

# COVENANT LINES

13TH EDITION

A Publication of the Eastside Christian School Board

## Building Plans

The Board is pleased to report that the Council of First Protestant Reformed Church supports our request to present the Congregation of First Church with a proposal to construct a school building on the northwest side of the site—often referred to as the circle drive. While some may have reservations about this plan, we hope that all will agree with the Council's recommendation after viewing our findings. This proposal seeks the best interest of both First PRC and Eastside Christian. With your support, this will be a wonderful opportunity for the furtherance of God's work in Grand Rapids.

## Fare thee well

Since the spring of 1997 when Miss Ruth Dykstra signed a contract with Eastside Christian, we have appreciated her quiet and thoughtful ways, her wisdom and patience in dealing with her students, and her complete dedication to the cause of covenant education.

June 2, 2000 will be a big day indeed at Eastside Christian. Yes, it will be the last day of the '99–2000 school year, but it will also mark the last day of a teaching career that's spanned more than four decades.

Ruth's career began in the kindergarten classroom at Adams Street Christian School in September of 1954. She had only completed her first two years of study at Calvin College, but because the need for Protestant Reformed teachers was so great, she felt called to help out. (Ruth eventually finished her college education while teaching kindergarten half-days.)

For the next 43 years, Ruth dedicated her life to educating the students of Adams Street Christian, where she taught a variety of grades, including kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth grades. Since seven of those years were invested in multigrade classrooms, Ruth felt confident in God's call to Eastside Christian in 1997.

Ruth's faith in this newly established school was an encouragement to the supporters of Eastside as she was the first teacher to sign a contract in that first year. God certainly uses each life in a meaningful way; sincere and heartfelt thanks, Miss Dykstra, for all that you have given us. It is our prayer that you enjoy God's richest blessings in your retirement.

## Retirement Open House

*Please join the student's, faculty, and supporters of Eastside Christian for an Open House to celebrate Miss Ruth Dykstra's teaching career. We plan to gather at the School from 6:00 p.m. — 8:00 p.m. on May 20, 2000.*

## Bravo! Encore'

The only thing missing from the *Eastside Musicfest* was an Encore'. The crowd certainly would have demanded it, had it not already felt blessed beyond belief to enjoy an evening in the company of such passionate and accomplished musicians.

One hardly dares elaborate on the event, so as not to spoil the presentation as a whole, but who could resist?

The boys and young men dressed in their striking white school-shirts and the girls and young ladies in their finest apparel, brought a well of emotion to all those listening to the opening chorus, "Everywhere I Go." And the handbells, what a treat to see the skill and concentration these students display. Perhaps it is dangerous to speculate, but undoubtedly, Mr. Hyden, himself, would have relished in the Junior High Boy's Quartet's rendering of "Glorious Things Of Thee Are Spoken."

At this year's Musicfest, all in attendance were privy to an audio lesson in "Folk Songs From Around The World." From America, the pre-k/kindergarten singers led the audience to Austria for a little Yodeling and a few giggles, then on the Netherlands with the first grade. The third grade took a path through Germany before their first and second grade companions joined them to lead the way on to Australia for a *Kookaburra*.

Flutists Dawn Young and Mrs. Kristi Thompson brought the group back to England with the accompaniment of Stephanie Adams on the piano. The fourth and fifth graders added a lilt to our step with the Tone Chimes en route to Mexico, and finished up with a couple American classics. The Christian hymns of praise to God, "Shout for Joy to the Lord" and "I sing of the Mighty Power of God," were the finale to this grand journey.

What a source of joy and encouragement this event has proved year after year.

If you haven't experienced this feast of talents, you may still have the opportunity to sample this rare treat at the *All Schools Choir Program*, scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on May 25, at Calvin College's Fine Arts Center.

All programs held in the sanctuary of First Church can be heard by phone (942-9955).

## Underground Adventurers

This story begins on a seemingly "normal" day at Eastside in January, when the students, faculty, as well as some parents and friends went underground. This band of adventurers set off from school, stopped for a quick lunch and

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

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then headed for the mines. Gypsum, that is!

To an untrained eye, the man who approached us from one of the large storage buildings, surrounded by semi truck & trailer rigs, didn't seem like much of an explorer, but he knew his way around. Yet, some were suspect as he led us into one of the buildings, dodging the fork lifts that scurried around. Amazingly, he revealed a huge door that opened to the elevator, which descended into the depths of the mine.

When the doors opened we saw what looked to be primitive hallways. These passageways were the result of previous gypsum mining efforts. As we stepped off the elevator, we were in the actual gypsum vein. Our guide explained that there are many such veins around the world that are still being mined today. This one happens to stretch from Texas all the way to New York, passing through Tennessee and Michigan on its diagonal path across the U.S.

Did you know that the Bible refers to gypsum? During the time of the Assyrians, the Bible identifies it as alabaster. The ancient Greeks even used crystalline gypsum as window "glass". Our guide identified the four layers of gypsum on the walls of the tunnel around us. Close to the ceiling is a layer of *selenite*, below that *shale satinspur*, followed by *crystalline*, also known as "pencil," and finally, the lowest stratum is *alabaster*.

Some of the present day uses of gypsum include: drywall, plaster, cement, fertilizer, and dental plaster. We even eat gypsum on a daily basis in the form of calcium sulfate, which is found in a variety of products from ice cream to toothpaste. Check some labels, you might be in for a surprise.

Mining first began in this location in 1890 and continued until 1943. Ten years later, the owner of the mine cemented the floors and began leasing the space for storage, which continues yet today. From 1950 until 1974 the mine was designated as a civil defense shelter for up to 15,000. It was stocked with food, water, and portable toilet facility in the event of a catastrophic event.

Before ascending to the daylight, our guide allowed some "mining" of our own. The junior high students used their time

to explore the passageways and discovered that they were all connected in a grid-like fashion. As for the parents, we served as horses for the little miners, who *just had to have* the next pretty crystalline "pencil" that he or she found.

— contributed by Bruce Miedema

## New Teacher

Prayers were answered as Kristin Brands signed the contract that the Education Committee presented to her. Kristin is anticipating her graduation from Dordt College next month, at which time she'll receive her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and Music.

When the students of Eastside return next fall, the first through third graders will enter a world created especially for them by Miss Brands. Her interests in art, music, writing, and nature are sure to manifest themselves in meaningful ways as God uses Kristin's unique gifts to craft a delightful environment for these young learners.

As the Board and as supporters of Eastside Christian, we are excited to welcome Kristin into our fellowship and pray that God will give her the assurance of His guiding hand as she travels the many miles from her home in Edgerton, MN to join our community. We wish her God's speed.

## Board Members

Tom Flikkema and Jerry VanBaren fulfilled their terms of office on the Eastside School Board as Tom J. Newhof and Dan Schimmel were elected at the Annual Association Meeting in March.

A special thanks to Tom for keeping the van routes short and to Jerry for managing our finances, never wavering in his charge to uphold the mandate of fiscal responsibility.

Speaking of which, if you have not had the opportunity to contribute to either the Eastside Operational Fund or to the Building Fund, please contact Tom J. Newhof (616-949-5857) home phone.

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