

COVENANT LINES

10TH EDITION

A Publication of the Eastside Christian School Board

Mackinac Island Adventures:

This year the 9th grade class enjoyed a year-end trip to Mackinac Island. The four students, Cyndi Adams, Nate Pastoor, Tim Thompson and Susan Young and their chaperones, Mr. and Mrs. D. Pastoor and Mr. and Mrs. T. Thompson, set off on Thursday, June 4 for their much anticipated adventure. Cyndi gives the following account:

“After arriving in Mackinaw City, we found that our reservations were for a hotel in Sault Ste. Marie! We were dismayed at the thought of another two hours in the van, but thanks to the friendly hotel clerk, we were able to switch our reservations. That evening we went to a cool laser light show in a local shopping center.

The next morning we got up very early and rode our bikes to the ferry docks, from which we headed to the Island. Some of the braver of us, myself included, rode on the top deck of the ferry the whole way.

We had a wonderful, sunny day riding our bikes in the State Park and shopping for souvenirs. On Saturday, we went to the Mystery Spot (a gravity-defying house), flew over the Mackinac Bridge and Island in a very small plane, drove go-carts, played miniature golf and our van broke down.

Overall, we enjoyed the trip so much that we plan to do it all over again someday, if we have the chance.

THANK YOU to everyone who made the trip possible!”

Commemorative Quilt:

If you have not seen the quilt which Mrs. Carol Faber, Mrs. Kristi Thompson and Mrs. Gert Van Putten helped the students and teachers make, do stop by the school sometime. The creative energies and the labor of love that went into this quilt make it a genuine treasure. It is displayed with great appreciation to all those who gave of their time and talents so freely this year. God has worked through so many hands to build such a firm foundation.

Open Court Reading Program:

Miss. Dykstra and Mr. Ondersma provided the Promoters with an analysis/survey of the Open Court Reading Program at their meeting in April. What follows is an overview of the insights they shared with the group that evening:

In Miss Dykstra's 1st and 3rd grades, the Open Court Reading Program helps students gain a strong phonemic awareness while building their vocabulary. This program is both challenging and fun for the students. Not only do the stories in this program encourage students to read with expression and feeling, but the quality of the selections and the pages of fine art truly enhance their enjoyment of unit topics.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the Open Court Reading Program is its emphasis on writing. From the time they are able to put a story into words, the students are encouraged to think and to write. This year, the students in Miss Dykstra's class wrote many stories mimicking the style or subject of the authors in their readers. Consequently, these students understand what it means to be a writer and are better equipped to read and to explore various types of literature.

As for the upper elementary grades, the Open Court Reading Program continues in the same challenging direction, where building a “community of scholars” is the focus. While this program continues to build students' vocabularies and reading skills, it extends their abilities to include research, critical evaluation and higher order thinking skills. By strengthening their reasoning and problem solving abilities, this program takes students beyond basic reading and writing skills to equip them for a variety of challenges.

Throughout the program, beginning in the lower elementary and extending through the 6th grade, Open Court helps the teachers nurture critical, self-directed thinkers who read and write using their own minds.

After completing their first year with Open Court, both Miss. Dykstra and Mr. Ondersma agree that it is an excellent program for Eastside to utilize. They praise it as “an effective and exciting way to teach reading”.

Enrollment:

If you wish to enroll your child(ren) for the 1998–99 school year, please contact Gerald VanBaren @ 682–0086.

All School Picnic:

On Monday, June 11, students, teachers and supporters of Eastside gathered at the Grand Rapids Township park for a day of food and festivities to celebrate the last day of school.



Students and teachers gather for a final picture together at the picnic

Eastside Christian School Association admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Commencement:

Nathan Pastoor welcomed those gathered for the 1998 *Commencement and Celebration of the First Year of Existence* with his Salutatory address. After thanking God for His goodness and mercy in guiding him and his classmates to this milestone, as well as their parents, teachers, friends and supporters, he recalled a lesson of the past year.

“When I was thinking about what I should say in this speech, I thought of a poem which we had read in literature class. It was about a traveler walking through the woods on a road. He came to a point where the road split into two, and would never come back together again. The traveler had to choose which way he would take. In our class we have four of these travelers, whose roads came together at a point, and we will never be the same because of it . . .”

Having chosen the eagle as the school mascot this year, it was fitting that the graduates selected Isaiah 40:28–31 as their text.

“ . . . He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.”

“Flying with the Eagles,” was the title of the address presented by Mr. Tom Newhof, who served as the first president of the Eastside School Board. Mr. Newhof encouraged the students not to be afraid of becoming weary in the pursuit of the Kingdom, but to continue in the path that they have begun, for “the Everlasting God gives power to the weary.” He said, “Just the existence of this school is evidence of the answer to our fears of becoming weary . . . I’m sure those who worked so hard this year including yourselves, your teachers, aides, Administrator, Board members and supporters can testify that the Lord has borne us up on the wings of eagles. None of this happened because of our strength. We would have fainted long ago.”

After giving a vivid description of the eagle, including its admirable attributes which enable it to soar to great heights, he concluded with a reminder that this commencement is truly just the beginning. He

pointed out that already in the 7th or 8th Century before Christ was born, Isaiah knew the comfort of an assured victory. He knew that “no matter how weary and faint we might feel, “The everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not . . .” (40:28b).

Tim Thompson closed the evening with a Valedictory address. He said: “I also, on behalf of Nate, Cyndi, Sue and myself, thank all of you for coming to this first commencement program and celebration . . . This has been a great year for us. We weren’t too sure about it at the beginning of the school year . . . But, looking back, we are glad that we were part of Eastside Christian’s first year. It has been exciting to be part of a new school. Yes, we did have a small beginning, but it is our hope and prayer as the first graduating class of Eastside that the school will grow and that Eastside will be around, the Lord willing for years to come.

We have something unique here. A place where you feel part of a family. A place where we as students know that our needs are heard and seen and met by a caring Administrator, faculty, staff, school board and parents . . . With God on our side we are able to move mountains. And, in a way, getting a school started is something like moving a mountain . . . Our God has lifted us up on Eagles’ wings, and we are confident that He shall continue to lift us up in the future. With Him we can do all things . . .”

Annual Fund Drive:

The Finance Committee extends its appreciation to the generous supporters of Eastside Christian. It is pleased to report that the fund drive resulted in pledges for 85% of the 1998–99 operational fund. If you wish to contribute to either the building or operational funds, please call Peter Faber @ 956–9354.

Picnic on the Patio:

Last August, friends of Eastside gathered for a picnic on the patio at First Church to welcome the Faculty and to offer their praise for the Lord’s great provisions. As the Lord has again showered us with blessings, plans are in process for another evening of thanksgiving. Please plan to join the students, alumni and friends of Eastside on **August 27** for this evening of fellowship. More details to follow.
