

Unity Christian High School
Foster Faith • Increase Knowledge • Develop Skills

UC
Tidings
SPRING 2026



IN THIS ISSUE

Winter Play
Cheaper By The Dozen

Page 4

Called to Christian Education
Sharon Veltema

Page 8



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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Chapel, Culture, Community –
The Unity Christian Student

Mr. Jerry DeGroot
-PAGE 1

Heart to Heart
Dan Landstra
-PAGE 2

Winter Play - Cheaper By The Dozen
-PAGE 4

Development Update
-PAGE 6

Winter Sports Report
-PAGE 7

Called to Christian Education
Sharon Veltema
-PAGE 8

10 Years @ 48th
-PAGE 10

Alumni Announcements
-PAGE 12

Giving Corner
-PAGE 15

1973 Girls Basketball State
Championship Announcement
-PAGE 15

reVivE! News
-PAGE 16

Association Meeting Information
-PAGE 18

Upcoming Events
-PAGE 21

2025-26 Unity Christian Trustees

- Jon Lanning**
President - 2027
- Ryan Kooiman**
Vice President - 2027
- John Dice**
Treasurer - 2026
- Teresa Kooyer**
Secretary - 2026
- Ed DeYoung**
Vice-Gerent - 2028
- Betsy VanderPloeg**
Member-At-Large - 2028

Administration

- | | |
|--|--|
| Jerry DeGroot
Principal/CEO | Bill Corner
Safety Director |
| Jeff Engbers
Athletic Director | Julie Essebaggers
Admissions & Middle School
Coordinator, Counselor |
| Dan Landstra
Director for Spiritual Life
and Leadership | Angie Huttinga
Assistant Director of Instruction |
| Bill Postma
Director of Instruction | Doug VanderPloeg
Director of Transportation / Facilities |
| Spencer Smith
Dean of Students / Student Life | Troy Billin
Director of Development |



Chapel, Culture, Community – The Unity Christian student Jerry DeGroot, *Principal/CEO*

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.

I recently had the privilege of sitting in chapel, watching something unfold that captured the heart of Christian education. A few young men sat together to share their spiritual journeys in full vulnerability and with great courage. They spoke about the questions they had in their own faith lives and where their faith became more personal and real. What stood out was that these young men were on a journey together – in community. They had decided to start a Bible study together – not because an adult told them to, not because it was required, but because they wanted to hold one another accountable in their walk with Christ.

As they spoke, you could sense the impact this was having on other students as well. These students were modeling what it looks like to pursue Christ intentionally, together. It was a reminder that the Christian student community is not simply shaped by programs or academics – it is shaped by students choosing to seek God alongside one another.

The moment in chapel serves as a powerful example of what can happen when worship, learning, and culture align within the Christian school.

Chapel serves as the spiritual heartbeat at Unity. When students gather in worship, prayer, and teaching, they are reminded that they belong to something bigger than themselves. Singing together, hearing testimonies, and reflecting on God's Word create a shared spiritual language that unifies the student body.

Chapel also provides a space where students can wrestle with real-life questions through the lens of faith, scripture, identity, purpose, suffering, relationships, and decision-making. Christians were never intended to be in isolation, and chapel reinforces the idea that spiritual growth happens together.

The group that shared their faith journey and decision to begin a Bible study together is not in isolation, as this practice is increasingly common among students. Several groups of students at Unity have asked for specific space where a group of friends, early in the morning before school begins, can meet to open the Word, study the Word, and pray together - seeking God and asking Him to be part of their lives, and encouraging each other in their own faith journey.

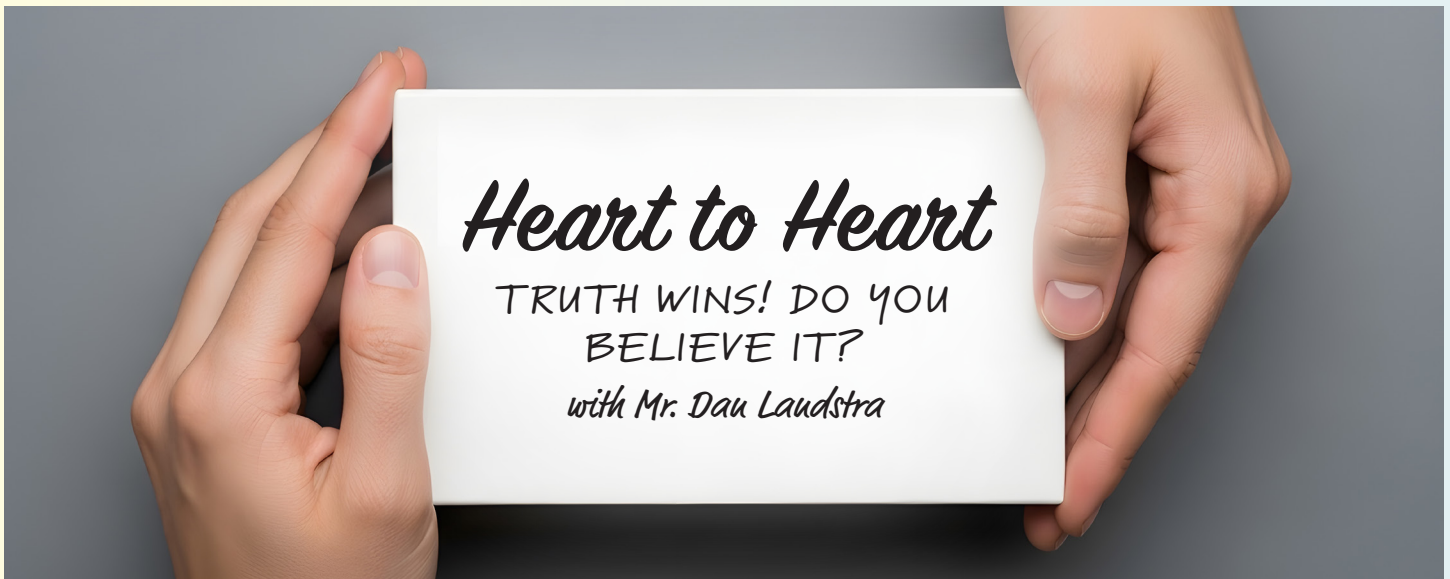
In a healthy Christian high school culture, students begin to see that following Christ affects how they speak, how they treat others, how they compete, how they handle disappointment, and how they use their influence. Over time, students begin to internalize that faith is not something they turn on during chapel, it is something that shapes their identity everywhere.

Perhaps the most important outcome is that students graduate understanding that faith is not an event; it is a way of life. Chapel teaches them to think deeply and worship joyfully. Classes teach them to think Christianly. School culture teaches them to live Christianly. Community teaches them to love others.

Together, these experiences prepare young people to enter the broader world with a faith rooted, thoughtful, and active. A Christian school community, shaped by worship, learning, culture, and daily lived behaviors, becomes a formative environment where students are equipped to influence the world around them with the character of Christ.

And that may be the greatest impact of Christian education; not only educated minds but transformed lives that shape culture wherever God calls them.

In Christ,
Jerry DeGroot



A foundational memory...

At the end of my seventh-grade year of school, our family took a trip to Florida. Part of that vacation included a visit to the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral. Like some of you reading this, I am old enough to remember watching on TV the launch of one of the Apollo rockets to the moon. By the 1980's, when we made the trip to Florida, NASA's attention had shifted to the Space Shuttle program. I was enthralled by all of it and was sure I would become an astronaut!

Turns out I don't have the skill set for a large portion of what it takes to become an astronaut. But before my dreams were completely dashed by the reality that math and I would never be great friends, I checked out as much as I could about what I would need to do to secure a seat on the Space Shuttle.

An important part of the training program, I learned, was learning what zero gravity feels like and being able to function in a weightless environment. For that, NASA had a large plane they referred to as the "vomit comet". By flying in steep rollercoaster-like arcs, passengers experienced twenty to thirty seconds of weightlessness.

The downside of this training regimen was the violent motion sickness (thus the name of the plane) experienced by some of the passengers.

It was a valuable training exercise and the only way someone living in earth's atmosphere could defy gravity for that length of time. I have often wondered what it must have felt like as a passenger floating around for thirty seconds before the "ride" comes to an abrupt, and often unpleasant, conclusion.

A foundational memory and the interest in aerospace that followed came full circle in recent conversation with a student after a senior Bible class. It reminded me, in a different sort of way, of what I learned about the vomit comet.

"I don't believe that."

Blake (not his real name) stayed after the bell to discuss an issue from the discussion in that day's class with which he disagreed.

I replied, *"Explain for me what part of the conversation you're struggling to accept."*

Blake hesitated for a moment, searching for the right words. *"I just don't think you can draw a line between 'right' and 'wrong' on a top-*

ic that is more complex than most."

Listening to Blake explain his thoughts, I agreed our conversation deserved careful consideration, but I believed Blake was complicating the issue to avoid directly answering the central question. *"I understand,"* I responded. *"But we're not really talking about complicated situations. And, although it will certainly be part of the larger conversation surrounding this topic, we're not yet talking about grace and forgiveness. We're just trying to come up with a definitive answer to the question 'Does the Bible allow for a sexual relationship outside of marriage?'"*

Blake was frustrated. He shook his head, non-verbally fighting the question and the answer. *"It's just not as easy as you make it seem."*

"Blake," I replied, *"I completely agree with you that the conversation and the issue is not easy! Everything around the issue of sex outside of marriage seems complicated in our world."*

Blake nodded in agreement.

"But," I continued, *"What we know for sure is the Bible gives a clear directive for Christians. We looked up a lot of passages where there is no ambiguity about God's design for people regarding sex and marriage."*

Blake searched for words. Students from the next class started entering the room.

“Blake, I understand from a cultural viewpoint it is difficult to give a direct answer. And, like I said, we need to discuss how best to deal with all the challenges of growing up in a highly sexualized culture. The fact that there are so many challenges is the very reason we need a starting point to guide us in how best to navigate those challenges.”

I waited a moment for Blake to process what I was saying. He nodded slightly, perhaps reluctantly. I concluded, *“That’s why we started with Scripture. That is our starting point for the rest of the discussion.”*

Frustration covered Blake’s face and filled his eyes.

He picked up his backpack to leave and said, *“Well, I still don’t agree. I don’t think those verses mean the same thing today.”*

With that, Blake picked up his backpack and said, *“See you tomorrow, Mr. Landstra.”*

You may wonder, *“How can a student disagree with the direct words of the Bible?”* It may frustrate you to know there are young people who challenge ancient truths and long-accepted practices of the Christian faith.

These questions and concerns are legitimate. Christians have always struggled with temptation leading to sin; however, conversations in this current cultural moment seem different. In the past, most believers engaging in sinful behavior still acknowledged violations of moral law. Today, acknowledgement of any moral standard pertaining to personal choice is far less common.

Our students grow up in a culture where, as John Stonestreet from

the Colson Center for Christian Worldview states, *“what was once unthinkable has become unquestionable.”* The cultural shift away from a belief in absolute truth and toward the acceptance of moral relativism that began in the adult world has now crept, little by little, over many decades, into the lives of young people.

The Barna Research Center reported in a recent study that among American teens, 6% believe in absolute moral truth, while 83% say moral truth depends on circumstances. These are numbers Christians should find very troubling.

In Senior Bible we often use the phrase, *“Truth Wins!”* It’s a way of acknowledging that God’s will and purpose for all things will ultimately prevail. To deny this reality is to be deceived.

In many parts of culture, people are deceiving themselves, believing their worldview and way of living is better than a Biblical worldview and obedience to God’s law.

I often think of the vomit comet airplane when considering the deception of moral relativism. The law of gravity does not require our consent to be true or real. It just is. However, for a brief period of time, using precise flying maneuvers, the law of gravity can feel like an illusion on the plane. Passengers float effortlessly, for a few seconds, as weightlessness feels like the new normal.

But truth wins! The illusion of weightlessness is always replaced with the reality of gravity. Every. Single. Time!

And in like manner, God’s Word does not require our permission to be the Truth. It just is. Living in a world of increasing moral relativism may deceive people into believing their way is best, but

like the passengers on the plane, what they believe is good turns out to be only an illusion.

One need not look far in secular culture to see the outcomes of living to please oneself instead of pursuing truth. Sadly, for nations, communities, families, and individuals, the results of practicing a secular worldview of moral relativism are tragic not only for adults, but increasingly for young people.

In a passage which seems increasingly relevant, the apostle Paul warned Timothy to be wary of straying from the truth. He wrote, *“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”*

Conversations we have with students like Blake are a wonderful opportunity to challenge them to consider why Truth matters. And even when students leave a conversation frustrated with the answer, it opens a door for them to deeply consider their own beliefs and on what those beliefs are found.

Blake and I had several more conversations about the Bible. Faith is a process and over time my prayer for Blake is he understands that God’s Word is not meant to be restrictive, but to give those who follow the Lord ultimate freedom. As Jesus told his disciples, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

Thank you, Lord, that Truth wins!

From the front row....

*Unity Director for Spiritual Life,
Dan Landstra*

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Adapted by Christopher Sergel. From the book by Frank B. Gilbreth Jr. and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey

Unity was proud to present *Cheaper By The Dozen* as the 2026 Winter Play! The entire cast and crew worked diligently for 8 weeks to rehearse, memorize, and perfect this show. *Cheaper By The Dozen* is a heartwarming family comedy that follows the large but efficient Gilbreth family. Anne, the oldest Gilbreth daughter, thinks her father, one of the great pioneers of industrial efficiency, makes their family seem ridiculous to everyone at school – especially to the boys. Her father’s unorthodox – albeit extremely effective – methods mean the family charts each household task, uses a rug as an imaginary bathtub to demonstrate how to take a truly efficient bath, and appoints a utilities officer to levy fines on electricity wasters. While these situations are often uproarious, there’s a serious reason behind the madness. Mr. Gilbreth has a heart condition that he’s been keeping a secret. Through Anne and Mr. Gilbreth’s disagreements, *Cheaper By The Dozen* explores growing up, the importance of family, and preparing for the future.





EXPANDING OUR MISSION

Leaving Your Legacy at Unity

We give thanks to God for the many individuals and families who recognize the value of a Christ-centered high school – one that views every subject and every experience through the truth of Scripture. So many have embraced this mission and shown their commitment through generous financial support, helping to ensure that Unity thrives not only in the year ahead, but for generations to come.

We also believe there are others who have not yet taken the opportunity to participate in this important work. The faithful generosity shown to Unity Christian High School thus far has given our Board of Trustees the confidence to proceed with the final interior finishes and bring the “Expanding Our Mission” project to completion, ready for students in the fall of the 2026/2027 school year. **With just under \$2 million remaining to be raised,** we are prayerfully working toward full funding and ultimately a debt-free future. With your continued partnership, we are confident this goal is within reach.

Reaching this milestone positions us well for the growth we anticipate from our Christian school partners. We expect graduating classes of 170–190 students to be followed by incoming freshman classes of 210–250. With the steadfast support of our community, we will be ready to welcome them.

We cannot do it without you!


We invite you to join us in this mission by committing to help secure a debt-free future. Simply use the QR code below to make your pledge and help us cross the finish line debt-free. Through the manageable gifts of many, we can reach completion. Fifty years from now, nearly 10,000 additional graduates will have walked the halls of Unity, having been encouraged and taught the importance of being grounded in the truth of God’s Word. What a lasting blessing and legacy for our community of faith.

Thank you for your generosity – and thanks be to God.


Jon Lanning



Ryan Kooiman


John Dice


Teresa Kooyer

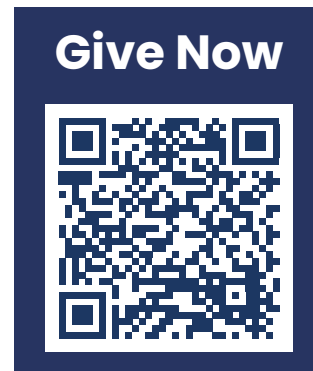

Ed DeYoung


Betsy VanderPloeg


Jerry DeGroot


Troy Billin

# of participants	Giving Plan		3 yr total	Total
300	\$100/yr for 3 years	or	\$300.00	\$90,000.00
200	\$250/yr for 3 years	or	\$750.00	\$150,000.00
100	\$500/yr for 3 years	or	\$1,500.00	\$150,000.00
100	\$1000/yr for 3 years	or	\$3,000.00	\$300,000.00
100	\$1500/yr for 3 years	or	\$4,500.00	\$450,000.00
100	\$2500/yr for 3 years	or	\$7,500.00	\$750,000.00
				<u>\$1,890,000.00</u>



WINTER SPORTS REPORT



Basketball - Girls

Freshman: 17-2

JV: 18-2

Varsity: 12-9

Varsity girls' basketball placed 4th in the OK Black Conference.



Basketball - Boys

Freshman: 18-3

JV: 17-5

Varsity: 19-3

Congratulations to the varsity boys' basketball team on their 1st place finish in the OK Black Conference!



Bowling - Girls

15-2

Congratulations to the girls' bowling team on their 1st place finish in the OK Gold Conference! They finished in 2nd place at Team Regionals and qualified for the State Tournament.



Bowling - Boys

3-15

Boys' bowling finished 5th in the OK Gold Conference and finished 7th at Regionals.



Swim – Boys (Co-op Team)

5-4 in dual meets in the season. The team participated in the Conference meet on February 27 and 28. Congratulations to John De Waal Malefyt, who will swim in the D1 State Meet on March 13-14!



Hockey (Co-op Team with Hudsonville)

12-16



Boys Wrestling

Finished 5th in the OK Black Conference with a Dual Record of 1-4. Congratulations to Caden Leatherman who qualified for Regionals with a 3rd place finish at Districts!

Girls Wrestling

Congratulations to the girls' wrestling team for another strong season after placing 1st at the West Catholic Dunneback Tournament and placing 2nd at multiple other tournaments throughout their season.

Called to Christian Education

Sharon Veltema: 23 Years Serving at Unity



I grew up in West Sayville, a small town on Long Island in New York, where I attended West Sayville Christian School through the 8th grade. After that, I went to the local public high school because there was no Christian high school where I grew up. After high school, I followed all six of my older sisters to Calvin College. I came from a family of educators. My father taught English at the high school I attended, and 4 of my 6 sisters were also teachers. Yet, I had no intention of getting a teaching degree when I went to college. After graduating with a degree in English and marrying my husband Larry, who happens to be a Unity Christian graduate, I worked in an office for a number of years.

It wasn't until my youngest son was in preschool that I decided to make a career change. Through a lot of prayer and

seeking God's will, I made the decision to go back to college to get my teaching degree. I found a part-time job, and I took most of my classes at night. (Online classes were not a thing yet.) After completing my student teaching with a certification in English and Math, I found a job teaching math at a middle school in Wyoming, MI.

During my first year of teaching, on the one-year anniversary of 9/11, all schools observed a moment of silence at the time that the first plane struck the World Trade Center. I remember the principal came on the intercom, instructing us to begin a minute of silence. At the end of that minute, the principal told us all to resume class. I remember feeling so empty and sad that there was so much I couldn't share with my students. I couldn't tell them about the family in my home church in West Sayville whose husband and dad died on that day. I couldn't share Psalm 91 with my students – the psalm that man's 10-year-old son read at his dad's funeral. I couldn't pray with my students or tell them about the fact that no matter what happens in our broken world, God has defeated sin and Satan, and that God is still in control of all things.

As we entered the Christmas season later that year, we had a general assembly for the whole school and sang songs such as "Jingle Bells" and "Santa Claus

Is Coming to Town." When I walked my students back to class, I again experienced that empty feeling. There was so much missing from a Christmas celebration that did not celebrate Christ. Throughout that year, there were many other times that I wished I could pray with my students or with their parents.

In December, at a Unity basketball game, I went up to Jack Postma and asked him if there were any job openings for the following year. He told me there was a position becoming available entitled "Teacher for Spiritual Growth." The position primarily involved planning chapel and working to involve students in chapel. He told me to come into school during Christmas break and talk to him about the position. I remember thinking, "I'm a math teacher. What could I possibly bring to this job?" But a couple of months later, after going through the interview process, I was hired for the job. I remember interviewing before the school board, and one member asked me, "Why don't you feel God calling you to stay working where you are right now?" I paused for a while and then said, "Of all the questions you've asked me, that is the hardest one to answer. I don't know where God is calling me to be. I believe that we need good, Christian, committed teachers in our public schools. But I feel like I am

denying a huge part of myself when I can't share my faith freely with my students. However, I also realize that God has a plan for me, wherever that might be." Later that night, Jack Postma called me to offer me the job.

A large part of my job is teaching Algebra. Since elementary school, math has always been my favorite subject. The beauty of teaching in a Christian school is that every subject, including math, can be taught in a way that reflects God's design. Mathematics helps us see the order and beauty of God's creation. I have had many students who struggle with math, but I remember one in particular. One day this student said to me, "If God is good, why did He create something as awful as math?" I had to smile, and I often recalled his comment as I helped him through a subject that frustrated him. Seeing God's handiwork in every subject area is a challenge *and* a joy for teachers in a Christian school.

23 years later, the greatest blessing of working at Unity is being in a community of people who love the Lord and are working for the kingdom. I have the best colleagues that anyone could ever ask for. I'm truly going to miss seeing them and interacting with them. I will miss Monday morning prayers for our school and our community. I will miss sharing stories of faith and God's

blessings with my colleagues. Even as the staff has changed over the years, Unity continues to be filled with committed and caring teachers and staff.

During my first few years at Unity, Jack Postma would stop in my office every day. We discussed what his goal was for chapel, books, and theology. He would always say, "We want to establish a culture of worship in our school." Eight years ago, Dan Landstra's role at Unity changed as he took the

"23 years later, the greatest blessing of working at Unity is being in a community of people who love the Lord and are working for the kingdom."

position of Director of Spiritual Life and Leadership. This has been a tremendous blessing for me as we share the task of planning chapel. This change came at a time when I was feeling burned out with chapel planning. God knew exactly what I needed at that time.

At the end of 23 years, I will have coordinated close to 3,000 chapels. (2,950 to be exact – snow days so far are factored in). And while there is a cer-

tain amount of stress in coordinating approximately 130 chapels a year, there is also joy that comes from working with students who are so incredibly talented and who are very willing to use their gifts and talents to worship God. One of my favorite things is putting together special chapels during Advent and Holy Week. It's a lot of work, but it is incredibly rewarding. I love how our students are always so excited to be involved in chapel – whether by speaking, singing with a praise team, playing an instrument, or singing a solo.

When asked, "Who has had an impact on your 23 years at Unity?" I could list many people – certainly my colleagues. I would also say that the students have had a big impact on my life. I love seeing how students mature and grow spiritually over their four years at Unity. I am extremely grateful to have had the privilege of being a part of their lives.

And now, I find my time at Unity coming to a close.

It's a bittersweet feeling. Although I look forward to the next chapter in my life, I know that it will be very difficult to leave this school and this community of people who are more than colleagues, parents, and students. They are my brothers and sisters in Christ. And for that, I will always be grateful.

Written By: Sharon Veltema

10 YEARS @ 48th



As the 10th academic year at Unity's 48th Street campus begins to wind down, we asked two current seniors to reflect on their four years at Unity. We are so proud of how they have grown and are excited to see what God has in store for them next!

Adam Breuker *Class of 2026*



When I first walked through the halls of Unity Christian High School, I thought I was already living a Christian life. I went to a Christian school since kindergarten. Every person I knew was Christian,

so the ideals surrounded me. How could I not be a Christian, right? Well, I wasn't. Before high school, I had never truly read my Bible and never developed any internal thought or relationship with my Creator. I only ever participated with Christianity in a group setting at school or at church on Sundays.

However, things changed as I progressed through my first few years of high school. I learned from chapel, devotions, and teachers that faith needs to be personal in order to grow. I personally began habits of praying and reading my Bible. I loved reading through the gospels because that is where I learned how Jesus lived, acted, and talked. I learned how my actions and characteristics should reflect who Jesus was as

a prophet, teacher, and man in society. One thing I remembered was taking choir my freshman year with Mrs. Foreman. Every Friday, she had a devotion that was relevant and made me reflect deeply. There were countless other teachers who made a positive impact on my walk with God. I also remember Mr. Bosma's devotions having similar depth and quality faith lessons. Throughout Unity, I have always looked forward to Thursday chapels for singing and worshipping.

In my senior year, our spiritual theme was "Faithfully Different." Before we even jumped into what this means and how to live it out, I always thought of Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed by the pattern of this world, but be transformed

by the renewing of your mind.” Throughout this year, I have learned about the uphill battle surrounding living a faithfully different life. In my days today, it seems that everything is fighting against me: politics, college decisions, finances, friends, relationships. It’s so easy to find the more common, sinful side of these subjects. However, being faithfully different means that we live obedient to God, we follow God’s commands for our life, even if that means stepping out of our comfort zone. Living faithfully different is more than just one and done; it is a constant lifestyle of obedience to God.

Katelynn Boyd *Class of 2026*



As an incoming freshman, Unity Christian was the last place I wanted to be. I’d gone to Allendale Public from first grade through eighth grade, and I had every intention of graduating from there with all of my friends. However, a few months into my eighth-grade year, my parents told me that I would be attending Unity

Christian High School in the coming fall. I was so angry, and I did everything in my power to change their minds. Obviously, my efforts fell short. I even remember having a meeting with Mr. DeGroot before starting my freshman year, and when he asked me why I wanted to come to Unity, I straight-up told him I didn’t want to and that my parents were forcing me to. He’d chuckled at that. Anyways, to say that I came into Unity Christian with a bit of resentment in my heart would be an understatement. I had every intention of just hunkering down and surviving until graduation. I didn’t want anything to do with this school or the people in it, so it’s crazy to think that as graduation creeps up, I’m actually going to miss this place.

My time at Unity has taught me many lessons, but more than anything, it’s shown me just how truly perfect God’s plan is. If life had gone according to my plans, I would be a completely different person, and I’m not sure I would even call myself a Christian. Thankfully, God had other plans for my life. The friends I’ve made, relationships I’ve built, and teachers and coaches I’ve had at Unity have all shaped me into the follower of Christ that I am today. Looking back, I can see God’s hand clearly at work in my life and the goodness in His plans for me. God placed me at Unity Christian because He knew I needed to be here long before I knew I needed this place. I came into Unity with a bitter heart and a practically non-existent faith

life, but I will be leaving with a heart full of gratitude and faith stronger than ever before.

Over the past couple of years, I’ve had the interesting experience of watching Unity build and expand. While having boards on some of my classroom windows was a bit odd and having construction workers hammer on walls when I’m taking a test is pretty annoying, I’m also incredibly thankful for this ongoing construction. It’s really comforting to see so much expansion here at Unity, where everything we do is founded in Christ. The Christ-centered education I’ve received during my time at Unity has, without a doubt, been the most shaping and rewarding experience. My whole life has changed for the better because of the faith-based environment I’ve been immersed in over the past four years. It is thanks to the teachers, coaches, and students here that I’ve not only learned who God is, but I’ve come to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I cannot stress enough just how important I believe a Christian education is, especially during one’s high school years. Watching Unity grow fills me with reassurance and gratitude, knowing that so many students to come will receive the same faith-based education that made me the confident Christian I am today. As I go off to college this fall, I am beyond grateful for the formative four years I’ve spent at Unity, and I cannot wait to see how God will use my life and my story to further His kingdom.

ALUMNI ANNOUNCEMENTS

Births



Kim (Smith '07) and Greg Parlmer's daughter, Livia Mae Parlmer, was born on January 9, 2025 at just 24 weeks gestation. Livia weighed 1lb 11oz and spent 4 months in the NICU. She is now a happy and healthy one-year-old!



Amber (DeGraaf '17) and Parker White celebrated the birth of their daughter, Ruby Mae White, on October 5, 2025.



Lance ('13) and Karie DeYoung are happy to announce the birth of their fourth child, Rowin DeYoung, on October 6, 2025.



Rylee (Bond '20) and Josh ('19) VandenHeuvel's daughter, Ivory Sage, was born on January 8, 2026, weighing 8lb 3oz and measuring 21.5 inches long.



Rachael (Hoekwater '14) and David Plantinga welcomed son, William Paul Plantinga, into the world on November 18, 2025.



Luke ('15) and HarLee Dykstra welcomed daughter, Rylee Sue Dykstra, into the world on October 31, 2025.



David ('09) and Charlotte Minnema are happy to announce the birth of their daughter, Eloise Gayle.



Heath ('15) and Kaylee (Dykstra '15) Brower have been blessed with three beautiful girls: Koraley (4), Ellery (1), and Selah born on January 30, 2026.

ALUMNI ANNOUNCEMENTS

Family



Kyle Warren ('08) and Samantha Smith welcomed son, Grayson Matthew Warren, into the world on July 28, 2025, and are happy to announce they were joined in marriage on March 7, 2026.



Jordan Zomerlei's ('13) work took him out of state after graduating from GVSU. He married his wife, Jordan, in 2019 and walked alongside her through a successful battle with cancer in 2020. The couple moved back to Hudsonville in 2021 and are happy to share that their family has grown with the addition of their son and a daughter who is due very soon.



Dawson ('18) and Aubrey Dekleine were married in September of 2021 and moved into their new home in Hudsonville. They are very excited to start a family and are happy to announce that they are expecting a baby boy in May of this year. Dawson and Aubrey both volunteer in their church's high school program and are very passionate about and fulfilled by helping the next generation foster their faith.



Since graduating from Unity, Sydney (Jeurink '19) Sanders is happy to announce she married Dakota Sanders in 2023 and gave birth to her first child, Carly Jean Sanders, on October 2, 2024.

ALUMNI ANNOUNCEMENTS

Weddings



Regan (Mulder '21) and Jackson Welch were married on February 28, 2025.



Holly (Hoolsema '17) and Zachary Baker were joined in matrimony on August 2, 2025.



Bethany (Balcer '15) and Christian ('16) Bos were married on January 3, 2026.

If you would like to submit an alumni wedding, birth, career, or mission update, scan the QR code to the right!



1973 Girls Basketball State Champions

Come join us to celebrate the 1973 Unity Christian Girls' first Basketball State Championship Team on December 11, 2026. We are reaching out to all players, managers, scorekeepers, and spectators from that incredible season.

After more than 50 years, we are recognizing this team for its accomplishments. The MHSAA called them "The Legends of the Game". If you have not received an email regarding this celebration, please contact Marcia Visser at mbv5713@gmail.com.

Looking forward to seeing everyone!

Leave a Legacy: Planned Giving and Your Estate

Planned giving is a powerful way to support Unity Christian High School while also managing your estate in a tax-efficient manner. By incorporating charitable giving into your estate plan, you can leave a lasting impact while potentially reducing estate and future income tax for your heirs. With the right plan in place, gifts from your estate can have a lasting impact.

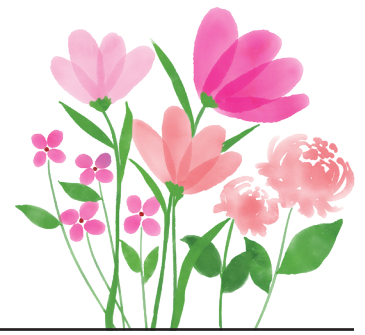
Examples of Giving from an Estate:

Charity as a beneficiary on a retirement account (IRA, 401k, etc.). Since these accounts are subject to income tax when inherited by non-spouse beneficiaries, leaving all or a portion to charity can maximize your philanthropic impact while avoiding tax burdens for your loved ones.

Charity as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Similarly, life insurance policies can be used to fulfill your desire to give. A charity can be included as one of or the sole beneficiary on a life insurance policy.

Including a charity in your will or trust. Specifying a charity in your will or trust potentially reduces estate tax and income tax liabilities and can be a powerful tool to support the work of Unity Christian High School.

One of these options, or a combination of them, allows you to make a contribution to Unity without impacting your current financial situation. No matter which approach you choose, planned giving ensures that your values live on and that the causes you care about continue to thrive.



SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

Shop **revive!** for all your new season needs! We've got shorts, swimwear, flip flops, and tons of spring clothing and footwear. Not to mention spring purses, bags, jewelry, sunhats, and all the accessories to suit the season. Then shop the fresh home décor, including bright pillows, spring florals, wreaths, wall art, and so much more to brighten your home!

STUFF

Ever think about all the stuff that fills your home, your car, your purse, your life? Have trouble finding the bottom of a drawer in your home? Can't remember the last time you could vacuum an entire room without going around piles?

Perhaps you've seen something like the following posted on Facebook and wondered if that could really be true. No matter what statistics you're looking at, the truth is we have a lot of stuff. And that's not always a good thing.



10 Shocking Statistics about your Stuff!

- We use only 20% of our clothing – the rest just sits in our closet.
- The average home has 300,000 items in it – about 80% of them are rarely used.
- We spend \$1.2 trillion annually on non-essential items – stuff we really don't need.
- Toys have increased by 500% in 50 years – yet kids play with only a handful.
- 9% of plastic waste is recycled – the rest ends up in landfills or oceans.
- Storage units in the U.S. could hold every person in the entire country (maybe even the whole world) – and they're still growing.
- We throw away 81 pounds of clothing per person each year – the hidden cost of "fast" fashion.
- Electronic waste is growing 3 times faster than any other waste – old gadgets pile up fast.
- 25% of people with 2-car garages can't park in them – too much clutter.
- Decluttering reduces stress – too much stuff overwhelms the brain.

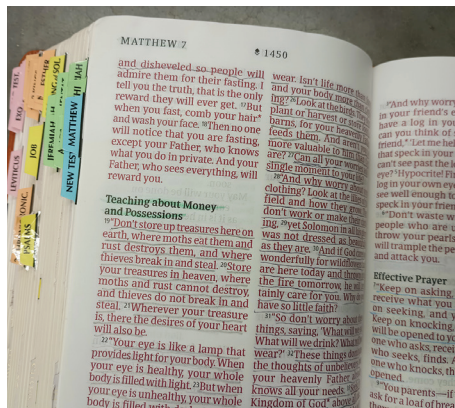
So leave your surplus (and your stress!) at revive's Donation Door this spring! We can help with your clutter! We also reduce waste by finding other ministries and organizations that can use what we can't sell. And we recycle as much as we can, including clothing, shoes, linens, metals, and electronics!



And then shop smarter! Only buy what you need – and buy it at thrift store prices at revive! You'll spend a fraction and give new life to someone else's surplus!

And finally consider what God has to say about "stuff".

Matthew 6:19-21 reads: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for



yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

None of this earthly "stuff" we accumulate will last, none of it can really be counted on to get us through. Even our very favorite possessions have a limit to the joy they can bring. All of it will let us down, wear out, decrease in value, and in the end, not be enough. Which means these things can't really be called true treasure. But if God is our treasure, we finally have something worth keeping. Something that will last, even into eternity. Let's set our hearts on Jesus, the only real treasure, the only thing worth keeping.

Timing is Everything

Sometimes it's just about timing, especially when it's God's timing. It was another busy Friday at revive and a volunteer and her husband were dropping off several items after the passing of his father. As they pulled their trailer to the front of the store to more easily unload a power lift chair, an elderly couple shopping the store saw it coming in. They shared that the wife, Evie, already had a lift chair, but they could use one for her husband, Tom. An extension cord was found, and Tom was eager to give this chair a try. Decker in his cowboy hat, Tom slowly pivoted himself to sit down, moving at his own steady but not speedy pace. Other shoppers around them seemed to hold their breath as he made his way into the seat. To everyone's delight it fit him just right! He and Evie were so happy to have found it.

They later shared that they are in their upper 80s and have traveled the country for many years together until recent health issues have slowed them down. They have been shopping revive for many years and were happy to be supporting our Christian schools with this purchase. And we were so happy it met their need at just the right time. The volunteers making the donation were also blessed to see it going to help someone else so quickly. Sometimes you do have to wait for God to provide, but sometimes He drops it right in your lap! At revive, we've learned it's a joy to be part of the blessing, no matter when it comes.



Address
3675 Baldwin St.
Hudsonville, MI 49426
616-662-3375
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
Annual Association Meeting
Wednesday, April 15, 2026
6:30pm, Unity Christian High School

YOU ARE INVITED!

An 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 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 School;
- 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.

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. Those meeting the requirements as a member of the Association are asked to affirm new or returning Trustees, along with the tuition and annual budget as presented and approved by the Trustees.

Annual Association Meeting
Wednesday, April 15, 2026
6:30pm, Unity Christian High School

AGENDA

1. **Welcome – Opening Devotions**
Jon Lanning, President
2. **Introduction of Trustee Members and Trustee Nominees**
Jon Lanning
3. **Affirming Trustees**
 - a. *The Trustees recommend to the Association that its slate for Unity Trustee extensions and nominations be affirmed.*

Upon receiving affirmation, the Unity Trustee recommended for an extension will have their Trustee membership extended for three years.

Upon receiving affirmation, the Unity Trustee nominated will begin their three-year membership.
 - b. **Affirm or not affirm three-year extension for *Teresa Kooyer***
 - c. **Affirm or not affirm nominee to be a Unity Trustee for *Michael Brinks***
4. **Affirm 2026-2027 Tuition and Budget as approved by Trustees.**
5. **Announce Trustee three-year extension result.**
6. **Announce new Trustee result.**
7. **Recognize retiring Trustee John Dice.**
8. **Adjourn and close with prayer – Ed DeYoung, 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.

TRUSTEE NOMINEE BIO



Michael Brinks

What Christian education means to our family:

A Christian education is more than academics – it is a gift that shapes hearts as well as minds. While it has not always been easy to provide, the joy of seeing teachers and staff care deeply about not only our children’s learning but their spiritual growth has been immeasurable. My wife and I both experienced the blessings of a Christian education, and early on, we knew we wanted our children to share that same foundation. Watching them grow in faith, character, and knowledge under the guidance of a community that values both education and spiritual development has been one of the greatest blessings of our lives.

- Michael and Laura are members of Ridgewood CRC where Michael has served as an Administrative Deacon, Administrative Elder, and Council Chair.
- They have four children: Jae’l (2017 grad); Aliyah (married to Austin Schuiteman; both are 2020 grads); Jade (2022 grad); and Jaxon (Unity senior)
- Michael recently retired from Gentex



Teresa Kooyer

What Christian education means to our family:

One of the biggest blessings we have received from Christian Education is the partnership that comes from being part of this community. At our children’s baptisms, we promised to do all we could to raise them in the fear and knowledge of the Lord. What an awesome and yet daunting task! We are so grateful for the daily presence of Godly teachers and staff who continually work to shape the worldview of our kids according to His Word. We pray God blesses our endeavors as a community: to grow covenant children into adults who will testify of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

- Matt and Teresa are members of Walker URC where Teresa serves as a Women’s Bible Study Leader.
- They have four children: Hank (2021 grad); Hallie (2023 grad); Natalie (2025 grad) and Philip (Unity sophomore)
- Teresa is employed at West Side Christian School as a Nature Preschool Teacher

CURRENT 2025/2026 TRUSTEES

Jon Lanning (2nd term through 6/27) – President

Ryan Kooiman (1st term through 6/27) – Vice President

John Dice (2nd term through 6/26) - Treasurer

Teresa Kooyer (1st term through 6/26) – Secretary

Ed DeYoung (2nd term through 6/28) – Vice-Gerent

Betsy VanderPloeg (1st term through 6/28)



THE PROPOSED 2026/2027 BUDGET SUMMARY

	Adopted 2025/2026	Trustee Approved 2026/2027
<u>BUDGET</u>	\$10,396,265	\$11,179,891
<u>REVENUE</u>		
• NON-TUITION	\$1,966,225	\$2,300,051
• TUITION	\$8,430,040	\$8,879,840
Full-time at Unity	\$11,360	\$11,775
Unity/Careerline Tech	\$8,600	\$9,000
ENROLLMENT	747 students	772 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 \$34/month and \$33/month respectively for full-time at Unity and Unity/Careerline Tech students.
2. The full cost of educating one student at Unity is \$14,481. 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 \$2,706 to help our families.

SCRAP METAL DRIVE

Support Christian education by recycling your scrap metal this spring! Volunteers will be on-site to help direct the disposal of scrap metal. The Scrap Metal Drive is located in the spare Arrowwaste lot in Jenison off of Chicago Drive.

May 1 – 6:00PM – 8:00PM

May 2 – 8:00AM – 1:00PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2-10Spring Break

April 23 & 24.....Student Directed Spring Play | “12 Incompetent Jurors”

April 27Celebration Banquet (see details below)

April 30Choir Concert | 7:30PM, Fair Haven Church

May 1 & 2.....Scrap Metal Drive (see details to the left)

May 4.....Symphonic Band & Chamber Orchestra Concert
7:30PM, Fair Haven Church

May 9.....Graduation

May 13Concert Band & Concert Orchestra Concert
7:30PM, Fair Haven Church

May 21Last Day of School

Celebration Banquet 2026

Leaving a Legacy: Christian Education at Unity

You are invited to celebrate Christian education at Unity Christian High School at the annual Celebration Banquet. This year’s event highlights the legacy that grandparents and parents who choose Christian education have on Unity.

When: Monday, April 27. Begins at 5:00pm for new addition tours & hors d’oeuvres, followed by dinner & programming at 6:30pm.

Where: Jack Postma Worship Center

The Celebration Banquet is free of charge, but registration is required by April 17. Scan the QR Code below, email development@unitychristian.org, or call the Development Office at (616) 662-4011 to register.





Unity Christian High School

5900 48th Avenue

Hudsonville, MI 49426

Phone: 616-669-1820

www.unitychristian.org

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit #250



“developing followers of Christ to be leaders”