

Unity Christian High School

Foster Faith • Increase Knowledge • Develop Skills



SPRING 2024



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Unity Christian High School

The Tidings is a publication by Unity Christian High School's Development Office. Its purpose is to highlight some of the special things that occur within our school and to unify our Unity Community. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Please contact the Development Office if you would like to update your contact information, share an announcement, or if you know of someone who would like to receive *The Tidings*.

Email
communications@unitychristian.org

Phone
(616) 662-4011

Write
Unity Christian Development Office
4542 48th Avenue
Hudsonville, MI 49426

Online
See *The Tidings* or share it electronically from our website:
<https://www.unitychristian.org/parent-resources/#bulletins>

Social Media
Connect with the daily happenings at Unity through our social media channels.

-  @UnityChristianHighSchool
-  @Unity_Christian_High_School
-  @UCSaders
-  @UCSaders

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2023-24 Unity Christian Trustees

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President - 2025

Jon Lanning
Vice President - 2024

John Dice
Treasurer - 2026

Julie Lenters
Secretary - 2024

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Ed DeYoung
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Teresa Kooyer
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Director for Spiritual Life and Leadership

Bill Postma
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Scott Soodsma
Dean of Students & Attendance

Doug VanderPloeg
Director of Transportation, Associate Athletic Director

Troy Billin
Director of Development



UPDATE

Jerry DeGroot, *Principal/CEO*

The expansion of our facilities marks the next steps in the journey of our Christian community, a chapter spurred by growth, and a steadfast commitment to nurturing the spiritual and educational well-being of all. As we seek to continue moving forward, the call to action resounds – a call to our community to join hands in a collective effort to make this expansion a reality. To complete this vision that goes beyond brick and mortar, a modest proposal of a 1% contribution from everyone’s income for a five-year period emerges as an equitable solution. Supporting our Christian school through a collective financial commitment is not merely an act of generosity; it is a strategic investment in the spiritual growth of our young people. This nominal percentage holds the potential to create a substantial financial pool that would not only cover construction costs but also ensure the sustainability of Christian education!

Our Vision

Developing followers of Christ to be leaders.

Our Mission

Foster faith, increase knowledge, develop skills to serve God and others.

Our Motto

Educational Excellence in a Christian Community

Our Beliefs

- We believe God is Creator, Savior, and Lord.
- We believe the Bible is God’s Infallible Word and is the full Gospel of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration.
- We believe our children belong to God and are instructed to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, to enjoy Him, and to love Him and others.
- We believe a Christian world view will benefit a person in this life and in eternity and seeks to restore the Kingdom of God on earth.

Expanding our building is not merely about erecting physical structures; it reflects our collective dedication to providing a space where Christian values and academic excellence can flourish hand in hand. The expansion will enable us to accommodate a growing community, ensuring that every individual has access to the resources and teachings that will shape their character and faith. The magnitude of this project comes with a large price tag, and it comes with a big ask. Your commitment to financially supporting the completion of this project will extend beyond the present moment, reaching into the future leaving a legacy of spiritual and educational abundance.

Your gift to Unity Christian is an act of stewardship, an acknowledgment that the resources entrusted to us are to be utilized for the greater good of the community and the glory of God. By contributing financially, each member of our community becomes a co-laborer in the mission of Unity Christian, reinforcing the notion that our commitment to Christian community is not a solitary journey, but a collective endeavor.

The act of giving, in this context, becomes a profound expression of faith. It is a declaration that we place our trust in a sovereign God, recognizing that the expansion is not just about the square footage but about creating a space where lives are transformed. The financial commitment is not a burden but a joyful participation in the unfolding narrative of our Christian community, where generosity becomes a vehicle for the manifestation of God’s grace!

The 1% contribution becomes a symbol of unity, a tangible expression of our shared values, and a commitment to enduring the legacy of Unity Christian High School. Moreover, the sustainability of Unity Christian is ensured through this consistent financial model. Long has Unity Christian and our community relied on our lead donors. We are indebted to those who have given so generously and are extremely thankful that they continue to do so. We hope to establish this new model with a goal of 2500 individuals committing 1% of their income for five years. If this can be a reality and then include the generous support of our lead donors this project would be fully funded!

This call to action, urging each community member to play a vital role in shaping our youth is an investment to growing God’s kingdom. The benefits reaped from this collective effort are not only financial but build a community of cohesion declaring our love for God and our thankfulness for his amazing grace and the gift of his son our savior, Jesus Christ.

Together, we can make this vision a reality, shaping a brighter future for our community.

Thank you,

THROUGH THE GENERATIONS:

Unity's First Student, Mrs. Ruth Stubbs

Christian education was the norm in my family and in the Christian Reformed Church to which we belonged. From first grade at age 5, Hudsonville Christian School was my school (there was no kindergarten there then) except for one year when our family lived in another town, where there was no Christian school. I graduated from Hudsonville Christian in the ninth grade, as did my four younger siblings, all of us having studied in the same classrooms as my mother and her siblings. After that, by bus to Holland Christian High for two years, where we were graciously welcomed despite their two-story building being so crowded that one-way traffic was necessary in the hallways. Unity was ready to open when I became a senior. Ray Vander Laan, chair of the school board, was a friend of our family and enrolled me as its first student.

My feelings were mixed about switching from Holland Christian to Unity Christian High School. I liked Holland Christian, where our teachers were excellent, and we had made many friends. There was always the disadvantage, though, of living far enough away to make it difficult to participate in extra-curricular activities. But there was no question about the move. My parents said, "Of course you're going to Unity. We've worked hard to get this school started." As it turned out, there were many advantages to being in the first graduating class in this new school. For one thing, we had to get everything started—yearbook, school paper, clubs, student council, any extra-curricular activity. It was fun to be in that position, especially as seniors. I was the editor of the school newspaper, the Bugle, and worked on the yearbook, which we called Silhouette.

Our teachers were outstanding, and I remember mine fondly: Mr. Bierma for English lit, Mr. DeKoning for economics, Mr. Oostendorp for physics (even though I didn't



really want to take that course; our choices were limited); Mr. Ten Harmsel for typing (he was still a Calvin student), Mr. Marlink (a seminarian) for choir and Bible. Other teachers were Mr. Lautenbach (chemistry) and Mr. Vanden Berg (biology and English). The faculty included two women—Mrs. Niewenhuis, Latin teacher and librarian; and Mrs. Vander Laan, who taught commercial subjects part-time. Walter De Jong was our capable principal. We made many new friends because Unity drew from Jenison and other places where students would otherwise have gone to Grand Rapids Christian. A little store in the hallway was open after school for buying snacks and school supplies, and I often worked there and loved doing that.

After graduating from Unity, I enrolled at Calvin College, majoring in English and education, and



graduating four years later. I always wanted to be a teacher, right from my first day in first grade. I liked to learn and I liked to share with others what I had learned. That is still true; I am a lifelong learner. Over the course of my career, a total of 25 years, I taught at the junior high and high school levels. All of those were in Christian schools except for one semester when I was living in Los Angeles and taught in a public middle school. For a short time, I taught at Calvin College as a part-time writing teacher. During my teaching years, I also earned a master's degree in English from MSU. My four children attended Christian schools, three of them graduating from Calvin, a Christian college - now University.

So why is Christian education important? Some observations:

- Christian education must be, first of all, excellent. That means hiring teachers who are knowledgeable, well-prepared, and well-compensated.
- Christian education is, intrinsically, a worldview, putting all learning in this context: This is God's world, God created it, and God wants us to know how best to live in it. Every subject is viewed from this perspective, not just the Bible classes. It is the air we breathe. And so, of course, it is still as important as ever.
- A big threat to Christian education is its cost. Many people who would like Christian schools for their children may not be able to afford them, but often community members help to make that possible.

I am proud of Unity Christian High School. It has always lived up to its name, every word of it, and continues to do so, bringing together students from a broad area instructing them about God's wonderful creation, and encouraging them to find their calling in it.

*Ruth Stubbs, Class of 1954
The First Graduating Class of
Unity Christian High School*



ALUMNI IN THE ARTS

Andrew Plaisier, Professional Musician

Living and working as a professional musician in Grand Rapids is not what Andrew Plaisier always pictured for his life. In fact, for a long time, he was unsure of where God's path was leading him. That path began not far away in Hudsonville, MI where Andrew's affinity for music began at an early age. He grew up in a musical household where, "My mother played violin in several area symphonies as well as taught violin, viola, and piano." Andrew recalls, "My older sisters both played string instruments as well, so I started playing cello in 4th grade orchestra at Hudsonville Christian Elementary and Middle Schools because I wanted a different one than what was already around the house!" This early involvement in the arts would develop into a lifelong love of music.

Growing up in a family dedicated to Christian education meant that Andrew and his sisters attended Christian day school from elementary through high school. However, it was during his time at Unity that his love of music would bloom. For the first time, he began to take music more seriously and became involved in more musical opportunities. "I appreciated the wide range of activities I was able to be involved in at Unity, whether artistic, academic, or athletic."



Andrew went on to attend Calvin College where he double majored in Music and Biology. While enrolled, he was a member of the Calvin Orchestra and the Community Symphony. He filled his time playing in quartets with friends, playing on worship teams, entering talent competitions, and participating in several music festivals between semesters. Despite dedicating so much time and energy to musical endeavors, Andrew still was not sure it was what he wanted to pursue as a career. Upon graduation from Calvin, Andrew intended to take a gap year to assess what God might be calling him to. In preparation for that season of discernment, he applied to two musical graduate programs as practice for the following year. To his surprise, he was accepted to both schools in his first year of application.

After earning a master's degree in Cello Performance and Chamber Music, Andrew returned to West Michigan and created a space for himself in the local music scene. When asked about his current job, Andrew explained that his days are often busy and varied. "I play with the Grand Rapids Symphony as well as other symphonies around the state, teach private cello lessons to 15-20 students, and regularly play in weddings and church services."

Looking back at his life so far, Andrew can see how Christian education has impacted his career decisions. "Even now, there are times where I wonder if I am being selfish by making a career out of something that is more of a hobby for most people," he muses. "However, I have witnessed and come to believe that music does have tangible differences in God's world, and I am contributing to the betterment of society both in my teaching and playing of music." His time at Unity planted seeds that allowed him to foster the edge and physicality that he needs to endure as a professional musician who is always competing and auditioning. "I think my experiences in many sports at Unity helped foster a healthy competitive spirit that I utilize in taking auditions, and a physically healthy body that I am very thankful for!" says Andrew.

Andrew is particularly proud of his work with the Grand Rapids Symphony's Music for Health program. Through this program, he and other symphony members play in hospitals and neuro-residential facilities. His work as a musician also allows him the opportunity to make a difference in multiple areas of his life. Andrew shares, "[I am] able to share my love of music with my students and seeing their growth, and interacting with concertgoers after performances."

Congratulations, Andrew, on your fruitful career in the arts! It is exciting seeing Unity graduates live out their calling!

SENIOR



KATIE LANDSTRA

As I near the end of high school, many emotions arise within me. In the past four years at Unity, I have made great memories alongside great friends; I have grown in my faith and into the person I am today. As I reflect on these years of my life a sense of gratitude falls over me. So many people contributed to the high school experience I was able to have - from teachers who supported me, teammates who encouraged me, and friends who laughed with me. High school is about more than just education; it is a time to learn who you are and what you want to become. Some of my favorite memories from Unity include sitting in the student section at games, attending chapel, participating in Winterfest, and being part of both the cross country and track teams. But for every memory I made at Unity, I know there will be even more memories made after I've graduated and gone off to college, which is why the gratitude I feel is paralleled with excitement and anticipation at the prospect of what awaits me in my next phase of life. New opportunities will await my classmates and I as we exit the doors of Unity for the last time; each of us going our separate ways, but all of us tethered by the four years of life we shared together. I'll never forget the time I spent at Unity, the people I met, and the things I learned, and I hope to carry them all into the next stages of my life.



TYLER KROL

As my time at Unity comes to a close, I find myself reflecting fondly on my four years. I especially think of the many extracurricular activities in which I was able to participate and the people who shared those experiences. Soccer, track, the musical, and many other opportunities helped me forge many friendships. Ultimately, it is the people who made my time at Unity so special. My favorite memories are the interactions with great classmates, coaches, and teachers. I am very thankful for the care and intentionality many of the teachers give to us. Their care is evident and makes a positive difference in the students' lives. I would be remiss to not acknowledge my thankfulness for Unity's effort to infuse faith with learning. The daily chapels, devotions, and Christ-centered classwork have helped me as I form a foundation of faith for life after high school. Now I look to college with the hope and confidence that I should be able to find that same spirit of the Unity community: a community engaged in the Lord's mission of bearing good fruit. I believe this is what Unity does and I hope it continues to flourish in doing God's work.

GRACE DEWAAL MALEFYT

Finishing my senior year has stirred up many different emotions, a prominent one being gratitude. I am thankful for the opportunity to have attended Unity Christian, where I've had the opportunity not only to complete my high school journey but also to establish the groundwork for my college education. Throughout my journey at Unity, I've gotten to experience a nurturing community filled with love and support, where every teacher, coach, and classmate has played a pivotal role in shaping the person I am today. Blessed with opportunities for both academic and spiritual growth, I've discovered avenues to deepen and strengthen my faith through both classroom experiences and extracurricular activities. In the classroom, I've been grateful to experience the genuine care and dedication of my teachers, who actively strive to cultivate a nurturing environment. Engaging in sports over the past four years, I became part of family-like cultures characterized by love, respect, and a secure space to experiment with my faith and develop cooperative leadership skills. One of my takeaways from Unity Christian is the realization of how the school provided a unique space for deepening my faith, and the cultivation of strength through the bonds formed within this community.

Through Christian education, my faith underwent a transformative journey, evolving from mere rituals into a profound and meaningful relationship with my Lord. Unity has not only helped shape my faith; it has also transformed it into a dynamic force, a guiding compass influencing my perspective on faith and who I am as a child of God. As I embark on my college journey, I am dedicated to continuing the development of my God-given gifts, carrying with me the transformative experiences from Christian education into the next chapter of my life.



JENNA VANNETTE

Hello! My name is Jenna Vannette, and I am a senior. As graduation approaches, I have a lot of emotions! Leaving Unity will be so bittersweet! High school has been the best 4 years of my life. I have made so many friends and have found so many good mentors too. I have also been very involved with theatre and have made some of the best memories! Going to practice every day has helped me build up so many relationships and even make friendships with people I never thought I would talk to. I always feel so included! I am also excited to start a new chapter of my life though! I am excited to start my new job and have more responsibilities. I believe Unity has equipped me well to handle my beliefs and faith outside of school. All the Bible classes and chapels have really helped to lead me in the right direction. So, leaving will be quite sad but also exciting. Some of my favorite memories at Unity would probably be Winterfest my sophomore year, at the lip syncs. I came out in a whole Napoleon Dynamite outfit and did his whole dance. Everyone cheered loudly, and it made me feel so good when I was already nervous. It made my whole year! It also helped me to become more confident in myself. Unity has been such an amazing time for me, and I am going to miss it a lot!



REFLECTIONS

ALUMNI NEWS

WELCOME TO THE BLUE CREW, LITTLE ONES!



('16) David and Jenna Jansen welcomed Baby Boy, Beau James, into their family on December 21, 2023.

Stephanie (Bussis '01) and Justin Kreuze are pleased to announce they welcomed their 7th child, Annika Lynne, on December 16, 2023.

Katelyn (Brummel '08) and Ryan Cashwell welcomed their son, Levi Thomas Cashwell, into the world on July 19, 2023.

Knox David was born to ('08) Jeff and Jen Rozeboom on August 22, 2023, and joins big brother, Wade (4).



Jessica (Meijer '06) and Michael Dobson welcomed their second son, Evan Richard Dobson into their family on December 3, 2023. Evan joins big brother, Aiden (5).



Peyton Nicole Hess was born to parents Abbi (Lanser '12) and Charlie Hess on September 6, 2023.

Karlee (Rigterink '11) and David Squires have been blessed with over 5 years of marriage and more recently welcomed their son, Scout (1), into the world, joining big sister, Sutton (4).



Kendra (Goebel '14) and David Chesterman gave birth to a son, Kallen David Chesterman, on December 5, 2023. Kallen joins his big sister, Sophia, aged 6. Their new family of 4 is adjusting well!



Elisabeth (Albers '07) and Kristopher ('07) Vanderwall had their son, Gideon, on January 4, 2024. Gideon joins big sister, Ella (4).



Henry (Hank) Douglas Bouma officially joined Kim (Ritsema '98) and Henry Bouma's family on December 14, 2023. He was welcomed by big sister, Karolyn.

ALUMNI NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR WONDERFUL ACHIEVEMENTS!

Jason Wagenmaker ('99) and his wife, Jennifer, feel blessed to share that Jason has been employed by Mayer Brown LLP in Chicago since he graduated from law school at Indiana University in 2006. Jason was recently promoted to equity partner at the firm in January 2024. They live outside of Chicago with their two daughters, Bridget and Beverly.



BLESSINGS TO THE NEWLYWEDS!



Katie (Bolhuis '18) and Matt Garvelink were married in December 2023!



Madeline (Nuiver '22) and Seth Weening were married on July 29, 2023. Soon after they were blessed to move to Florida for Seth's continued studies at Reformation Bible College as well as Madeline's new position teaching music and literature at Knights Christian Academy. Madeline and Seth are now expecting their first baby at the end of August 2024. They are thankful for God's incredible faithfulness to them!



('12) Nick and Jessica Vander Ploeg were married on December 16, 2023!

UPCOMING EVENTS

CLASS OF 2002 REUNION

WHEN:

Friday, May 31 at 6:00 pm

WHERE:

Sarah (Pols) Busscher's House
6293 88th Ave
Borculo, MI 49464

RSVP:

Contact Kristin (Geurink) Sterk
at kristin.sterk@gmail.com or via the
event invite on Facebook by May 24.

*Please bring a dish to pass. Come when you
can, leave when you need to. We are so excited
to reconnect and catch up with classmates!*

Class of 1984 40th Reunion

WHEN: Tuesday, August 6, at 5:00 pm

WHERE: Douglas Walker Park Pavilion
1195 84th St SW, Byron Center, MI 49315

RSVP: To assist us with planning, we would
appreciate it if you would let us know how
many are coming. Email uch84@yahoo.com
or call/text Bethea at (616) 204-5010.

Pulled Pork, tableware, and drinks (water and pop)
will be provided. Please bring one side dish and one
dessert to share!

5 pm – Set Up & Fellowship

6 pm – Potluck Served

*You and your significant other are invited!
We look forward to seeing you!*

Thank you,

*Carmen (Veltema) Kuncaitis, Amy (Fredricks) Mannard,
Beth (Brouwer) Brouwer, and Bethea (Veltema) Lucas*



ASSOCIATION MEETING

The annual Association Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10 at 6:30 PM at Unity Christian High School. It is open to all Members of the Association. See pages 10-11 for the meeting outline, new Trustee candidates, and Association membership criteria.



SPRING PLAY

Unity presents *Death by Dessert* on April 25 & 26. This year's student directors are Liz Kleinbrook and Jenna Vannette. Tickets will be available for purchase on our website.



CELEBRATION BANQUET

The Celebration Banquet will be held on April 29 at 6:30 PM in the Jack Postma Worship Center. Visit www.unitychristian.org/give/ for more details on how to RSVP.



GOLF OUTING

Join us on June 3 for the Unity Christian Golf Outing at Sunnybrook Country Club. Registration is open for both morning & afternoon flights. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Come out to support UC Athletics!



GRADUATION

Celebrate the Class of 2024! Commencement will be held on May 11 with the ceremony beginning at 11 am in the Jack Postma Worship Center.



1ST ANNUAL HOMECOMING

We are excited to announce Unity Christian High School's First Annual Homecoming! Homecoming events will take place the week of September 23, 2024, and conclude on Friday, September 27 at our home football game. More details to come.

SCRAP METAL DRIVE

Do you have old appliances, used batteries, vehicles, or metal (steel, aluminum, copper, brass, etc.) you would like to dispose of? Drop them off at Arrowwaste on May 10 & 11 to help raise money for Unity Christian and Hudsonville Christian.



Forklifts, cranes, and extra manpower will be available to assist with heavy or bulky items. Scrap pick up is possible if there is enough tonnage at your site. Please reach out to Bill Brouwer for inquiries.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer at this event, contact Bill Brouwer at (616)822-4512.

Arrowwaste Storage Lot
1600 Chicago Dr
Jenison, MI 49426

May 10
1 pm – 8 pm

May 11
8 pm – 2 pm



DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

From the Desk of Troy Billin

It is such a blessing to hear of God's faithfulness in the lives of the many students, families, and alumni who have been blessed by a Christian Education. I regularly hear stories from parents and grandparents about teachers who invest in the lives of individual students, helping them navigate the joys and difficulties of adolescence. God has encouraged Unity's school leaders and me with tremendous financial generosity and prayer support to accomplish the task of creating more educational spaces for more students. Historically, we have funded projects at Unity through large donor contributions, but I continue to encourage the MANY to participate in the long-term sustainability of Christ-centered education at Unity. I want to thank the nearly 1,000 donors that have already gotten involved. Although we have a way to go, I am confident we will accomplish our goal by encouraging 2,000 more donors to give \$500 to \$1,000 per year for the next 5 years. In doing so we will ensure that no one desiring a Biblically based, Christ-centered education at Unity Christian High School will ever be turned away.

If you are not currently committed to supporting Unity, please consider doing so today. Christian education is an institution worthy of your regular support. Thank you!

If you have any questions regarding the specific mission of UCHS and the way we intentionally minister to young people, please reach out! We would love to talk with you.

Pledge Today



ANNUAL ASSOCIATION MEETING

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 | 6:30 PM | Unity Christian High School

You are invited to the annual meeting of the Association for the affirmation of Trustees, tuition, and annual budget as approved by Unity Christian’s Trustee members.

MEMBERSHIP: The following persons are entitled to be voting members of the Association.

- All supporting parents and guardians of children who attend Unity Christian High School, and maintained by this Association;
- All Trustees at Unity Christian High Schools;
- All staff members at Unity Christian High School; and
- All persons whose recorded contributions towards support of Unity Christian High School, or its Foundation, for the prior year is not less than 10% of the tuition for that year.

VOTING: Membership is a privilege. Members who attend meetings of the Association are afforded the privilege of affirming the Trustee approved tuition and annual budget. Those in attendance who wish to participate must support the Basis, Purpose, and Standards laid out in Articles 2, 3, and 4 of the Unity Christian High School Constitution.

AGENDA

1. Welcome – Opening Devotions
Brad DeKock, President
2. Introduction of Trustee Members and Trustee Nominees
Brad DeKock, President
3. Affirming Trustees (See next page for nominee profiles)
 - a. The Trustees present to the Association that its slate for Trustee extensions and Trustee nominations be affirmed.
 - i. Upon receiving a majority of affirming votes cast, the Trustee approved for an extension will have their Trustee membership extended for three years.
 - ii. Upon receiving affirmation of the Trustee approved as nominee, a vote will be cast to affirm the Trustee nominee as a Trustee.
 - b. Affirm three-year extension by casting “Yes” or “No” for **Jon Lanning**
 - c. Affirm nominee by casting “Yes” or “No” for the nominee to be a Trustee **Ryan Kooiman**
4. Affirm 2024-2025 Budget as recommended by Trustees.
5. Announce Trustee three-year extension results.
6. Announce new Trustee result.
7. Recognize retiring Trustees **Thea Gabrielse** and **Julie Lenters**.
8. Adjourn and close with prayer
Thea Gabrielse, Vice-Gerent

NOTE: The affirmation of Trustees is by ballot. Affirmation for the proposed budget and the proposed tuition will be done by oral call at the meeting.

PROPOSED 2024/2025 BUDGET SUMMARY

	Adopted 2023/2024	Trustee Approved 2024/2025
BUDGET	\$8,623,600	\$9,740,430
REVENUE		
NON-TUITION	\$1,645,600	\$1,778,000
TUITION	\$6,978,000	\$7,962,430
FULL-TIME AT UNITY	\$10,350	\$10,890
UNITY / CAREERLINE TECH	\$9,150	\$9,620
ENROLLMENT	680 STUDENTS	737 STUDENTS

NOTES TO PROPOSED BUDGET

Recognizing Unity's educational excellence in supporting all the programs offered for students, the Unity Trustees present the following budget. The budget reflects controlled spending and maximizes funds raised outside of tuition-revenue. It also supports those who serve faithfully in our schools and maintains tuition affordability.

1. Tuition has been increased \$45/month and \$39/month respectively for full-time at Unity and Unity/Careerline Tech students.
2. The full cost of educating one student at Unity is \$13,216. Unity is blessed to have other resources to support this cost of education. By funds raised through the Revive Resale Store, Unity's Education Foundation, the annual PACE drive, and the Athletic & Music Boosters, the full cost of education is reduced by \$2,326 to help our families.

CURRENT 2023/2024 TRUSTEES

Brad DeKock (2nd term through 6/25) – President
Jon Lanning (1st term through 6/24) – Vice President
John Dice (2nd term through 6/26) – Treasurer
Julie Lenters (2nd term through 6/24) – Secretary
Thea Gabrielse (2nd term through 6/24) – Vice-Gerent
Ed DeYoung (1st term through 6/25)
Teresa Kooyer (1st term through 6/26)

PROFILES FOR 2024/2025 TRUSTEE CANDIDATES



RYAN KOOIMAN

What Christian education means to our family:

From our early relationship days, my wife and I agreed that we would make any necessary sacrifice to send our future children to a Christian school. It hasn't always been easy, but it has always been worth it. From having Godly influences and care from the staff members each day to having Christian friends who come from a Christian home, and to meeting their future spouses at a Christian school, we very much appreciate the impact of Christian education. We are continually grateful and impressed with the spiritual maturity of our children and their friends and understand that much of this is due to the intentional influence of their teachers and school staff. As a result of the time spent at Unity, we feel that our children are strong in their faith and are educationally prepared for whatever the next steps in life may be.

What do you believe your greatest asset would be while serving as a UC Trustee?

I believe my greatest asset in this role would be my use of the gift of discernment. The experiences I've gained in daily management and empowerment of people, learning educational processes, other board roles, setting aside personal gain or emotion for the betterment of the organization, and continuously seeking God's will have helped build me to a point to serve in this role.

- Ryan & Stephanie are members of Cottonwood Church
- They have three children: Katelyn (2021 grad), Carson (senior), and Case (8th grade at Allendale Christian)
- Ryan is the Director of Training at Standard Motor Products, Inc.
- Ryan has served for six years on the Allendale Christian School Board



JON LANNING

What Christian education means to our family:

My wife Karen and I both attended Christian schools growing up. We are truly thankful to our parents, teachers, and staff who helped us grow in our faith. We made the choice to send our own kids to Christian schools as well. Unity and the EOCS schools really are a community. We rejoice together, support each other, grieve together, and work to raise children who love the Lord with all their hearts. Karen and I will always be thankful for the impact of Unity's teachers, coaches, and staff. I am thankful for the opportunity to have served on Unity's board for the past 3 years and look forward to helping that legacy continue.

- Jon and Karen are members of Messiah CRC
- They have three children: Michael (2020 grad), Jacob (2023 grad), and Caleb (10th grade)
- Jon works at Inontime Inc., a trucking and warehousing company
- Jon has served on the Hudsonville Christian School Board and Foundation Board

HEART TO HEART LIFE ON THE ENDS

by Dan Landstra



“Does the see-saw lean one way or the other in your life?

Which side bears more weight for you?

Have you made it too easy?

Have you made it too hard?”

Students came to chapel on a Monday morning in late January and observed a fourteen-foot-long board perfectly balanced on a sawhorse. On one end hung a paper with the letter “H” for “hard.” On the other end hung a paper with the letter “E” for “easy.”

The idea for this chapel originated from several conversations with students over the course of the first semester. These conversations highlighted what appears to be, for various reasons, a growing trend in Christian culture.

TOO EASY

"If someone you just met asked you if you were a Christian, do you know what you would say?"

Joe (not his real name) and I were running out of time. Our forty-minute conversation was about to be interrupted by the bell, ending Joe's school day. He needed to get to work.

Joe talked openly about his questions on faith and life. Joe also spoke of his desire to eventually be a member of a church on his own as an adult. He acknowledged he would only consider marriage to a woman who was a Christian.

Yet during our conversation, it seemed Joe was holding something back. His eyes, alternating between glances at me then the floor, led me to believe he didn't have the confidence to support some of what he was saying.

I asked, "Is there something else about your faith you want to talk about?"

Joe squirmed in his chair, crossed his arms over his chest, and said, "Well, I would like to know what you think about something."

"I'd be happy to talk about whatever you want!" I replied. "What's your question?"

Joe uncrossed his arms, leaned forward, and said, "You probably know I like to have my good times with friends, right?"

I smiled. Joe was indeed a very fun person to be around, but I suspected there was more to this than just his pleasant personality. "I'm sure you do," I said. "Why do you bring it up?" I asked.

Still leaning forward in his chair, Joe continued, "Let's just say I regularly do some things that you would probably not approve of me doing. And believe me when I say I'm not the only one either."

Joe's confession was one I've heard from other students over the years as well. Talking about behaviors is, of course, important but the motive or 'why?' of the behavior is really the heart of the matter.

I studied Joe's expression for a moment. I wondered, "What is it you are trying to tell me?"

I asked Joe, "You said earlier you had a question for me, what is it?"

Joe sat back in his chair, looked thoughtfully out the window, and while still looking outside replied, "I just wanted to know if you think I'm good to go?"

"What?" I quizzically replied. "Good to go with what?"

"You know...the Lord" Joe responded.

Still puzzled, I responded back, "Explain!"

"Ok. Well, I believe in God and Jesus. I know the Bible is true. Like I told you earlier, I want to date and marry a Christian. I want to belong to a church."

Joe grabbed individual fingers on one of his hands as he listed each specific thing.

He continued, "As I see it, I believe in all the right things, so if I like to

party or do some things that maybe I shouldn't, it probably doesn't actually matter too much because of what I believe."

Joe paused, looked thoughtfully at me, and finished his commentary with a one-word question, "Right?"

"Joe," I said, "It's important for you to know God knows your heart infinitely better than me. He is the one you answer to, not me."

Nodding his head, Joe replied, "I get that."

I continued, "Having said that, I wonder if you really have confidence in what you are saying? If you really believed what you are telling me, it would seem you don't need me to validate it for you."

Joe nodded but had an unhappy frown on his face. "Joe, only you can decide what your relationship with Christ is going to look like, but I want you to ask yourself; Are you trying to have it both ways - living spiritually when it works for you and living your way the rest of the time?"

The bell rang and Joe got up to leave. We shook hands and as he walked out, I thought, "Lord, help Joe know his choice for you comes with both joy and sacrifice."

TOO HARD

On a different day, Amy (not her real name) sat with me for her Senior Conference. We also discussed many things related to her time at Unity, her plans for life after high school, and how she had grown as a person over the past four years. However, when the conversation turned to her spiritual life, Amy's smile disappeared.

The question I posed to Amy "How would you describe your relationship with Christ?" seemed to fall on her with a heaviness that brought instant emotion. Tears started to form in her eyes.

Concerned, I asked, "What's wrong Amy? I didn't mean to upset you with my question."

Amy held up her hand, shook her head, and said, "No, you're fine. It's just that I knew you were going to ask me this and I have been struggling with this question for quite a while now."

Amy grabbed a Kleenex, dabbed the corners of her eyes, and continued, "You have no idea how badly I want to say my relationship with Christ is great, but I just don't think I can."

I took a moment to think about Amy's words and what could cause her such distress. Amy's struggle did not seem to come from a lack of belief. She had just admitted she desired a close relationship with Christ.

I asked, "What do you think is causing the separation from the relationship you have and the relationship you desire with Jesus?"

Dabbing a few more tears, Amy responded with an answer over which so many Christians over the ages have struggled, "I just don't feel like I'm good enough."

I nodded in acknowledgment of a real spiritual struggle. Then I said to Amy, "Describe for me what your spiritual life looks like. What spiritual practices are you participating in on a regular basis?"

Amy nodded, knowing what I was asking about. She proceeded to list off several items including Bible reading, daily prayer, service work, church, youth group, and Bible study participation.

When she finished, Amy looked at me with the same dejected expression a student has when they are handed back a test they just failed.

I said, "That is quite a list! Do you enjoy doing those things?"

Nodding in eager agreement, Amy replied, "Yes, I do!"

"Then what seems to be the problem?" I asked.

"It always feels to me like I should be doing more. I feel so guilty if I miss a day of devotions, or if I don't pray as much as I should. When I miss youth group or a Bible study meeting, I always have to fight strong feelings of guilt." Amy paused to collect her thoughts, then continued, "Like I said, I feel like I'm just not good enough and I always think God is disappointed in me."

Amy glanced up, as if looking for God, then said, "You know that phrase you use sometimes to describe some people's mindset about God, 'God forgives me, but I don't think he likes me.' I think that applies to how I think."

Amy looked at me for a moment, then raised her hand toward me, signaling me not to talk. "I know what you are going to say, 'It's about grace, not works.' I know that too. But I'm just telling you what I think about when you ask me about my relationship with Jesus."

I sat back in my chair and thought for a moment. Across from me sat a senior who, by her own admission, sincerely wanted a

relationship with her Lord and Savior but didn't yet know how to gain the trust that would allow her confidence to grow.

"Amy, I understand what you are saying. You should know there are many people, some much older than you who struggle with the same lack of confidence." Amy nodded. I continued, "I think we need to talk more about how you are creating standards in your relationship with God that were never intended to be there. It doesn't need to be this hard."

Amy smiled and said, "I would love to know how to get to a place where it doesn't feel so hard."

After we scheduled another meeting, Amy left the classroom and I thought, "Lord, help her

understand your grace and the freedom it offers her."

Back in our January chapel the seesaw balanced with the "E" and "H" at either end. "Too Easy" on one side, "Too Hard" on the other. In the middle, a new paper was added with the letters "CF", or "Christ Follower" printed on it.

The devil desires to keep all of us on the ends of the board. On one end little is required of me but to just say I believe. Grace is free but also cheap. On the other end is a life full of doubt and a lack of confidence about what Christ has done on my behalf. It causes me to wonder if I could ever do enough to truly be saved.

Jesus calls Unity students (and all of us) to the middle of the board. A place where Christians take great

comfort and draw confidence in being saved by grace through faith, and not because of what we have done but because of what has been done for us. A place where Christians respond to the grace given them by living in joyful obedience to his Word, desiring to live as agents of redemption in God's world.

Let's pray for Joe, Amy, and the many others who live life "on the ends." Pray, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they are drawn toward the Christ Follower life. Lord let it be.

From the front row...

Dan Landstra

UC Director
for Spiritual Life
and Leadership





SPRING HAS POPPED UP AT **revive!**

The first day of SPRING at **revive!** was an eventful one, as it is with every new season that refreshes our shelves. With **195 people waiting in line** at opening, we knew it was going to be a good day! And so it was. A packed house and long lines were no match for lots of volunteer help and a well-staffed checkout. Shoppers were able to fill their carts with the color of the season and go home with smiles on their faces.

By the end of the day, **revive!** had checked out **740 people** at the register, not including all their friends and family with them, and sold over **7,000 items!** All of that added up to **\$25,725** in sales that day! A new record! To God be the glory! We are so grateful for what He is doing in this place!

Come see what all the commotion is about! All the swimwear, shorts, tank tops, t-shirts, sundresses, flip-flops, and summer gear is out! Plus, spring and summer floral arrangements, home décor, furniture, and more! Fill your closet, refresh your home, and brighten your day with a visit to **revive!**



NINETY & NEEDED



When it comes to being a part of **revive!**, retirement really doesn't exist, there's no concept of aging out, and no such thing as, "I'm too old for this." Every person plays an important role in the success of our store, no matter their age or stage of life. There is no better example of that than our very own "nonagenarians": Marian Brookhouse and Crystal Unema. Both over 90 years old, they faithfully come each week to volunteer, accomplishing meaningful and necessary tasks to keep the store running smoothly.

At a vibrant 91 years, **Marian Brookhouse** has been a part of the **revive!** volunteer family since just after the store opened in 2010. She spends her time working in the Housewares and Home Décor department: sorting through the never-ending bins of home goods donations, cleaning them, pricing them, and arranging them for sale on the store shelves. You can find her busy with these tasks almost every Monday.

One of Marian's favorite parts of volunteering is working with all the other volunteers and the great staff. (Everyone here would say Marian is a joy to work with too!) On one very special day, the **revive!** family and some of Marian's own family planned a surprise party at the store for her 90th birthday! What a treat to celebrate this great lady and her years of love and faithful service!

Marian has been married to her husband Bernie for 71 years now! They have 4 children and count it a blessing that they all live in the area. They also have 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, making them one big happy family! One of Marian's favorite things to do is spend time with her family. She also enjoys reading and all kinds of outside activities, including spending a lot of time at the lake. Before volunteering here, Marian also worked part-time for 17 years at Spectrum Health. She began by working in radiology but then moved into the role of patient escort, helping patients get to where they needed to be throughout the hospital. What a blessing she must have been to all those people in their times of difficulty as they walked (or rolled) down those halls with her by their side!

Marian sums up her story with a word of thanks to the Lord for the healthy years He has given her and Bernie. And we certainly join her in thanking God for that! She is a sweet, humble, hard-working servant of the Lord who blesses all who know her. And we are so grateful she spends some of her time with us here at **revive!**





Crystal Unema, turning 91 this March, has been volunteering at **reVive** for 8 years now. (More proof that it's never too late to start something new in life!) She helps with Party

Supplies, Photo Albums, and Housewares & Home Décor items, doing her part to keep the store full and looking nice. She is always pleasantly surprised by how fast items sell after they are put on the shelf. She also enjoys meeting the many customers who come to shop. One of the things Crystal likes most about being part of the volunteer family is how friendly everyone is that she works with, including the care and patience she feels from the store managers. She also enjoys being part of something that is giving back to the Unity Christian High School community. Another highlight for Crystal would be celebrating her 90th birthday with a surprise party at the store, complete with everyone joining in the singing of "Happy Birthday" and her favorite carrot cake!

Crystal's other interests include traveling, reading, and doing needlepoint. She also enjoys attending Bible study at her church. And on top of that, she makes sure to walk 4,000 steps every day - surely one of the reasons she has been blessed with a healthy and active life!

In her younger years, Crystal attended Calvin (College) University for 2 years before marrying her husband Norman and then having 3 children: Rodney, Barry, and Sheli. In the middle of marriage and raising her children, she decided to go back to college. This was difficult, but with her husband's support, she graduated with her teaching degree. She went on to teach kindergarten and first grade for 30 years at Hudsonville Christian School. What a blessing to that school and the many generations who were part of her class!

Aside from being a wife, mother, and teacher, Crystal also had the opportunity to be the treasurer for Senator Bill VanRegenmorter's campaign for the Michigan Senate in 1992. Then in 1993, she became Hudsonville's first woman City Commissioner! In that role, she served on many city boards and arranged the Memorial

Day Service every year. She has also been a member of the Calvin College Alumni Association Board and the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission. Among her many experiences, one that stands out to her is the opportunity to visit Wolong Natural Reserve in the Sichuan Province of China, where she was able to pet a panda. She also taught English to adults for a summer on Hainan Island, China, with the help of her husband. What a life full of experiences!

We are so grateful Crystal includes **reVive** in her life too! She shares that whether working in the classroom or **reVive**, she gives thanks to God for the opportunity to serve others in His name. She is a testimony of using the talents God gives you for as long as He gives you time on this earth!



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE 90 TO BE NEEDED!

reVive could use you now! We could use more help in our toy department, sorting and pricing incoming toys to go out for sale, as well as help in our technology department, testing and pricing items to sell. There's also room in the areas of handling lawn and garden items and preparing Christmas items for the next season. And of course, there's room for you in any other area you might be interested in too!

If you'd like to put your gifts to work with a great group of people for a really good cause, try volunteering at **reVive**! Stop by to ask any questions, take a tour, pick up some information, and see what it is all about. Or check out our website (www.reviveresale.org), Facebook, and Instagram pages. The environment is friendly, the schedule is very flexible, and the days are full of fun!

Address

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revive@unitychristian.org

Shopping Hours

M, W, F: 10 am - 5 pm
T, Th: 10 am - 7 pm
Sat: 10 am - 3 pm

Donation Hours

M-F: 10 am - 4 pm
Sat: 10 am - 12 pm





Unity Christian High School

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www.unitychristian.org



“developing followers of Christ to be leaders”