

The Grapevine



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SAFARI · Kindergarten's annual safari brought students face to face with wild creatures of all types: lizards, lions, tigers and office staff.

Christian Unity

By Chris Steenhof

Psalm 133 is a beautiful short poem about unity. It centers around two metaphors that help the reader understand how essential unity is to the vitality of a community. The Psalmist describes unity as the oil poured on the head of the high priest, saturating his beard and his robes. He compares unity to the dew that allows for plants and vegetation to flourish. In both cases, the Psalmist suggests that unity permeates everything, becoming part of the fabric of a community.

Unfortunately, we haven't seen a lot of unity in our culture in recent days. It seems like the Covid pandemic has divided people by either creating new divisions or exacerbating ones that existed previously. Even more unfortunately, this disunity has impacted the Christian community as well.

In days to come, BVCS and other Christian schools have a tremendous opportunity to promote unity and a shared vision across ideological, denominational, and political lines. We can do this by focusing on our vision to be an institu-

tion that helps students see the world through the lens of faith and living a life of service to others that flows from that understanding.

This does not mean avoiding difficult topics but instead listening to each other with grace and understanding. It means listening to voices that have traditionally been silenced or forgotten. It means accepting that we must live with some ideological tensions as we work together toward our common vision.

At BVCS we have been working towards filling some key positions in our school. It's been exciting to talk to candidates about the vision of our school, especially when much of our time recently has been focused on things like Covid protocols. As we interact with potential staff members, it has been a time of thinking deeply about our vision and direction as a school.

My prayer is that BVCS can strive to saturate our community with a sense of unity in the days to come as we navigate these turbulent and confusing times.

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Upcoming Events

For complete and up-to-date calendar and event information, please visit www.bvcs.ca/events-calendar/



Northern CEBC Conference

Friday, April 23

Non-instructional day as BVCS hosts this virtual conference by the Christian Educators of BC.

BVCS Litter-a-thon

Thursday, May 6

Continuing the annual tradition, BVCS students (grades 8 - 12) will spend the day beautifying the Highway 16 corridor. Info: www.bvcs.ca/litter

BVCS Golf Tournament

Saturday, May 29

Eighteen holes for a great cause! Join us for this annual tournament in a revised, Covid-friendly format. Info: www.bvcs.ca/golf

Grandfriends Day

April: stay tuned!

We're looking forward to connecting with you! Covid protocols require that we host this online, but that doesn't mean you won't love what we want to show you. Stay tuned for the date!

Spring Society Meeting

Monday, May 10

We'll be reporting, voting and celebrating Christian education together. We'll host this in an online format.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: ATHLETICS

Deep Hopes

Squeals of delight during a game of tag, the uncontrollable laughter of a misplay during a game, or maybe even a few words of frustration after a defeat. These are just some of the things that you might hear coming from the BVCS gym. The largest "classroom" of the school produces the largest sounds and arguably the largest emotions as well. Thankfully during this Covid time, our gym has continued to be a place where kids let their emotions and legs run wild, a place where they expand their athletic abilities, and a place where relationships grow deeper. So much more happens in the gym than just having a good time and I am so glad that I get to be a part of that at BVCS.

Throughout my life, sports and competition have always served a much deeper purpose than just having fun. It's been about passion, hard work, experiencing rich emotions, learning to work with teammates, and discovering the unique person that God created me to be.

As the Athletic Director at BVCS, it is my deep hope that every student who joins an athletic team can learn something about themselves and something about God. I want them to learn that no matter their skill level hard work matters, that giving their absolute best and playing with passion pleases God. I want them to learn to stay in control of their actions while experiencing overwhelm-

ing emotions. I want them to learn that working as a team and playing their individual role is way more beneficial than competing with each other to be the "star". I want them to learn that God has given them athletic talents as unique gifts and when they use those talents they honour Him. I want them to learn how to treat teammates, opponents, and referees with the utmost respect even in

I want them to learn that God has given them athletic talents as unique gifts and when they use those talents they honour Him.

the face of adversity. Ultimately, I want them to know that all of these lessons learned during athletics can be applied into all areas of their lives so they are better equipped to be effective examples of how rich a life centered in Christ can be.

It has been a blessing to continue practicing with our athletic teams according to Covid protocols this year. Coaches, parents, and athletes have been extremely patient and understanding as we navigate the ever changing protocols and procedures. However, I look forward to when our student athletes can once again be thrown into the crucible of competition. For it is through those wonderful tests that their characters can be refined to be ever more pleasing to God.

James Horner is the Athletic Director and teacher at BVCS.

Things can change. Watch www.bvcs.ca for more information.

Kindergarten and Rainy Days

Kindergarten students believe with all their hearts that God is an amazing Creator. They are full of excitement as we welcome the new season of spring! Their cute umbrellas and rubber boots reflect the joy they truly feel as they ooze in the mud, feel and taste rain and jump in puddles.

As you read, *Selah*: pause and reflect. You may just find yourself celebrating spring as a five year old.

In spring:

- I love to hear the rain on my tin roof, falling against the window panes and running through the gutters.
- I love to see the bunnies come out to eat and play in the green grass.
- I can hear the birds singing and it makes me happy.
- Puddles are the best! As we jump in and splash around the water flies high. The mud goes CRRZZY! Getting wet makes me smile.
- There are lots of pussy willows that I love to pick for my family!
- We planted flowers to put in our "house for flowers"!
- I love the butterflies! They are so loved and so pretty!



- In the spring, we honor our loved ones by visiting their graves with our whole families.



- The crash, bang and boom of thunder and lightning storms are powerful and exciting.



"I love it outside. Love it, Love it, Love it!"

- There is nothing like feeling the wind in your face when you can finally ride bikes and drive quads. I love to watch God's creation as I drive.
- I love when my family has an Easter egg hunt on the beach in the sand—I always get the biggest egg cause it is my birthday.
- Spring reminds me that Jesus came alive at Easter. He is special and He

died on the cross to save us from our sins.

- I love it outside. Love it, Love it, Love it!

I hope these words inspire you to dig out your rubber boots and go puddle jumping. Or grab an old umbrella and just take a quiet walk in the rain. But remember to breathe deep and reflect on the Almighty, the One who made and gave us the beautiful season of spring. Enjoy!

Christa LaFountain is the kindergarten teacher at BVCS



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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Todd Van Driel (2009)

Tell me about your life journey after graduating from BVCS?

It's hard to believe that my high school graduation is so long ago! After graduating from BVCS in 2009, I immediately moved to The King's University (Edmonton) for my undergrad. During my time at King's I played soccer and volleyball, and I thoroughly enjoyed playing one final year of those sports with my older brother Daryl. While at King's, I was blessed to play for Edmonton Scottish, a very high level soccer club in the city. I learned a great deal while being with that club, and it facilitated a high level of play for me. In my last year at King's I was a "player coach"—an opportunity which set me off on my path toward coaching soccer. I began assistant coaching at King's in 2014 while also working on campus as Athletics and Recreation Coordinator. I eventually earned a promotion to Athletics Manager, and I have been at King's ever since. I became the Men's Soccer Head Coach in 2018. I stay engaged in volleyball and soccer, and God has opened doors for me to work on other projects as well.

How did the Christian education you received at BVCS and The King's University impact your journey?

Christian education set a firm foundation of biblical knowledge and a firm foundational faith. To be surrounded by like-minded people throughout my time in Christian elementary and secondary institutions was very comforting. Looking back, my elementary and secondary education at BVCS solidified biblical and theological knowledge. Moving into a Christian post secondary education at The King's University



took me toward real world theological processes. Knowing the facts was not enough; knowing the context, the why, or the how behind so much of the biblical story can prove to galvanize passion toward what we were taught. King's did a great job of further exposing me to the "real world". Christian kids leaving home for the first time may ask, "do I truly believe what I was taught while

My faith has shown me that sport and fitness bring out life lessons in so many ways.

growing up?" Thankfully for me, King's was an atmosphere that allowed me to face that question and answering it with "yes, absolutely".

How did your BVCS experience impact your career?

I was truly blessed to be a part of sports teams at BVCS. By playing, learning and immersing myself in the sports world I was allowed to find my passion in that area. To have a Phys Ed Teacher that was as passionate about movement education was very contagious, but more importantly, fun. In

a world that needs movement more than ever, there is an increased need for movement education professionals to engage things like chronic obesity, mental health, adaptations and physical enjoyment. Movement and activity is a way to enjoy the company of those around us in a stress-free setting. God created us to move and enjoy our lives to the fullest. Addressing our physical health using activity and a proper diet could mean a longer life lived with those we love. My faith has shown me that sport and fitness bring out life lessons in so many ways: grief, passion, perseverance, celebration and joy (to name a

few) are common to both sport and life. I have the opportunity to further reach out to the next generation and allow them to experience those lessons in an environment that is much less stressful than real life.

How does your faith impact your role as a coach and your other roles at King's?

First, that there is going to be more than this "current life". For Christians, our time on this earth is but a speck in the grand scheme of life. We are made for more than this. How can we use

our time to the greatest of our ability in areas of faith and relationships? How can we make use of the limited amount of time we are given to bless others? For me as a coach, many of the players that come into the King's system are only going to be there for a short time. How can we best prepare them for that next phase of life? Are any of these student athletes going to be professional athletes? Possibly, but the odds are *very* low. So, let's then turn to using sport as a way to further them as human beings and as Christians. Let's use sport to create servant leaders. Let's use sport as a way to connect them to a larger network of people that they can share their lives with. My faith has endless connections with what I do.



ABOVE - Todd & Kate Van Driel

What about BVCS has stayed with you?

Man, so many things! At the end of the day, you cannot replace experiences. Things like trips, games, extracurricular activities—these are the things students remember (at least I do!). Beyond sporting events like provincials and zone tournaments, trips like the Haida Gwaii and Bard on the Beach—anything outside of the normal—are so much appreciated. Don't get me wrong, they take *lots* of time and energy to plan

and follow through on, but wow do we students remember them well into our adulthood. "Out of the box" experiences will stay with students. I remember very

little of the classroom course work (that's not to say it didn't benefit me!), but in terms of lasting impressions on me personally, I loved the things that were out of the norm.

Any other things that would help us learn more about how Christian education and BVCS have impacted you?

I value my experience in Christian educational immensely. Christians are challenged on their beliefs every day.

In a world with increasing pressures to understand and live life based on facts and nothing else, faith is increasingly important. Christian education has been so helpful in bringing fact and knowledge into the faith that I hold so tightly. I think it is very important for students in Christian secondary institutions to be challenged to think about their faith and seek truth and understanding. The challenge, as I mentioned earlier, is that upon leaving this system students face challenges in their faith every day. But if they have been encouraged to seek truth for themselves, they will always come around to the truth that is Christ and what He has to offer us!



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worth of new technology, equipment and more for BVCS students (without raising tuition to do it).



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That's Just Awesome

In this section, we want to focus on student success stories in and out of the classroom as teachers and students work together to “appreciate, understand, and evaluate the world” (from the BVCS Vision Statement). In each edition, we will focus on a different area/grade at BVCS. In this issue, we feature high school Bible and Social Studies classes.

In Social Studies 8 students created and presented realistic models of the different types of housing that were common in Europe's Middle Ages. It was encouraging to see a high level of student interest and engagement in this project. I was very impressed with the amount of creativity and small group cooperation students showed. Several students commented about the basic injustices of a rigid class system—a mature observation based on their comparisons of dramatically different house sizes and styles.

After watching *The Two Popes* in Bible 8 (as part of their study of the Roman Catholic Church), students were required to write a letter to Pope Francis. In these letters, students asked him questions about himself, the papacy, the Roman Catholic faith and personal questions. These covered a wide range of topics from “How much do you get paid?” and “Do you have any pets?” to “What is your favourite Bible story” and “Do you feel God chose you for this position?” Time will tell if any of them receive an answer.

Social Studies 10 students demonstrated great passion and determination to research and defend one of Canada's Prime Ministers as being the G.O.A.T. (Greatest Of All Time). The biggest surprise? Brian Mulroney won. He was one of Canada's least popular Prime Ministers when he stepped down from office in 1993.

These same students have shown strong interest in learning about Canada's role in WW I as demonstrated by their intricate and detailed models of a topic of interest related to the war; from trench warfare scenes and Vimy Ridge to recruitment posters and a gas mask.

Bible students in grades 10 – 12 were very engaged participants and effective fellow-teachers to their classmates in the recent monotheism unit. They did an amazing job teaching each other about various Jewish and Islamic feasts, complete with various foods, drinks, and sometimes—even costumes and gifts for one another! I was blown away by their organizational skills and creativity in completing this assessment. It was awesome to see.

Many students in BC First Peoples 12 have commented that “they are learning things they never knew” about early settler-Indigenous relations in the Bulkley Valley. Students have lamented at how the choices made by people several generations ago continue to have negative effects in the present. Several students were moved emotionally by a Wet'suwet'en guest speaker who lived in Smithers' Indiantown in her childhood and re-committed themselves to living justly in the present.

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TOP · Social Studies 10 students show off a WWI battlefield, complete with trenches, mud, barbed wire and shell craters.
BOTTOM · BCFP 12 (BC First Peoples 12) students listen carefully to Violet Gellenbeck as she shares via Zoom about her experiences growing up in Indiantown here in Smithers.

STAFF PROFILE

Myrna Johnson

I was born in a small mining town called Bralorne, BC. When I was nine we moved to Nanaimo. This was a culture shock for me and I had a difficult time adjusting. Providentially, the first friend I made invited me to go to Sunday School with her. It was through this that I came to know Jesus as friend and Saviour. Although my parents were not Christians, they did not object to my involvement in church and youth services and activities. When I graduated from high school, however, they had a difficult time understanding my decision to go to Bible College instead of university. It took several years for me to earn enough to complete the course for a diploma in English and Bible.

After three years of Bible College, my desire was to find a position where I could support a mission to spread the Gospel. I took a job doing office work for a small Christian school. As time went on, I found myself doing more and more in the classroom with students who needed extra help. This is when I first experienced the joy of what I call the "light bulb moments"—when students who have been struggling are able to put the pieces together and understanding brightens

their faces. It became clear that teaching was what God was calling me to do.

I enrolled in the education faculty at the University of Victoria. Just at that time the requirements for the Bachelor of Education degree were changed from a four-year program to a five-year program. Since I could not afford a fifth year, I decided to leave and begin teaching with just my teaching license. The economy at that time was in a recession. Many new teachers were only able to get on the bottom of very long on-call lists. I realized I would need to look further afield to find a teaching position. I found a position in a small church school in Grand Forks. Over the next eleven years, I taught multi-grade classes ranging from grade two to grade nine. During this time, I came to appreciate Christian education and the support of the parents in their children's education.

My next position was in another small church school in Mackenzie. While there, I taught multi-grade classes from grade two to six. It was also during this time that I saw the power of Christian education to change the lives of students and families. After teaching there for ten



years I decided it was past time that I completed my Bachelor of Education. I took a year off to return to the University of Victoria. After returning to teaching in Mackenzie for a year, I learned that the school would be closing.

In 2006 I came to teach at Bulkley Valley Christian School. During my time here I have taught kindergarten, grade 3, grade 5/6 and covered all the elementary grades for teacher prep times. For the last several years I have been teaching grade 2/3. I have also worked with special education. At Bulkley Valley Christian School, for the first time in my teaching career, I have been blessed to have an abundance of resources available to enhance my teaching. It has also been a huge blessing work with encouraging staff and a community dedicated to supporting Christian education. During my time here I have been able to spend time teaching beyond the curriculum, helping students learn how to resolve conflicts with their peers, how to communicate their feelings in acceptable ways, and how to live in Christian community.

Throughout my life I can testify to the loving kindness of God and to His faithfulness to empower me to do whatever He has called me to do.

Myrna Johnson currently teaches the combined grade 2/3 class at BVCS.



A LOOK IN THE DOOR

What would you see if you were to drop in to BVCS on any given day? In each issue of The Grapevine, we'd like to give you 'a look in the door' on classroom and out-of-classroom learning in various areas of our school.

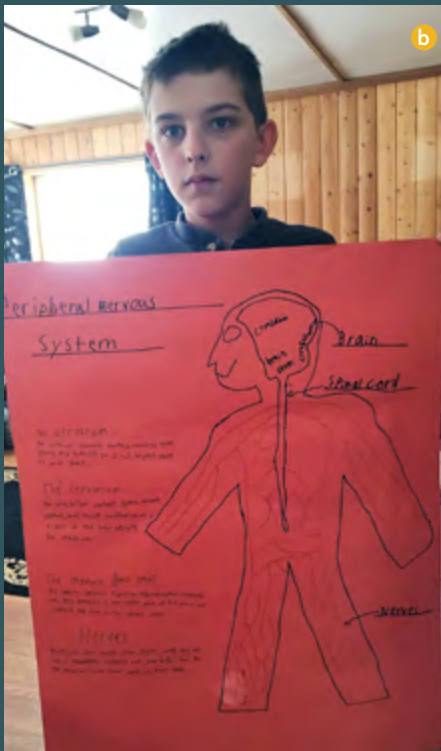


A LOOK IN THE DOOR

Distributed Learning

The Bulkley Valley Christian School Society operates two schools: Bulkley Valley Christian School and Bulkley Valley Christian Distributed Learning. The students showcased here are BVCDL students who love learning at home!

- a. Ezme and Kinza keeping warm.
- b. Have a heart! Caleb has discovered new things about the human body.
- c. A nerve wracking! Xzavier and the nervous system.



A Warm Welcome

It's admissions season and we're thrilled to welcome a number of new families to the BVCS community, beginning this September.

- Ryan & Amanda Recina (Hudson, K)
- Brandon & Amanda Boonstra (Jay, K)
- Brad & Vanessa Vandergaag (Grayson, K)
- Rodney & Bailey Leffers (Jordynnn, K)

A number of other families are still in the admissions process. We will include their names in future Grapevine issues.



Why is Blue Dog Blue?

The Grade 4 class spent some time in Art learning about George Rodrigue. He was a contemporary artist who used bright colours in his work. The class was inspired by his 'blue dog' art. After reading *Why is Blue Dog Blue*, the students learned about complementary colours as well as how to blend colours with chalk pastel. Their 'blue dogs' certainly add some much needed colour to our hallway!