> grade. A value study: after the contour drawing, degrees of shading, so-called values, add depth and texture, and linear perspective creates the depth of the table.

---

## FROM HERE AND THERE

—Continued from page 4

overheard a student (Donne), who was saving money toward a game, that he will instead use the money toward the school's building. A blessed mite-giver of our days!

4<sup>th</sup> graders practice math skills the fun way with **NFL football trading cards**: they plot the weights versus heights of players, draw a scale-model football field, figure the average running records of players over five years, etc.

4<sup>th</sup> graders prepared soup and bread mixes for the bazaar to **help a pastor in Thailand** buy a motorcycle, to make it easier for him to attend his 700+ parishioners.

Our students observed first-hand what a *reverent* approach to life might mean, as several **parents (and an uncle!)** shared their knowledge and experiences in some classes. Mr. Miller spoke to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders about his upcoming Antarctica expedition, and even dressed up a student in the gear he will have to wear. In honor of Veteran's Day, Mr. Rosetta shared with 4<sup>th</sup> graders some of his experiences as a Viet Nam veteran, and Dr. Pancratz, a family physician, spoke about the circulatory system.

Since last year, **1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders are paired up as "buddies"** for regular weekly activities (interviewing each other, writing and illustrating Buddy Booklets, doing cooperative learning activities, a Christmas gift exchange, etc.). It gives the 1<sup>st</sup> graders someone to look up to, and the 5<sup>th</sup> graders an opportunity to really be of service and to positively impact the lives of the little ones.

8<sup>th</sup> graders Andrea Ellis and Kelly Reeder played a flute duet and Schuyler Clark a drum solo at the **MS Band**

**Concert** on November 30.

4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades will participate in the **National Geography Bee** on January 8.

7<sup>th</sup> graders prepared posters and samples of food of specific countries for the **Taste of Europe Night**.

The **MS Model UN**, lead by our AP Government students, will convene on Jan 31, and Catholic University will again host the **US Model UN** on February 8-10 (with our alumnus, CUA junior Laszlo Korossy, serving as an Under-Secretary-General). Thirty delegates will represent WCA.

**Lara Linden**, a senior at WCA, recently earned a **perfect score on the Critical Reading Section of the SATs**. She accepted early admission to Grove City College in Grove City, Pennsylvania.

Save the date for the **spring play of WCA's King's Players** on March 23-24.

MS and US students spent the **Service Project Day** in December helping at various Christian missions.

WCA again participated in the **Operation Christmas Child** project, shipping to needy children in 92 countries 117 "shoeboxes" filled with toys and a simple message about Christ in the receiving child's language.

**Family/Alumni Basketball Night** is planned for January 5, with JV and Varsity games, a game of 6<sup>th</sup> graders vs. their parents, an "All-Star Alumni" game, various basketball activities for younger children, and family fun and good food for all.

**Jacob DiPiazza**, WCA alumnus '04, made the Division 1 swim team at the University of Maryland.

The next **Society Meeting** is scheduled for January 29. Plan to attend to share in God's great works at WCA.

Whether you attend the Parents-in-Prayer weekly meetings or not, **pray with us** for our school, its families, and our communities.

---

## To Ponder

"...to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, and to devote the will to the purpose of God."

—Archbishop William Temple

---

## Coram Deo

What is your only comfort in life, and in death?

That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

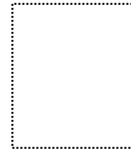
*Heidelberg Catechism, First Question and Answer*

***The Messenger***

*Washington Christian Academy*

*PO Box 9847*

*Silver Spring, MD 20916*



---

WASHINGTON

*reverent, adventurous*

CHRISTIAN

*academically serious*

ACADEMY

*in the historic Reformed tradition*