



# The BEACON

News for family and friends of Ann Arbor Christian School 2020-2021 No. 2

## HEADS UP by Wayne Sit, head of school

### The Great Orchestrator



This June will be my 20th anniversary with my wife Wendy. Back in 2001, neither of us imagined many events that would unfold during these two decades, including the tragic death of her father a week before our wedding, leaving the Boston area where we started our family and moving to Michigan, learning to drive on dirt roads (we had plenty of potholes in Boston but no dirt roads!), having five wonderful children, having a small hobby farm that includes three donkeys, facing a pandemic and having a heart attack in 2020, and joining the Ann Arbor Christian community in 2009.

Before Wendy and I met, during her undergraduate years at the University of Michigan, she was in a small group during the start-up years of Knox Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor. There, she met the school's first full-time and beloved principal, Ann Deckert, who was co-leading the group with her husband. During that same period nearly 800 miles away, I became a believer as an undergraduate at Harvard and decided that I wanted to pursue a career in education. A few years later, Wendy and I met at church when she moved to Boston to work on her Master's degree. Fast forward years later when we decided to move to Michigan, Wendy reconnected with Ann to talk about Ann Arbor Christian for our then three children, and that is how God started our journey with AACCS.

In a season in which so much is still unknown and unexpected trials still face us on both near and global levels, stories like this remind us of God's intricate and intimate handiwork in working all things according to His greater plans: how He orchestrates relationships, events, and circumstances so that His kingdom, greater purposes, and love are advanced through every and all situations.

Between being forgetful and being insistent on our own wisdom, we often need these times to revisit our memories, to re-read accounts of God's faithfulness captured in Scripture, and to retell each other our own stories of God's transformative interventions in our lives. In both bountiful seasons and excruciating ones, God has plans for you and for AACCS to prosper, as captured by the beautiful quilt in our Gathering Space.

Even while I write this, I trust that God is orchestrating the timing for the next leaders of AACCS in ways that we do not even see yet, guiding the school board and me as we discuss the future of the school's capital campaign, sharpening our understanding of the word "prosper", and preparing the next generation of families who will attend Ann Arbor Christian.

With the status of COVID-19 still unpredictable, Wendy and I are struggling with where to go for our 20th anniversary in June. However, for this small decision and for the many bigger ones that will lie before us, we know that we can trust God for the future of our marriage, our five children, and our children's children. In this season of Lent, may the supernatural mystery of two contrasting forces at play - pain, brokenness, and suffering on one end and rejoicing, celebration, and hope on the other - allow us to be more deeply rooted in our God who orchestrates all things for those He loves. We can trust God for the future of Ann Arbor Christian and the thousands of lives within our school community today and tomorrow.

# For Such a Time as This

By Ryan Peterson, AACCS board president

Many of us are familiar with the Old Testament narrative of Queen Esther. Set in the Persian empire, this short but significant narrative chronicles the experience of God's people who were in Persia — not their promised land. After an enemy of the Jews (Haman) convinced the king to kill all the Jews, the Lord used Esther's cousin Mordecai to speak these often quoted words from Esther 4:14: "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

## For such a time as this.

Indeed, Esther saw that God had put her in this position to act. She called the Jewish people to fast, and she went to the king to intercede. By God's grace, the Jews were delivered.

It is not by accident nor chance that 30 years ago, a group of faithful Christians began what we know today as Ann Arbor Christian School. Founding families, who believed the Lord was leading them to establish a needed Christian school presence in Ann Arbor, prayed and acted. Today, we have the privilege of doing the same. For such a time as this, in the midst of a challenging season for all in education, we can also pray and act. Our Board is committed to doing that and does it through decision-making and support to ensure Ann Arbor Christian School continues to fulfill its mission of offering "Christ-centered, academically excellent education that challenges students to live and act in society as committed followers of Jesus Christ."

One role of the Board is to protect the mission. At each monthly Board meeting, we begin the meeting by reading out loud again (and again!) the mission and vision of AACCS. Then, we spend time in devotions and prayer before jumping into our consent and regular agenda. Currently, even as you read this, the Board is finalizing the 2021-2022 budget in light of this important mission. We are imagining a school that doesn't exist, believing that God has called AACCS to fulfill our mission "for such a time as this."

The Board continues to covet your prayers and wisdom during these important days, for the sake of our students and families the Lord gives us the privilege of serving.

## LIVE Virtual Tours

### Would You Like to Join Us for a Tour of AACCS?

As a special way to encourage you and to put a smile on your face and heart, please join Wayne for an hour for a LIVE virtual tour of AACCS.



### RSVP | DATES:

- APRIL 8TH @ 9:00AM
- APRIL 9TH @ 1:00PM
- APRIL 13TH @ 9:00AM, 1:00PM
- APRIL 21ST @ 11:00AM, 2:00PM

**1** EMAIL: [prdevelopment@annarborchristian.org](mailto:prdevelopment@annarborchristian.org)

**2** OR CALL: #734.741.4948

**Come and see what your prayers and support are making possible every day!**



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COVID could have taken the "special" out of this meaningful event for 5th graders at AACs. Even though we could not host the typical feast with family members present, students were still able to creatively share their rich family heritages with their fellow students and teachers.

# A COMMUNITY GATHERED

## Family Heritage Day 2021



Be sure to check out Lands' End for the updated spiritwear with the NEW Eagle logo. Go, Eagles!



**Alumni Profile UPDATE:** AACs just learned that the alumnus profiled in our last Beacon newsletter, Colt Parker, is going to intern with Tesla this summer (and possibly longer) as a college sophomore! Congratulations, Colt, on this huge accomplishment!



## #AACSLIFE

Check out photos like these on Instagram & Facebook



# LASTING SIGNIFICANCE

## Putting on the Armor of God

By Becky Johnson, spiritual life coordinator

As we have been unpacking our chapel theme for this year, there has been a buzz of excitement as the students anticipate which armor piece will be the focus of the next chapel. The elementary students receive their own paper version of the piece of armor. These are assembled on the outside of their lockers as a visual way to remember what they have learned. Recognizing the crafty lies of the enemy who would want us to question our identity in Christ, the truth of God's Word, and the sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross has been an ongoing focus. The middle school students have had some deep discussions about how these lies play out in their lives and how to combat those lies with God's truth.

These lessons are not a once and done kind of thing, but rather ones that need to be repeated over and over again. The truth of God's love for us brings great joy, yet we are often a forgetful people. Paul reminds his readers to be alert. The enemy is relentless in his lies. We need to be as determined in clothing ourselves daily in God's armor and helping our students to do the same.



What does that mean in a practical way for parents and teachers? How do we help our students to stand firm in a world that is shifting sand?

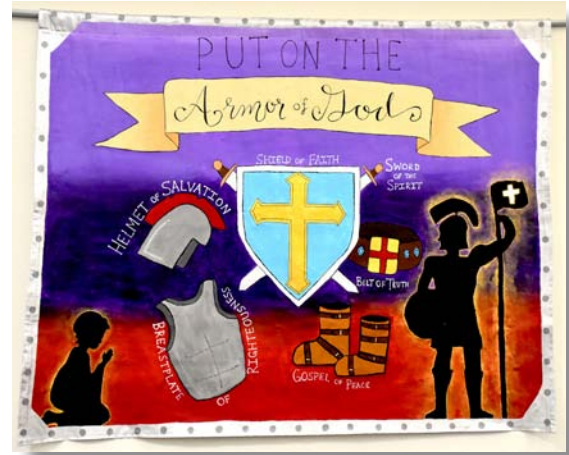
**Pray...** Daily ask God to clothe your family, children, grandchildren, students, and teachers in the armor of God. Vigilance in prayer is key.

**Proclaim...** Share your stories of faith, ways God has worked in your family, in your own life, in the lives of those you know. As children hear about both miraculous intervention and amazing perseverance under trial, they grow in seeing God's faithfulness and in developing resilience.

Recently as the fifth graders shared what they had learned from their **Family Heritage Project**, I was blessed as several students shared faith stories from their ancestors. I share them as a way to encourage you to pass on the stories of God's faithfulness to the next generation.

### Faith Story by Andrew John, 5th Grade

My sister Jorie and I are named after our great-grandparents, John and Marjorie. In 1945, when my Grandpa Dale was four years old, my great-grandma Margie got a bad headache. Two days later, she was paralyzed and couldn't breathe by herself. She was diagnosed with polio and put in an iron lung to breathe for her. She was in the hospital for four years. She lived almost 40 years in her iron lung, and Grandpa John quit his job as a celery farmer to take care of her. The amazing thing about Grandma Margie is that she never complained, even though she never walked again. She trusted completely in God. She always prayed for other people and people loved to be around her because of her good attitude. Grandpa John and Grandma Margie loved each other and God, and they showed everyone in their family what it meant to trust in Jesus.



**What does the "Armor of God" mean to you?:**

*"I believe it means we need to be ready for anything the world may throw at us and God gives us what we need to be ready in any situation or problem we may face."*

### Faith Story by David, 5th Grade

When my great-grandfather Bill was eight, he woke up and realized that his father was gone — his father had abandoned the family. This was during the time of the Great Depression. Not having a father made childhood very tough for him and he could have followed after poor influences. Later in life in WWII, Bill was enlisted in the war and assigned a special project where he was involved in the plan to create an atomic bomb. After his experience, he made a choice that rather than helping create products of destruction, he wanted to help people live a life of following God. Bill became a pastor and stayed one for over three decades, including being the pastor at First Baptist Church in Ypsilanti, MI. That decision created the legacy of faith that my family has today.





## BEYOND THE BASICS

### Listening with the Ears of Our Hearts

*Equipping Students to Become World Changers and Culture Makers for Jesus*

*By Renée McKeone, curriculum director*

***“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” — Matthew 5:9***

On Monday, January 18th, the AACS students explored this verse in conjunction with our chapel theme relating to the armor of God and having our “feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.” (Ephesians 6:15). At a prior chapel, students explored the idea of peace with God through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Our Martin Luther King Day chapel built upon that concept, but extended it to explore what it means to be peacemakers with one another in our communities.

MLK Day as a day “on” rather than a day “off” has been a longstanding AACS tradition. When students stay home from school, there is probably very little they do to think about and respond to the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Attending a school day entirely devoted to exploring topics related to social justice and King’s legacy to work to build a world where we are one in Christ demonstrates its importance to our students and equips them to become world changers and culture makers for Jesus.

Our world, broken by sin, is filled with places of division and separation. In recent events in our country, the division between races has been highlighted as an area where much work is still needed to build peace and break down walls of division. In praying about and preparing for this day, the committee of teachers who contributed to the day felt it important to focus on starting with listening to others.

This was not only a lesson that students could grasp and apply, but also would serve as a foundational principle to live as peacemakers. If one is to be an active peacemaker, the first act needed is to listen to one another - and listen with the ears of our hearts. It is interesting that when we put two ears together, we form a heart, and that the word “ear” is inside the word “heart”. It’s not surprising then that really listening involves using one’s heart to truly hear the other.

In our opening chapel, we explored the idea of listening as a form of peacemaking through a variety of skits performed and recorded by the 8th graders. Each skit illustrated a conflict and a solution. The students could see how listening was a key aspect of each resolution. This was followed by a lesson and activity where students in grades 3-8 practiced listen-

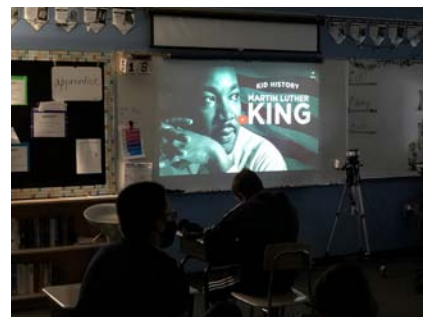
ing with the heart, as they listened to several video clips of people who had been impacted by acts of racial

injustice. We chose personal stories and testimonies of people who experienced acts of discrimination and violence in order to develop empathy and the skill of listening with their hearts on a deeper level. Discussions following each video clip allowed students to process what they

heard and share the messages from each video. Students responded very well to the videos, taking each story very seriously and answering with thoughtful and caring responses. Our youngest students in preschool through second grade shared picture books at age appropriate levels, but could also practice listening with their hearts as they heard the stories. In both situations, the power of a story, of personal experience, really drew the students in and evoked a powerful response. “A person is a person, not a color” was one of the responses given by one of our second grade students. A middle school student

reflected on the experience in this way: “I heard the courage and faith of these people, that protested peacefully and did nothing wrong. These powerful stories should carry over into our lives, and we should all be united by faith rather than separated by hate.” One young student may have summed it up most succinctly, “God made everyone and we need to show love.”

Our goal is that students learn to listen with their hearts, in their own interpersonal conflicts on the playground, in the classroom, with their families and neighbors, and, as they grow, that God will use them to bring peace and reconciliation to the world.



*Elementary students worked on their “listening with my heart” hats to help them connect that, when we listen, we need to engage more than just our ears, but also our hearts to truly understand and “hear” people as God does.*

## Quotes from AACCS parents



*We've been at AACPS now for 6 years! This school encourages the academic and spiritual growth of our children. We have always been so thankful for the teachers and staff, but this year even more so! They have provided a safe learning environment which allowed our kids to be back for in-person learning. We will be forever grateful for the sacrifices and effort the school leadership, teachers, and staff have and continue to make in this challenging year.*

## NEW DATE!!

**NEW BIBLE!!**

before as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow in thanksgiving, abounding in thanksgiving. Let your thankfulness, Colossians 2:6-7. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow in thankfulness, Colossians 2:6-7. Therefore, as you receive your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then you will walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Colo



just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Let your roots grow down into the Word, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you have learned and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Now with thankfulness, Colossians 2:6-7. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus to take him into your hearts, let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7-8. Therefore, let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him, just as the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:9-10.

## NEW DATE!!

*By Lisa Hawley and Dawn Geldermans, co-chairs*

Join us as we celebrate 30 years of AACS with a celebration under the stars at The Valley at Frutig Farms on May 14, 2022 with a LIVE and silent auction, hors d'oeuvres, dinner, and so much more!!

Please contact [anniversary@annarborchristian.org](mailto:anniversary@annarborchristian.org) if you would be interested in donating a product or service to be auctioned off at the event. The event team is also looking for people or companies that would be interested in financially sponsoring the event. For more information and updates please keep checking our event website at [www.annarborchristian.org/30thanniversary](http://www.annarborchristian.org/30thanniversary).

If you are interested in volunteering before and/or at the event to help the celebration run smoothly (e.g., technology, bid-ambassadors, runners, check-out, decorations, etc., etc.), please contact us at [anniversary@annar-borchchristian.org](mailto:anniversary@annar-borchchristian.org) to learn more about how you can help AACs grow.

**Thank you in advance for your support of AACSB!**

“When I read, I listened with my heart **HEARD**:

*"The time is  
always right  
to do what is  
right."*

*"I have decided  
to stick with  
love. Hate is too*

*great a burden to bear."*

*"We must accept finite disappointment, but  
never lose hope."*

*"Their goal wasn't to stand out because of their differences; it was to fit in because of their talent."*

*"As sure as time, history is repeating itself,  
and as sure as man is man, history is the  
last place he'll look for his lessons."*

“When I read, I listened with my heart  
**LEARNED:**

*"Keep faith through the good and the bad."*

*"The time your friends need you is when they're wrong."*

*"People's actions do not always indicate their motives."*

*"We are all created differently. GOD is the One who decides our appearance and gender, NOT society."*





## AACS Acts of Service



### MLK Day Service Project:

In keeping with the theme of "shoes fitted with the gospel of peace", our MLK Day school service project was to collect shoes! We gave our shoes to the organization Soles4Souls.

At Soles4Souls, they turn unwanted shoes and clothing into opportunity by keeping them from going to waste and putting them to good use by distributing them to those in need across the U.S. and around the world.

We collected 10 LARGE boxes of shoes and two smaller boxes. The estimate is that over 50 pairs were in each box, so we probably hit our goal of 500 shoes! This number of shoes provides food, shelter, and education for a family in a country such as Haiti for 8 months! Thank you for your contributions to bring God's peace in the world!

**Thank you for your donations!**



# WELCOME TO THE AACCS FAMILY!

## Welcome Our New Teacher

### Shea Heid

ELEMENTARY SPANISH TEACHER



The school is glad to share that Shea Heid joined AACCS as our new elementary Spanish teacher. Shea is completing a Masters in teaching at Wayne State University, in which she will be certified in both Spanish and ESL for K-12. As a Mexican-American who has lived in various international settings and a strong Christian, Shea will be bringing many elements that we seek in a teacher introducing Spanish to our elementary students.



As a way to extend the conversation about how we listen with our hearts, our middle school students also read a civil rights themed historical fiction or biography. They did a one-page writing reflection on their books. See a few of the quotes here on pages 6 & 7 and on our Facebook page.



MLK Day Project Excerpts: 8th Grade Student Reflections of their books:

“When I read, I listened with my heart  
**WONDERED:**  
“Aren’t we all sinners?”  
“If these empowered women didn’t pursue their dreams, what would the world be like now or in the future?”



“When I read, I listened with my heart  
**DECIDED:**  
“You cannot fully understand issues happening in our current time without understanding the roots of where it came from.”  
“I want to lead ... I want to pursue my dreams ... I want to work harder and harder everyday...”  
“To be faithful to JESUS no matter what happens.”

## Are you interested in receiving \$500 off your tuition for the next school year?

### \$500 TUITION CREDIT

Submit this voucher when you register at AACCS to receive the \$500 tuition credit per family when you enroll one or more children in grades K-8 at the school.\*

**Ann Arbor Christian School**

5500 Whitmore Lake Road • (734) 741-4948 • [www.annarborchristian.org](http://www.annarborchristian.org)

We were referred by the \_\_\_\_\_ family.

Our Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Applied to your May 2021 tuition bill.

As in the past, \$500 referral vouchers will be available if you refer a new family who enrolls in AACCS. The added incentive is that the new family will receive \$500 off their tuition as well.

This is a great way to introduce AACCS to families you know who may want to join us in the fall! Contact the school office for a voucher.

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of Ann Arbor  
Christian School



The **BEACON**

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## ALUMNI PROFILE: ABBY NG

**Year of Graduation from AACCS:** 2015

**Grades of attendance:** 2nd through 8th grade

**What high school did you attend?** Pioneer High School

**What are your post-secondary educational plans?** Currently a sophomore, studying Computer Science with a minor in Creative Writing at the University of Michigan Engineering school.

**Tell us about some of your personal accomplishments since graduating AACCS:** In high school, I was on the Pioneer High School Science Olympiad team. In my senior year, we made it to the national level competition, where we placed 5th place overall in the nation. After band, Science Olympiad was the main extracurricular that I placed a lot of time into, and it was incredibly rewarding to see that pay off. I have a software engineering internship at Facebook lined up for this coming summer and am very excited to move forward with my career from here!



**Favorite memories or experiences of your time at AACCS:** I'll never forget the 8th grade trip and getting to spend so much quality time with my classmates to finish off our experience at AACCS. I also really enjoyed playing in the Praise Band, and it inspired me to continue playing trumpet through high school. I also have fond memories of all the parties and special events from 5th grade, including Pilgrim Day and running through the hallway to graduate elementary school.

**How did your experiences at AACCS impact you?** AACCS gave me a well built, strong base for my faith moving forward from middle school. Going to a public high school was a rough transition, but if my understanding of God and my beliefs wasn't as secure as it was graduating 8th grade, I wouldn't be where I am today. I also gained incredible friendships and connections to all those around me, and still keep in touch with some people from AACCS now.

*Like us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram (@annarborchristian), or check out our hashtag #AACSLife to see what our students are up to here at AACCS.*

