

BEACON LIGHTS

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CONVENTION REFLECTIONS

The month of November is a kind of turning point in the year. While the summer and early fall months are behind us and school is back in full swing along with its busy schedule of homework, catechism, and sports, there is much to look forward to in the coming holiday season. As we collectively adjust to busier schedules and cooler weather, a little reflection on memories made during the warm summer days of this past year is a welcome reminder of God's goodness in our lives. But so too is the anticipation of Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, when we have additional opportunities to praise God for his providential care of us in this life and his provision of hope for the life to come through the birth of his Son. This month we look backward and forward, considering events of this past year and the Savior promised in Scripture.

In God's providence, the regular Protestant Reformed Young Peoples convention, which would have included 500+ young people and dozens of chaperones, could not be held due to ongoing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because smaller gatherings were permitted, a variety of mini conventions and retreats were held across the country in place of the usual denominational convention. Two of these events were hosted in the states of Indiana and Tennessee and were attended by the writers for this month's feature articles. These articles include overviews of each retreat from the perspective of two young people who participated in them, as well as written versions of two speeches by ministers who attended the Indiana mini convention

as chaperones. The clear message of these articles is that God has been good to his people, even amidst the disappointment of putting off the full denominational convention for another year.

Our regular rubrics for the month also have a seasonal theme in view, one looking back and the other forward. In Current Events we consider the worldview implications of the 2020 summer Olympics held a year later than originally scheduled in Tokyo, Japan. Readers are encouraged to consider this article alongside the editorial for this month, as both articles are intended to point out the patterns of thought swirling around our world and the danger they pose for young people. The Devotional for this month looks forward. Both the introductory article and Bible study plan focus on the first few chapters of the book of Luke, which point to the promised Messiah.

In addition to our regular rubrics and thematic feature articles for this month, we also include an interview with P. M. Kuiper, author of the recently published book *Through Many Dangers*. Perhaps readers have noticed the advertisement for this book on the back page of *Beacon Lights* over the past few months and have already gotten a copy from the RFPA. If not, we hope this interview piques your interest in reading a work of Christian historical fiction that is both exciting and edifying. As noted by the author, we could use more of this sort of material. Maybe reading it will inspire you to be the next youth author published by the RFPA!

CATECHISM SEASON

At the point that this edition of *Beacon Lights* arrives in the homes of our subscribers, most young people in the Protestant Reformed Churches will have been sitting under the catechism instruction of their pastor or elders for more than a month. If our readers are honest, that observation probably comes with a (quiet) sigh of resignation. Catechism season is here. Again.

Truth be told, the preparation required for catechism involves extra work during an otherwise busy time of year. And it means an evening away from other activities that might seem more attractive, or at least more important. Homework, sports, part-time jobs, social life—all good things—easily crowd out the desire of young people to receive instruction in the contents of God’s word and the doctrinal truths confessed by Reformed churches. We do go to church after all, and *twice* each Sunday at that. Catechism can seem so...extra.

That’s what many Reformed and Presbyterian churches began to think a few generations ago. What was once a given among these churches of the Reformation has become relatively rare. And though catechism was usually replaced with some other church program or service project, its removal from the life of conservative Christianity has not stopped the alarming departure of young adults from the churches who were working hard to keep them in the pews through exciting contemporary worship and engaging ministry opportunities. To put it simply, God’s people are dying for lack of knowledge. Not for the first time, as it turns out (Hos. 4:6).

It’s worth noting that some of the churches that left off the practice of catechism instruction a generation or more ago are realizing their error. Prominent pastors and leaders in several Reformed and Presbyterian denominations are sounding the alarm and issuing a call back to the practice of formal catechism training for believers of all ages. What they are realizing is that if they don’t do it, someone else will. These other catechism teachers are already hard at work for the hearts and minds of

young people. And by and large, they are incredibly effective at reaching their audience.

Whether you are aware of it or not, you are always receiving catechism instruction from the world around you.¹ There isn’t a catechism book or written work associated with this program, and you will rarely be sitting behind a desk or table as you participate. But the goals are the same: instruction of your heart and mind as a means to produce certain patterns of thought and behavior in your life.

Let’s consider for a moment what the “catechism book” of the world teaches (2 Tim. 3:1–7).

- Lesson 1: there is no such thing as objective truth.
- Lesson 2: the only things that are real are things you can see, touch, smell, taste, or hear.
- Lesson 3: there is nothing wrong with you as you are right now—be proud and loud!
- Lesson 4: your identity is for *you* to define.
- Lesson 5: there is only one life—get the most out of it!
- Lesson 6: your happiness is the most important thing in life.
- Lesson 7: anyone who tells you “no” or that you are wrong is oppressive.
- Lesson 8: your potential is unlimited, and nothing is more important than you.
- Lesson 9: life is full of responsibilities, so have fun while you are young!
- Lesson 10: love is what you feel, and you can’t change it.

Of course, you won’t ever see this list of lessons written down in an actual catechism book. But

¹ Kevin DeYoung, “The World Is Catechizing Us Whether We Realize It or Not,” *The Gospel Coalition*, August 24, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/the-world-is-catechizing-us-whether-we-realize-it-or-not/>.

examples of its major points abound in our world. Have you noticed commercials on your music streaming station that insist you need to “have it your way” or that “you deserve it”? Have you seen commercials on TV with two men holding hands and gazing into each other’s eyes, deep in love? Or maybe two women in the home caring for their adorable, laughing children? Have you watched interviews with Olympic athletes reveling in the glory of their victories because they “reached their full potential in life”? Or draped in a rainbow flag kissing “their partner”? Hopefully you are not calloused to the blatant materialism and rebellion of pop music or the lustful desires for “love” that fill the country music stations on your car radio. Every lyric, every picture, every conversation is a catechism lesson in search of a class with open hearts and minds.

Being in the world, but not of it, is an incredibly difficult thing! Our Lord knew this better than anyone, having experienced the temptations of Satan and this world as fully as any human—yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). It is telling that one of his greatest concerns just prior to his death was that his elect people would be preserved in a wicked world intent on absorbing them into its ways. Consider these words from John 17, which Jesus prayed in the hours before his betrayal and crucifixion.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also

sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. (vv. 15–19, emphasis added)

This, dear young people, is why your parents and elders insist that your church *must* hold catechism classes on a weekly basis in addition to the regular preaching each Sunday. Your hearts and your minds are tender and ready for instruction. Who will get to form your patterns of thought and behavior? Will it be the world with its lessons on the idolatry of self? Or will it be the words of your Lord and savior that fill your mind? Your sanctification is worked by the Spirit through instruction in the words of holy Scripture, which are able to make you wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). That is the point of studying your lessons, reciting the answers to questions, filling out written work, and taking notes in class—to gradually form your heart and mind in the ways of God so that when you are old you will not forget them (Prov. 22:6).

As you think about the incredible value of catechism instruction, let me offer one more suggestion. Encourage your pastor and elders with a kind word and an attentive attitude. Thank them for their faithful labor in the catechism classroom. They give generously of their time to instruct you in God’s word as an antidote to the poisonous catechism of the world around us. Like the world around you, their words are aimed at your hearts and minds. But unlike the world, they do it out of love for your souls. So don’t sigh in resignation to the catechism season. Thank God for it!

Leah Decker

INDIANA MINI CONVENTION REVIEW

One of this year’s “mini conventions” was hosted by Grace and Grandville Protestant Reformed Churches at Quaker Haven Camp. Located just over two hours away in northern Indiana, the camp was a perfect fit for the 120 kids and 15 chaperones who attended. A total of twelve different churches were represented: Byron Center, Faith, First (Grand Rapids), Grandville, Hope (Redlands), Kalamazoo,

Lynden, Pittsburgh, Southeast, Southwest, Spokane, and Zion.

The week began on Monday afternoon with the conventioners boarding two coach buses at Grace church and arriving at the camp around 4 p.m. There were donuts and free time until Professor Dykstra’s speech on the apostle’s words “Let no man despise thy youth” (1 Tim. 4:12). This topic was expanded

on more fully each night during group devotions and was accompanied by a variety of speeches on several notable figures from Old Testament history.

Following the speech, the first team game, a boat-building competition, was held at the beach. At the whistle, each team was asked a list of Bible trivia questions. With every correct answer, a player was sent out to grab a supply of their choice from a massive pile of kiddie pools, cardboard, and pool noodles. After assembling the makeshift boats using duct tape and rope, the teams walked to the water for the relay races. While some boats floated better than others, everyone had a great time cheering the players on!

On Tuesday morning, Rev. Joe Holstege spoke on Judah, the son of Jacob known for both his evil ways and his later repentance. Team games were held again, this time in the style of an “Amazing Race” that was continued on Thursday afternoon. Games included giant beach volleyball, broomball, and Bible trivia. Later in the evening, Professor Dykstra spoke on David and Goliath, after which yard game tournaments (volleyball, Spikeball, and 3-on-3 basketball) began.

Wednesday morning the chaperones woke up early to make breakfast for all the conventioners and the camp staff. The meal consisted of French toast, hash browns, breakfast sandwiches, and made-to-order omelets. The amazing homemade breakfast was definitely a highlight of the week! Later that morning, Rev. Bruinsma gave a speech on Jael, while the rest of the day was kept open for unscheduled leisure time. There was much more free

time compared to previous years, and it was often used for playing Spikeball and beanbags or canoeing and spending time in the game room. That night, there was an optional question-and-answer panel about the current church controversy, which lasted several hours. It was an appreciated time of discussion and was very well attended by campers and chaperones.

Thursday, the final full day of convention, began with a speech on David’s mighty warrior Benaiah from Rev. Kleyn. After the speech, teams finished off organized games and then had time to go tubing on the lake. This was something unique to a smaller convention, and the young people really enjoyed it! Banquet was later that night, with delicious brisket as the main course and cheesecake for dessert. After-banquet games were a success with pin the tie on the minister, jeopardy, and the ministers competing in a hot dog bun eating contest (pictures are worth seeing!) By Friday morning, everyone was packed up and ready to head back to West Michigan.

God undoubtedly used this “mini convention” for the good of the young people. Not only were the speeches clearly biblical and applicable, but the precious communion of saints was experienced powerfully, something that perhaps has been taken for granted in the past. Overall, the week was a wonderful and spiritually edifying time. As young people, we give thanks to God for this opportunity to fellowship with one another!

Leah is a senior at Covenant Christian High School and attends Zion Protestant Reformed Church.

Rev. Joseph Holstege

JUDAH: A STORY OF REDEMPTION

This article was originally presented as a speech at a Protestant Reformed mini convention held at Quaker Haven Camp in August 2021.

The story of Judah is one of the most beautiful in the Bible. We often overlook this history because it is nestled in the middle of the story of Joseph. All the catechism students and Sunday school kids know about Joseph. What is interesting, however, is that Judah was honored above Joseph by his dying father

as the wielder of the scepter and the one whom his brothers would praise (Gen. 49:8–10). The greatest honor of all, however, is that Judah was the father of the Lion, who is also the Lamb, the Redeemer of his people, and the ruler of the world (Rev. 5:5). Who, then, is Judah?

The first thing to know is that Judah was a villain. He was brought up in a troubled home. His older brothers found all kinds of ways to humiliate

and anger their father, Jacob. Reuben was a fornicator who went up to his father's bed (Gen. 49:4). Simeon and Levi were murderers who slaughtered an entire city and destroyed Jacob's reputation (Gen. 34:30). Then there was his younger brother Joseph, the tattletale and goody-goody. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons and made no secret about it, which made Judah and his brothers hate Joseph. They hated his coat of many colors. They hated his dreams. Their hatred made them look for an occasion to get rid of him.

No, they could not quite bring themselves to murder Joseph outright when he showed up in Dothan. They threw him in a pit instead to give them time for a better plan. It was Judah then who had the light go on when he spotted the Ishmaelite caravan heading down to Egypt. "Aha! I know what to do! We can get rid of that insufferable Joseph and even make a little money on the side!" This, then, was the plan that sprang from the murderous heart of Judah: "Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh" (Gen. 37:27). If you think Judah was being merciful because he saved Joseph's life, think again. For all Judah knew, it would be worse for Joseph as a slave in Egypt than if they killed him on the spot. Imagine looking in the face of your brother as you drag him out of a pit and hand him over to chains. He will never see his father or his home again. He will become the property of another, a slave. Judah hardened his heart and set his face. He maybe even whistled a little tune to himself as he jingled the silver in his pocket. With a straight face he told his father that his precious son Joseph had been devoured by a wild animal. A liar and a villain!

Judah did not become any less of a villain as the years went on. You can read Genesis 38 to get the full story, but the long and the short of it is that Judah found his way into the house of a prostitute, or so he thought. The woman in question was actually his daughter-in-law, Tamar, whom he swindled out of a husband and household. Tamar was not so easily put off, however. When she heard that Judah was coming to a nearby town, she put on the clothing of a harlot and a veil on her face and awaited his arrival. Judah was so eager to commit fornication with her that he even gave her his staff, his signet ring, and his bracelets as a pledge to pay for her services. By way of contrast, Joseph was in the land of Egypt around the same time, fleeing the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen.

39:9).

At this point, however, the story begins to shift. It is a shift that reveals in a striking way the truth that our God is a God who calls not the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13). Judah got wind that Tamar played the harlot and was pregnant. He was so furious that he called for her to be brought to him and burned (Gen. 38:24). Imagine the hypocrisy! When Tamar arrived, however, the staff and ring and bracelets were brought out, and Judah began to realize he had been *had*. Oh, surely there could have been a way out for Judah. He could have denied that they were his possessions or accused her of stealing. But Judah realized in that moment that it was not Tamar who was confronting him, but God. Tamar was not innocent in her harlotry and deceit, but Judah confessed with all sincerity, "She hath been more righteous than I" (Gen. 38:26). The Spirit worked repentance in the heart of Judah, and in the way of repentance, Judah began to taste the sweetness of redemption.

It is clear from the way the rest of the story goes that Judah's behavior has completely turned around. You remember the famine and the brothers' journey down to Egypt. You remember the rough way Joseph dealt with them under the guise of an Egyptian ruler. You remember his demand that they may only return if they bring their youngest brother, Benjamin, with them. And you remember how Jacob under no circumstances was about to allow Benjamin to go on a journey with Judah and the others. "If mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave" (Gen. 42:38).

Yet it was *Judah* who convinced his father to entrust Benjamin to his care. Reuben tried, foolishly, with the offer to slay his own sons should he fail to bring Benjamin home safe (Gen. 42:37). Imagine a grandfather agreeing to kill his grandchildren to protect their uncle! What were you thinking, Reuben? Judah, however, offered *himself*. "Send the lad with me...I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever" (Gen. 43:8-9).

Then, as if by design, Benjamin was caught in a deep conspiracy in Egypt and threatened with lifelong slavery. The silver cup of the second most powerful man in the world was found in *his* sack. O Judah, will you keep your promise? Is your word good? Or will you allow yet another brother never to see his father again, to be held in the chains of

Egypt? Will bitterness and malice continue to rule you, or the Spirit of Jesus Christ who redeemed you? This is what Judah said to the great ruler of Egypt, not really knowing to whom it was that he was speaking: “I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren” (Gen. 44:33). Let me be the slave. Let him go home to his father’s house. Let my life be for his life. Let my freedom be for his freedom.

It was these words of Judah that pushed Joseph over the edge with emotion. He could help himself no longer. The man before him was clearly not the same man who sold him into slavery. He was a changed man. He was a humbled man. He was a man ready to give up his own life for the sake of his brother, even a brother whom his father loved more than him. If you read Genesis 45, you will encounter what in my opinion is the most beautiful example of human reconciliation recorded in the pages of Scripture. By reconciling Judah to himself, the Lord reconciled his people to one another and saved much people alive (Gen. 50:20).

So, what do we learn from the story of Judah? The most important lesson of all is that our faith is in the Redeemer. We may be inclined only to look at the story of Joseph and see in him how badly we all fail. Joseph was a man of extraordinary spiritual character, while most of us identify much more easily with the bitterness, envy, and lusts of Judah the villain. Yet Judah the villain was not Judah the hopeless wretch. He was Judah the redeemed son of God, restored to a godly and deeply sacrificial life by God’s grace and in the way of repentance. The call to you from the story of Judah, then, is the call to faith in the Redeemer who came into this world to save the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).

The story of Judah also says much about the way a redeemed Christian will behave, and ought to behave. Judah the redeemed becomes Judah the redeemer of his brother Benjamin. Having been saved by the grace of Jesus Christ, he was conformed in his own life to the image of his Lord (Rom. 8:29). Did you think the Christian life meant only that you show up in church twice on Sunday and read your *Beacon Lights* now and then? No, Jesus said if he washes our feet, then we ought to wash the feet of one another (John 13:14–15). If Jesus sacrificed himself for us, then we ought to sacrifice ourselves for one another. The redeemed always show forth the character of *the* Redeemer in their own lives—like Judah offering himself for Benjamin.

The story of Judah is also a story that ends with reconciliation, and that too is instructive. Reconciliation is when broken relationships are resolved and restored. What is especially striking in the story of Judah is that reconciliation takes place even when the wounds have been so deep and so painful. Judah, you monster! You sold your brother into slavery! And yet the end of the story has Judah and Joseph weeping in one another’s arms. It is not always easy, nor is it always possible, to reconcile human beings. Sin and the damage of sin must be reckoned with carefully and fully. Yet we must never forget that as Christians, our faith and our gospel rest on the idea of reconciliation through the blood of the Lamb that was slain. The gospel is the gospel of redemption and reconciliation! That is the gospel that runs through the heart of the beautiful story of Judah.

Rev. Joseph Holstege serves as the pastor of Zion Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

JAE: AN EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN WARFARE

This article was originally presented as a speech at a Protestant Reformed mini convention held at Quaker Haven Camp in August 2021.

Jael lived during the era of the judges. Deborah the prophetess was the judge who served Israel at the time of Jael. During this time, the Canaanites under the rule of king Jabin had risen to power in the north

of Canaan. For twenty years, Jabin and Sisera, the captain of Jabin's powerful army, oppressed the northern tribes of Israel. Deborah enlisted the help of a man named Barak to lead the armies of Israel against Sisera and his host. Though Barak balked at her request to help, this does not mean that Barak was a coward. In fact, Hebrews 11:32 lists him among the witnesses of faith. After all, it was no little feat to go to battle against an army that far outnumbered your own. Barak's army consisted of only ten thousand footmen. That was small compared to Sisera's army that included nine hundred iron-clad chariots and a whole host of men from the regions north of Canaan.

Part of the reason Barak's army was so small was that men out of various tribes of Israel refused to fight. Only men out of Zebulun, Naphtali, and Issachar answered the call to take up arms. Dan and Asher refused. We also learn that the angel of the Lord later cursed Meroz, a village of Israel through which Sisera fled and the inhabitants did nothing to stop him. They just watched him flee through their city. This reflects the low spiritual state of Israel at this time.

All the events summarized above led up to what occurred in the tent of a woman named Jael. Jael lived in a large tent with her husband, Heber. Heber and his wife were Kenites, descendants of Jethro the father-in-law to Moses. Heber had moved away from the rest of the Kenites, living far away in the north of Canaan. We are not told why, but there was peace between Jabin the king of the Canaanites and the household of Heber. This is why we find Sisera freely entering into the tent of Heber.

During his battle with Deborah and Barak, Sisera saw that the army of Israel under God's sovereign direction was destroying his forces. Seeing that the battle was against him, Sisera stole away from his army and ran alone in a different direction that eventually led him to the tent of Jael. When Sisera appeared in the door of Jael's tent, she acted calmly and welcomed Sisera into her home. Since Sisera had been fleeing for hours, he was hungry and weary. No doubt this wary soldier was also providentially guided by God through his need to eat and sleep in safety from the Israelite army. Jael fed him milk and butter, prepared him a bed, then covered him to sleep, reassuring him that she would keep close watch by the door of the tent. Sisera fell asleep soundly on his side.

Sisera was so soundly asleep that he did not notice Jael leaving the tent to fetch a tent stake.

Her tent was a large one that required long, thick stakes to hold it in place. Stake in hand, Jael quietly approached Sisera, held the stake at his temple, and drove it through his head into the ground. This was a quick and easy death from a woman who had no other weapon on hand and could not afford to wound a capable soldier who would fight back if he could. So she quickly drove the spike through his brain, and he died immediately.

This act of Jael may seem gruesome. To fasten a man's head to the ground by means of a large stake through his temples! Yet we learn that this was an act of great faith. Jael had cast in her lot with Israel, the people of God. When the people of Israel refused to fight and even let Sisera flee through their midst, this woman fought the good fight of faith. God had by his grace grafted her into the Messiah who was yet to be born. She believed that Jehovah was her God. She knew what it was to be a part of the covenant that God had established with Israel. Through faith, therefore, she entered into the battle with boldness and confidence. For this single act she was declared blessed by Deborah in her song recorded in Judges 5. And because of her action, she becomes for us today a godly example of faith and daring. Jael entered into warfare with the enemies of God and his church!

Though today we do not fight the same sort of physical warfare as Jael, we nevertheless still fight through means of spiritual battle. Young men and women of God's covenant, how are we doing in our spiritual warfare? There is a battle being waged in our lives too, you realize. Satan has his sights set on destroying the church of Christ in this world. His aim is singularly focused on obliterating our love for God's covenant and church! Satan seeks to destroy the church by plundering, robbing, and raping God's saints of the truth of God's word. Perhaps Satan may not frighten us like the physically brutish Sisera, but he should! He is ruthless! He uses every battle tactic to annihilate the church of Christ and to exterminate our love for God and his church. He takes aim at the doctrines of the church in order to ruin them and turn God's people from the faith. He seeks to quench the fervent love for Jesus Christ and the work of salvation. He seeks to divide the church with the lie, causing division and strife.

Ah yes, divide and conquer! Satan knows the best ways of doing this. He seeks to ruin the covenant line of the church by destroying marriages and families. This chief foe of the church has a whole army behind him. He is the prince of the power of the

world! One of his allies is the wicked world around us. The most effective weapon he uses against the church is prosperity. This means that you and I are the objects of his fiercest attacks. He sends the world into the church via social media, through writing, through movies, and through the internet to make the ways of the wicked world so alluring! The world begins to influence us in the way we think and react to sin. As a result, the sinful hatred, resentment, the distrust of the world infiltrates the church and destroys her too.

But Satan and the world are not alone in their assault upon the church. We also fight our sinful flesh. This means that I am my own worst enemy! I have to fight the lust in me that is so attracted to the sinful ways of the world. While the world slowly kills the families of the church by its pernicious ways, we stand by admiring its alluring evils and submitting to their temptation. Because of our weak and sinful nature, we become calloused to the evil that is so present around us, failing to fight it like the citizens of Meroz who gave free pass to Jabin and Sisera.

The battle cry goes out to you, young Christian soldiers: to arms! Fight the good fight of faith!

Do we stumble and falter when battle is near?

Do we sit back and refuse to fight our mighty, overwhelming enemies? Do we refuse to love God's covenant and walk in his fear? Look at Jael and follow her example. Do not give in to the reasoning and lifestyle of the unbelieving world. Use God's word as your sure defense to discern what is truth versus the lie. God's word must go before us to battle the sin that so easily besets us. Out of love for God and his church, we throw ourselves into the fray of the spiritual battle we must fight.

Do not fear to drive the tent spike of God's word through the head of the serpent against whom we fight. Maybe that means driving the stake through our cell phones or the movies that possess us. Maybe it means lopping the head off our incessant drive for pleasure and the treasures of this world. Through prayer we seek forgiveness for our failures, then endeavor to live a life of thankfulness. What a wonderful example of Christian warfare Jael provides us. You too are men and women of faith. Hold high the banner of Christ as you fight the good fight of faith!

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma serves as the pastor of Pittsburgh Protestant Reformed Church.

Lucas Heyboer

TENNESSEE YOUNG PEOPLE'S RETREAT

The 2021 Tennessee young people's retreat was held August 9 to 13 by Providence, Hudsonville, Unity, and First (Holland) Protestant Reformed Churches. The retreat took place at Eagle Rock Retreat Center in the city of Tallassee. It was about an eleven-hour drive, give or take a bit due to stops for food and restrooms. Though it was a lengthy trip, the beautiful scenery made it worth the drive.

The retreat center was situated high up in the Smoky Mountains. As we looked out from the lodge, the mountains and trees rolled on into the horizon as far as the eye could see. We witnessed the greatness of God's creation everywhere we went. From the rivers on which we canoed and tubed, to the clear blue skies over the mountains, we were surrounded by God's amazing handiwork each day. It is incredible to think that even with what finite faith we

have, God can use it to move mountains, something so vast and overwhelming. What a great and powerful God we have! David writes of this in Psalm 36:6: "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep." It ought to be a great comfort to us that our God is the God who created the mountains, whose righteousness and love for us far exceeds even the largest mountain we can see.

The camp at the retreat center consisted of four main buildings. These included a bunkhouse, a dining hall, a lodge, and a barn. The bunkhouse had two separate rooms, one for boys and one for girls, each with fifteen to twenty bunk beds inside. There was room inside to relax as well, although everyone mostly went outside or to the lodge during free time. The dining hall held both indoor and outdoor seating, and we were provided three meals a day, which

included a variety of food. The lodge was a large central building that functioned as our meeting place, as well as an area to socialize and relax. Last there was the barn, which contained a ping pong table, a room for Professor Gritters and his wife, and the gift shop.

Several different activities were held for young people to participate in. Everyone got to choose two activities from a list that included paintball, canoeing, a high ropes course, rock climbing, and arts and crafts. Tubing down the river and hiking were activities that everyone participated in. On the last day, a tournament was held between several teams in which various games were played. Each team had to provide one member to participate in every game. The games included a wheelbarrow race, shot put, a hula hoop contest, and several other exciting competitions. There were also games played between the teams as a whole, such as the rock-paper-scissors race and thaw-the-frozen-T-shirt. Even when no activities were being held, there were games available to play during free time, such as Spikeball, bean bag, and CROSSNET.

Most importantly, everyone enjoyed covenant fellowship with one another. We were spiritually edified in both our discussions and the speeches. Our theme for the convention was “Contending for the Faith.” We split into discussion groups and talked about what “contending” means for us as young people, and how this shows itself in our Christian walk. We discussed what this looks like in our day-to-day lives regarding our interactions both with others of like faith and with those who are not fellow believers. This discussion was beneficial for all, as opportunity was given to witness to one another while also learning to witness to everyone around us of the reason for the hope that is within us.

Two speeches were given by Professor Gritters over the course of the retreat. The speeches were very profitable, shedding light on how Christians

ought to contend for the faith as they journey through their young-adult life. One point that really hit home was when Professor Gritters said that it doesn’t matter what anyone thinks of you, because if you live your life for God alone and contend for the faith, no one will be able to say any evil of you. All true believers will love and respect those who share a like faith and share a love for our God.

Though the denomination-wide convention was canceled for this year and the retreat was attended by a much smaller group, it was still incredibly beneficial and enjoyable! There were even some aspects of having a smaller group that made it better than a large convention. Traveling was easier with fewer people, and having a smaller group allowed us to spread out for activities in different areas of the mountains. Discussion groups were more personal as well. It was disappointing not to be able to spend time with all our friends, but it did allow everyone to get to know some other young people with whom we typically don’t spend time. It was also a great opportunity to make some new friends!

Ask anyone who attended this retreat, and you’ll find that Christ used this opportunity for the edification of his church. Not only were we able to enjoy God’s amazing creation, but we were able to do so with other believing young people. We were also able to learn of God’s goodness and how to live our lives entirely for him, whether that was by the speeches we heard, our in-depth discussions, or simply through our fellowship with his people. These retreats are fantastic opportunities for the young people of the church, and it is my hope that the young people can continue to develop in their faith by this means in the years to come.

Lucas is a first-year student at Calvin University and is majoring in mechanical engineering. He attends Providence Protestant Reformed Church.

Current Events Scott Van Uffelen

POST-OLYMPIC REFLECTION

Although it’s been a couple of months since we’ve been immersed in news coming from Japan about

the 2020/2021 Olympic games, it’s still worth considering how these events are understood in the

modern worldview of our country. The “Top Story of the Day” on Monday, August 9 (at least according to my newsfeed), was how the US athletes “restored the soul of America” through their performances at the Olympics. The phrase came from President Joe Biden addressing the American athletes, speaking about how proud he and all Americans are of their accomplishments. Specific references were made to the standout stars and teams who won the most medals or who broke world records. There was nothing too surprising in the address to the athletes; all in all, it was a refrain of common clichés you would expect from any president congratulating those who represented their country in a global effort.

During the Tokyo Olympic Games, the US won the overall medal count—pulling in 113 total medals, with 39 gold, 41 silver, and 33 bronze. This makes the eighth consecutive Olympics in which the United States took home the most medals. The 39 gold medals were also the most of any nation, beating out China’s total (38 gold medals) in the last hours of the Olympics. Such a narrow victory is thrilling, especially when it comes over rival nations China and Russia (or more correctly, the “Russian Olympic Committee,” since Russian athletes were banned from directly representing their country for two years due to illegal doping). With “God Bless the U.S.A.” ringing in the background, we are tempted to stand alongside our president, waving the number one sign in the air and making proud remarks about how we are always the best. We could then go to sleep at night thinking that everything is right in the world because those representing freedom and liberty prevailed against our Communist foes yet again.

That’s how many in our country would like us to view the Olympics, but there are other lessons for us to learn from Tokyo. Significant worldview implications are at stake in how we view and celebrate the games and its athletes. The Olympics are a grand spectacle, for sure, open to all nations. For Christians, it is a grand spectacle that clearly showcases a fallen world that is bereft with sin, a world and its peoples that are looking for fulfillment, recognition, endorsements, and assurance that their whole life’s focus up to this point has not been in vain. The Olympics, in part, remind me of the final hours of the Tower of Babel, where the nations of the world were assembled with a singular goal yet worked against each other in its pursuit. Like the Tower of Babel, the proud Olympic village is soon abandoned as spectators and athletes disperse and a site once teeming with activity, chatter, and laughter

becomes a desolate place, often never used again.

For those who followed this summer’s Olympic events, you would do well to think deeply about the stories that came out of the Olympics and how the news media reported them. Consider, for example, how the secular media presented the stories of transgender athletes, or how it framed the issue of mental health after one prominent athlete pulled out of the games for a time. Though wrapped in an American flag and cloaked in the language of virtue, these stories tell us a lot about the priorities of this world and how they are becoming the norm in our country.

Much can also be learned from watching the athletes and their responses to victory and adversity. Covering these personal stories of triumph and tragedy is what the Olympic broadcasts do well when they choose to do so. From some of these stories a young person can readily observe the selfish response of athletes when they did not win a coveted gold medal, some of whom openly blamed others for cheating as an excuse for why they lost. But we can also learn from the proper responses of athletes that took place this year. Examples in this category include stories not of triumph but of failure while doing their best, of those who help others on the track at the expense of their own medal chances, of those who give up spots on a relay to someone who is more deserving, of teams who can celebrate with their teammates but also congratulate the opponents throughout the match, and of those who win gold but remain humble and contrite. The Olympics are a spectacle of human nature at every level.

More importantly, however, consider the declaration that the American athletes “restored the soul of America” through their performances. What does that even mean? Most Americans will forget who medaled in a specific event by the time of the next Olympics. Case in point, the most Googled phrase during the whole of the Olympics was “medal count.” Maybe that is what the “soul of America” means. We send the most athletes of any nation, we train more athletes in our country than any other, and we leave the game with the most medals (eight times in a row). But we are less interested in who the athletes are or even what event they won their medal in—we just need to know that our country emerged with more medals, preferably gold, than any other nation. The Olympics are over and we are free to move on to the college and professional athletes of specific sports we enjoy and hope they represent us well by winning a title too. Triumph and victory above all else!

Child of God, may we not be so shallow in our view and appreciation of sports and athletes. Whether in viewing or participating, may we strive to receive the prize, but not to obtain a corruptible crown. Our goal in all of life must be the incorruptible crown that cannot be attained by physical exertion (1 Cor. 9:24–25). Our soul cannot be restored through an athletic achievement, through the attainment of a medal, or by one representing us as a member of an earthly nation. Consider the wording of 2 Timothy 4:7–8, wherein we are called to run

the race set before us (not always the one we chose, Hebrews 12:1) and be confident that through him we have fought a good fight, we have finished the course, and we have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give at that day: and not to us only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Deep truths for us to consider as we reflect on the Olympic events that have now finished and our calling to run a race for the glory of our Lord.

Aaron Van Dyke

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

P. M. Kuiper, *Through Many Dangers* (Jenison: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2021).
Illustrated by Paula Barone

Through Many Dangers is a work of Christian, historical fiction that has just been released this summer by the RFPA. The book is written especially for young people and details the story of a group of Dutch Reformed boys who serve in the Union Army during the Civil War. The test of faith that this service entails is a witness to God's faithfulness amid the harrows of war and the sinful culture in which these young men live. *Beacon Lights* staff member Aaron Van Dyke sat down with the author to discuss the book and provided the interview below. We hope this whets your appetite for the full story!

Can you tell us a little bit about what inspired you to write this story?

First, what inspired me to write fiction. Some years ago, in the *Standard Bearer*, Prof. Engelsma wrote a review of a children's book about the struggle Reformed believers faced in the Netherlands in the 1600s. In the course of his review, he noted a lack of good Christian fiction written from a Reformed perspective and challenged Protestant Reformed young people to take up that task. I thought, well, I'm not so young, but I can do that.

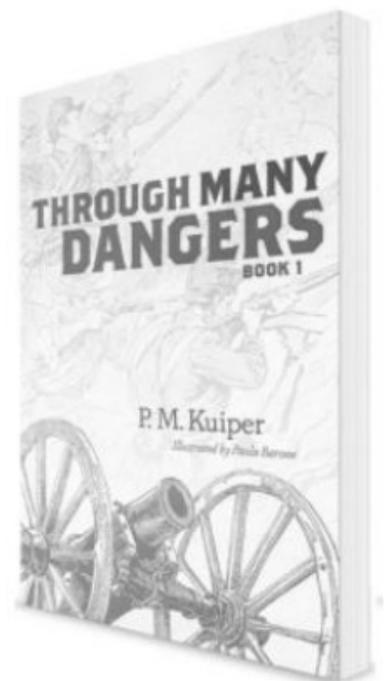
Then, as to this book, *Through Many Dangers*. I came across some letters from soldiers from the Dutch Reformed colony in Holland, Michigan, who fought in the Civil War. They struck me as honest

and real. They were spiritually minded young men, but they still did foolish things sometimes. I was intrigued by their struggle to live faithfully even when they were suddenly "out in the world."

Did the writing process involve a lot of research? What was the most surprising thing you learned in your research?

I did quite a bit of research on the Dutch emigration, the early days of the city of Holland, and various aspects of the Civil War. But when I get interested in something, I like to learn more about it, so that was an enjoyable part of writing the book.

I was surprised that Rev. Van Raalte promoted having the young men of the church volunteer to go off and fight in the war. Given their isolation in a Dutch-speaking colony and their concern to avoid worldliness, I would have expected him to resist that. But instead, he pressed on them their responsibilities as citizens. I'm sure many of the parents were



less enthusiastic about that. I suspect I would have been. But still, a large number of young men went.

Can you give a brief summary of the story?

The main character, Harm van Wyke, has recently turned eighteen. As the Civil War intensifies, Rev. Van Raalte urges the young men of Holland to join the infantry. Harm's father bitterly opposes the idea. Harm is unsure at first but decides to go, mostly because his friends are going. The story follows them through the war years, as they battle the Confederate Army in Kentucky and Tennessee, then take part in General Sherman's bloody Atlanta campaign. Along the way, they face exposure, disease, injury, and death. They also face daily temptations to forget God and turn from their faith.

How much of the story actually happened? Are there any people, places, or events in the story that *Beacon Lights* readers might be familiar with?

The story is based very much on historical events. Rev. Van Raalte was an influential Reformed minister and leader of the emigration from the Netherlands that resulted in the establishment of the city of Holland. His church, now known as Pillar Church, still stands in Holland. The young men of Holland joined the infantry and fought in the Civil War. My main characters are fictional, but I've tried to portray the trials they face and their spiritual attitudes in harmony with the available research.

Who are some of the main characters in the story? What kinds of spiritual struggles do they face? Will *Beacon Lights* readers find these characters relatable?

The main characters are Harm and his group of close friends. They were all raised to live a certain way—to honor God and walk faithfully. But once they join the infantry, they're removed from home and church and exposed to the world as never before. They each respond in different ways. Gerrit, who plans to enter the ministry, strives to maintain his life in the infantry pretty much as he lived it in Holland. Kees is more reckless, making friends he shouldn't make, and looking for fun in places he shouldn't be. Ted faces life with a good dose of humor, but also experiences some unique sorrows in his family.

I think the characters are very relatable to *Beacon Lights* readers because young people are at the age when they too must step beyond the security of home and church and begin to make their way in the wider world. Maybe it's at work, maybe at college, but suddenly they face new temptations. They

find that living as a believer isn't so easy—maybe it brings ridicule, maybe exclusion from a group. They discover that faith comes with a cost.

Who is your favorite character in the story?

I can't say I have a favorite. Some of the characters are more likeable than others, some make me laugh, and some are quite flawed, but they're all in the book because I think they advance the story and reveal something important about life in this world.

Why should *Beacon Lights* readers pick up your book?

I hope they read it because it's a good story. I hope they find it honest, exciting, funny, touching, and thought-provoking.

Do you have any advice for *Beacon Lights* readers who enjoy writing? Are there any resources you would recommend for writers looking for feedback?

I want to echo Prof. Engelsma in urging young people to write good fiction. The library is full of books on the craft of writing, and I can't add much to that. But I can speak to the importance of it. Writing good Christian fiction is a unique and powerful way to use our abilities to serve God and his people. It's okay to make that a priority.

For those who are already writing, I advise them to join a good writers' group or form one with like-minded friends who can be genuine in their encouragement and honest in their critique. That's been a great help to me.

Would you say writing Christian fiction is more challenging than writing general fiction?

Christian fiction is difficult because you want to be so careful that you don't write something that presents the story in a way that is wrong, or misunderstood, or harmful. On the other hand, our daily struggle to walk faithfully despite our sinful inclinations and the temptations of the world is an unending source of conflict, which is the backbone of every good story.

Do you have any other writing projects in the works?

I have several other stories in various stages of development. Because *Through Many Dangers* takes place in the infantry, it deals mostly with young men. Hopefully my next book will be able to focus more on strong female characters as well.

THE DAILY PRESS

“press toward the mark...”

(Philippians 3:14)

The Gospel of Luke (1): The Promise of a Savior Fulfilled

Although it is likely early in November when you are reading this, signs that Christmas is on its way are already all around you. Retail stores that you enter are probably decked out in Christmas decor and holiday sale signs. Advertisements everywhere encourage you to hurry up and start your Christmas shopping before it is too late. Some radio stations have even already started playing Christmas music! Most people look forward to the arrival of the holiday season. Children hear the story of Santa Claus and eagerly await his supposed arrival on Christmas Eve to bring them gifts, while their parents anticipate time off from work to relax and get together with family and friends.

Jewish children in the Old Testament also heard stories about the arrival of a very special visitor. For thousands of years, God’s people had been passing on stories from generation to generation about the promised Messiah who would come to deliver them. They were anticipating a Savior who would be the fulfillment of all God’s promises. There had been many signs that pointed to this Savior and prophets who foretold what his coming would be like. But they still did not know exactly when or how he would come. At times they were given deliverance from their enemies by military leaders such as the judges, but it was only temporary. There were a few godly kings who pictured the King who was coming, but each of their reigns eventually came to an end. None of these men were the true Messiah, the One who could provide lasting deliverance and salvation to his people and whose kingdom would have no end. The people of Israel had waited through many difficult seasons of captivity, foreign rule, and persecution. Generations of saints had come and gone without ever seeing the fulfillment of God’s promises. Prior to the beginning of Luke’s gospel account, there had been four hundred years of silence without any direct revelation from God. Perhaps many Jews

were beginning to doubt whether the Messiah would ever actually come. Maybe they were wondering if God had forgotten about them. But even when he was silent, God was not sitting idle. He was carefully orchestrating the events of the world to bring about his perfect plan for the salvation of his people. Our heavenly Father never forgets his promises, but he fulfills them according to his own timeline and in his own way. And usually, it is not at the time or in the way that we would prefer! Are you in a season where you are waiting on God for something? If you are tempted to be impatient or anxious, remember to pray for patience to trust in his perfect plan just as the faithful saints of old, such as Simeon and Anna, did.

Then finally, after all those years of silence, an angel appears—first to Zacharias, and then to Mary. Mary, as a direct descendant of David, undoubtedly heard the stories about the promised Messiah from childhood. Now the angel Gabriel appears to tell her that she would be the one to bear him into this world. Mary’s believing response to hearing that her Savior was finally coming was to praise and worship the Lord. Rather than exalt herself as the one who had been chosen to be the mother of the Son of God, she magnified the Lord and humbly expressed awe and gratitude for his goodness and mercy to his people in her beautiful song of faith. Do you also magnify God, not just at Christmas or on Sundays, but every day of the year? Or do you minimize him in your daily life to make room for other things? Daily Bible study and prayer will keep God’s goodness and mercy in the front of your mind so that you are better able to magnify him in all that you do.

Following the birth of his own son, Zacharias’ first words after being able to speak again were also a song of praise. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, he gave a beautiful prophecy that testifies of God’s faithfulness, both to him and to the entire nation

of Israel. He was eager to tell everyone about the salvation and deliverance that Jesus would bring, as well as how his son John would prepare the way for Jesus to begin his ministry. The shepherds who visited Jesus were also eager to tell everyone about what they had seen and heard. We read in Luke 2:17 that they “made known abroad” what they had learned about this special child. After seeing baby Jesus at the temple, we read that Anna the prophetess “spoke

of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38). Are you eager to tell everyone around you about your Savior? Do you testify with your words and actions about God and what he has done for you? As you read this month through the history of Jesus’ early life and his preparation for ministry, think of ways that you can tell others about the “good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10) that you are reading in the gospel according to Luke.

Reading Plan

Date	Read	Study Question	Sing or Pray
Nov 8	Luke 1:1–4	What was Luke’s purpose for writing this gospel account? How does this affect the way that you read it?	Psalter #28
Nov 9	Luke 1:5–12	Do you think that some of God’s people thought he had forgotten about them during the four hundred years of silence leading up to Gabriel’s appearance to Zacharias? Have you ever felt this way?	Psalter #22
Nov 10	Luke 1:13–17; Malachi 4:5–6	What would be so special about the child that Zacharias and Elisabeth would have? How would he fulfill the prophecy that Malachi spoke four hundred years earlier?	Psalter #7
Nov 11	Luke 1:18–25	Why was Zacharias unable to speak after his response to the angel Gabriel’s appearance? Have you ever struggled to believe one of God’s promises to you?	Psalter #6
Nov 12	Luke 1:26–33	What does Gabriel tell Mary about the son that she will have? Why was it so important for him to be the Son of God?	Psalter #242
Nov 13	Luke 1:34–38	How does Mary’s response to Gabriel’s message show her faith and trust in God? Do you truly believe the words of verse 37?	Psalter #243
Nov 14	2 Samuel 7:12–29	What is the significance of the fact that Jesus is not only the Son of God, but the Son of David?	Psalter #241
Nov 15	Luke 1:39–45	We see evidence here of the Holy Spirit working in Elisabeth and even John while he was still in her womb. What does this teach us about the salvation of unborn children?	Psalter #85
Nov 16	Luke 1:46–56	Mary’s song of praise is often called “the Magnificat” because of how her words magnify the greatness of the Lord. What wonderful characteristics of God does she emphasize?	The Song of Mary
Nov 17	1 Samuel 2:1–10	What similarities do you see between Hannah’s prayer of thanksgiving and the song of Mary? What does this tell you?	Psalter #283
Nov 18	Luke 1:57–66	Why was Zacharias able to speak again? How was this action evidence of his renewed faith?	Psalter #277
Nov 19	Luke 1:67–75	In verse 69 Zacharias says that Jesus will be a “horn of salvation.” What does this tell us about what the coming Messiah will do for his people?	The Song of Zacharias
Nov 20	Luke 1:76–77; Isaiah 40:3–8	How would John the Baptist prepare the people for the coming of Jesus? How are pastors today called to prepare for Jesus’ second coming?	Psalter #261

Nov 21	Luke 1:78–80	What does the imagery in these verses reveal about the Savior who was coming? How does this give you hope as a believer today?	Psalter #264
Nov 22	Luke 2:1–5; Micah 5:1–3	Here we see God using a wicked government leader to fulfill a promise that he had made to his people. What comfort does this give to you as a child of God?	Psalter #30
Nov 23	Luke 2:6–7; Isaiah 53:1–3	How were the humble circumstances of Jesus’ birth symbolic of what his earthly ministry would be like?	Psalter #46
Nov 24	Luke 2:8–12	Joy is a common theme that we will see in the gospel of Luke. Do you have great joy when you hear the good news of the gospel? Why or why not?	Psalter #406
Nov 25	Luke 2:13–14	The Roman Empire was experiencing a time of great peace and prosperity that is known as the Pax Romana. How is the peace that the angels speak of here different from earthly peace?	Psalter #407
Nov 26	Luke 2:15–20	Notice the differences between the shepherds’ response to Jesus’ birth and Mary’s response. What can you learn from both responses?	Psalter #141
Nov 27	Luke 2:21–24	Research the meaning of the name “Jesus.” What does our Savior’s earthly name reveal to us about him?	Psalter #77
Nov 28	Luke 2:25–32	What truths about salvation do we learn from Simeon’s words in verses 31 & 32?	The Song of Simeon
Nov 29	Luke 2:33–35	What does Simeon prophesy about both Jesus and Mary in these verses? How is this fulfilled later in Jesus’ life?	Psalter #164
Nov 30	Luke 2:36–38	How does Anna’s life exemplify what it means to be a “living sacrifice” (see Rom. 12:1)? What can you learn from her?	Psalter #163
Dec 1	Luke 2:39–40	Compare this passage to Judges 13:24, 1 Samuel 2:26, Luke 1:80. What does this teach us about Jesus’ childhood?	Psalter #259
Dec 2	Luke 2:41–52	Here we see Jesus submitting to his earthly parents even though they did not fully understand him and his work. What can you learn from this?	Psalter #255
Dec 3	Luke 3:1–9	John prepared the way for Jesus by preaching that the people had to repent. Why is being reminded of our sin good news for God’s people?	Psalter #141
Dec 4	Luke 3:10–20	Following their repentance and baptism, John gives the people specific ways that they must change their life. What do all his examples have in common? What does this teach you?	Psalter #268
Dec 5	Luke 3:21–22	How do you see all three persons of the Trinity present in the baptism of Jesus? Why did this event mark the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry?	Psalter #3
Dec 6	Luke 3:23–38	Who are some of the notable figures in Jesus’ ancestry? What does reading the genealogy of Jesus Christ teach us about him?	Psalter #408
Dec 7	Luke 4:1–13	Notice how Christ used the word of God to ward off the attacks of Satan. What Scriptures can you use to fight against your own personal temptations?	Psalter #162



SUMMER WRITING CONTEST WINNERS

Beacon Lights is excited to announce the winners of the 2021 Summer Writing Contest. The staff and judges were thrilled with the number of applicants and quality of the writing we received. Thanks to all who participated and congratulations to the authors of winning essays! We look forward to publishing some of these excellent pieces in the coming year.

Grades 7–9: Ministers of the Word

1. A Vessel unto Honor (George Martin Ophoff): Emma Bosveld
2. Ministering to the Nations (Rev Rodney Miersma): Kara DeJong
3. Rev Michael DeVries: Anna DeVries
4. Cornelius Hanko: Hailey Mingerink
5. David Engelsma: Luke Drnek
- *Honorable mention(s)*: God's Humble Warrior: Jake Mingerink // Rev Jason Kortering: Landon Kamps

Grades 10–12: A Most Elegant Book

1. Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: Leah Mowery
2. God's Creation of the Body: Tyler Block
3. End Times Revealed Through Birds: Abigail Schimmel
4. God's Elect Lights: Sam Feenstra
5. The Mountains and Rock Formations: Zachary Hollema
- *Honorable mention*: The Sun: Braylon Mingerink

Post-high, age 18–22: Cults and Other Religions

1. Mormonism: The Book of Moses: Luke Potjer
2. Apollo Quiboloy: Appointed Son of God: Rebekah Buiters
3. The Terror of Doubt and an Uncertain Future: The Theological Errors of Islam: Alison VanBaren
4. Atheism: Shawna Hoksbergen
5. The Heaven's Gate Cult: Josie Postma
- *Honorable mention*: The Arminian Error: Braden Lubbers

Post-high, age 23+: Nations, Tribes, and Tongues

1. A History of Christianity in South Africa: Bruce Feenstra
2. Australia: Brianna Brands
3. A Reformed Presence on Guam: Skip Hunter
4. God's Church in Egypt: Lorraine Smit
5. History of the Church in the Philippines and Call to World Mission: Julian Kennedy
- *Honorable mention*: The Spread of Christianity in Guatemala: Kristin Crossett

BAPTISMS

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Mark 10:14

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to:
Tinley Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brandon & Brittany Kroese—Calvary, IA

Eli Jade, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jade & Jessica VandeKamp—Calvary, IA

Levi Dewey, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jesse & Lydia Lanting—Crete, MI

Owen Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Justin & Lexi Gunnink—Edgerton, MN

Mia Grace, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jesse & Danielle Busscher—Georgetown, MI

Theodore Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy & Hailey Helms—Georgetown, MI

Amelia Kay, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Andrew & Tonya Holwerda—Georgetown, MI

Asa Jay, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill & Joanna Leep—Grace, MI

Lynden Jon, son of Mr. & Mrs. Dustin & Cassidy Nienhuis—Grace, MI

Jett Todd, son of Mr. & Mrs. Collin & Ann Heynen—Heritage, SD

Brooklyn Tae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Phil & Sadie Koole—Hudsonville, MI

Hayden Faith, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Alex & Angela Postma—Hudsonville, MI

Kamden Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Carl & Nicole Bruinsma—Hull, IA

Garret Ray, son of Mr. & Mrs. Brady & Dayna Kooiker—Hull, IA

Elias Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Noah & Megan Waldner—Hull, IA

Hadynn Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dylan & Lisa Hoekstra—Loveland, CO

Jetson Ron, son of Mr. & Mrs. Nathan & Emily Koole—Loveland, CO

Grant William, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bill & Linda Pipe—Loveland, CO

Gianna Danielle, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Todd Zandstra—Peace, IN

Goldie Anne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Garth & Stephanie McKinney—Southeast, MI

Petrinella Scott, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brad & Taylor Ophoff—Southeast, MI

Selah Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave & Bri Ophoff—Southeast, MI

Marcus Raymond, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jordan & AnnaMae Pipe—Southeast, MI

Lincoln Scott, son of Mr. & Mrs. Daniel & Rachel Miersma—Trinity, MI

James David, son of Mr. & Mrs. Nick & Kathryn Elzinga—Unity, MI

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 10:32

Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

Braxton Brummel—Calvary, IA

Darren Brummel—Calvary, IA

Kaleb VanMaanen—Calvary, IA

Courtney Cammenga—Georgetown, MI

Brandon Kooima—Hull, IA

Colton Kuiper—Hull, IA

Marlayna Span—Immanuel, Lacombe, CAN

Kayla Campell—Loveland, CO

Monte Kalsbeek—Loveland, CO

MARRIAGES

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” Psalm 48:14

Mr. Caden Vis & Miss Alyssa Maassen—Calvary, IA

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