

HILITES

WINTER 2024

FLOURISHING



"May the Lord cause you to flourish, both you and your children." Psalm 115:14

www.schs.org



SCRAP METAL DRIVE

**Friday & Saturday
April 12 - 13, 2024**

Put your old scraps to good use!

Metals (steel, aluminum, copper, brass, etc.), tired appliances (washing machines, dryers, water heaters, etc.), worn-out farm equipment, used car and equipment batteries, electric wiring, stripped or unstripped copper wire, tools, old cars, and more.

Proceeds will benefit Tuition Assistance.



CALENDAR NEWS

FEBRUARY

- 5 Blood Drive
- 5 Music Boosters Soup Supper - 5:00 - 7:00 PM
- 5 - 9 Winterfest Week
- 7 Band/Orchestra Concert - 7:00 PM

MARCH

- 7 - 9 *Shrek: The Musical* - 7:00 PM

APRIL

- 12 - 13 Scrap Metal Drive
- 22 Blood Drive
- 28 Orchestra Concert - 3:00 PM

MAY

- 1 Society Meeting - 7:00 PM
- 3 Senior Saints/Grandparents Day
- 5 Band Concert - 2:00 PM
- 5 Choir Concert - 7:00 PM
- 10 Student Directed Plays
- 16 Graduation - 7:30 PM

JUNE

- 8 Rod VanDyke Memorial Golf Outing @ Thornapple Pointe (*take note of new date and location*)

Please refer to the 2023-24 Events School Calendar on our website for more information.
www.schs.org



ANNUAL SOCIETY MEETING

**Wednesday, May 1, 2024
7:00 PM**

Please join us to vote for new Board members and the proposed budget for 2024-2025.
In April, you may visit our website (schs.org) to review the nominees and financials.

On the Cover: SCHS volunteered at Wedgwood Christian Services, for the annual Sailor Serve Day, where they weeded and spread joy through inspiring chalk art.

The South Christian HiLites publication is produced two times per year.

SCHS is an equal opportunity institution. SCHS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, or physical/mental handicap in its educational programming and activities, including enrollment, employment, and contracting.

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WELCOME TO THE WINTER HILITES



In their book *Restoring All Things: God's Audacious Plan to Change the World through Everyday People*, authors John Stonestreet and Warren Cole Smith write:

“The Bible is not, or not merely, a book about how to have a better life or handle life's problems. It is a book that explains the universe and how God is in the process of redeeming and restoring it to its original good, true, and beautiful state. He created it good and loves it still, despite its brokenness and frustration. He has plans for it yet and invites the redeemed to live redemptively, for its good and our flourishing.”

At the core, this is the narrative that drives our work at South Christian: that God loves the world and everything in it; that it was created good; and that God still has good plans for the world despite its chaos and sin. We read stories in Scripture that demonstrate God's desire to partner with people in the redemptive work here on earth—both “for its good and our flourishing.”

This issue of the Hilites contains just a few stories of students flourishing. In it, I hope you'll also see how God is compelling both current students and graduates to take active roles in the redemptive work of the kingdom here on earth.

Blessed to partner with you in this work,

Aaron Meckes
Head of School



STAFF UPDATES

Thank You
for your 10 years of service!



John Hendrikse
Social Studies Teacher



The English Department was able to attend the National Council of Teachers of English Convention that brought thousands of educators together for networking, inspiration and learning. One keynote speaker was actor Tom Hanks.

PRINCIPAL UPDATE

This fall, the majority of our staff attended the Christian Educators Association (CEA) annual convention. Most years the CEA convention takes place in South Bend, Indiana so Christian school staff from throughout the Midwest can gather together. (Fun fact—next year South Christian will be hosting the convention!) The convention days are filled with worship, keynote addresses, breakout sessions, and networking. On top of all that, this time provides bountiful opportunities for our staff to fellowship together in meaningful ways.

One theme of this year's convention was "flourishing." *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines flourishing as "growing or developing in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly favorable environment." Our final keynote address was presented by Dr. Lynn Swaner who wrote the book *Flourishing Together: A Christian Vision for Students, Educators, and Schools*. Dr. Swaner made two main points in her address:

- We flourish together and not alone.
- There are no flourishing children where there are no flourishing adults.

When I think about the meaning of flourishing and Dr. Swaner's points, I see South Christian as a very favorable environment for healthy and vigorous learning, growth, and development. Our top-notch facilities, staff, and community are deeply devoted to our mission of equipping students to live Christ-centered lives and serve God to their greatest potential.

The Lord wants us to thrive. He reveals this to us in Psalm 115:14, "May the Lord cause you to flourish, both you and your children" (NIV). With the new year, now is a great time to reflect on what you, your family, and your community might need to flourish. Consider one or two new practices that you can begin in 2024 that may lead you to participate in God's redemptive work toward flourishing for all.

Your partner in Christian Education,

Krista Wright
Principal



THE BLESSING OF SOUTH CHRISTIAN

This year marks my first at South Christian High School. Transferring from an online school, I chose to spend my senior year at South Christian to experience the dynamics of an actual high school, facilitate a healthier transition into college, and to have a closer and stronger relationship with God.

I grew up in a Christian home where my parents taught me to believe in God. When I was four years old, I personally asked Jesus into my heart. I was getting ready for bed when my dad came in to pray with me. I don't remember if I had asked him about Jesus or if he brought it up, but I remember being excited and happy. That was the first time I fully acknowledged God. It was my own choice. From there my relationship with God continued to grow, praying at night, praying with my parents, and praying at the dinner table. Sadly, when I was ten years old my grandma passed away. Doubt crept in and I became more of an observant Christian. I was still close with God, but it seemed like our relationship was drifting and God seemed like a distant stranger.

In September 2022, my sister who was in 8th grade, started to explore her high school options, including South Christian. I had no clue that it was even a choice for me to go to South Christian, but once I knew it was an option I wanted to go here. I had no idea why, but it was like a full force hit me and I started looking more at the school. I was oddly very into South Christian, when before, it wasn't even on my mind even though I drive by it every time I leave my house. I have social anxiety. Online school never helped me manage it, so I worried about how I'd be able to go to school in person. Before school began, I went to Senior Camp and that was a game changer. I felt good being there even if I was anxious, nervous, and tense at times. I had fears: no one would like me or I wouldn't

make any friends since they were all in their friend groups already. However, everyone was and still is very inclusive and welcoming.

I'm glad I'm here, and am excited that I'm able to grow my relationship with God. Right before coming to South Christian, I realized how big a part He has in my life and how I want him in my heart like I did when I was four years old. Two of my classes, Christian Ministries and Christian Doctrine, have given me more insight and are helping me get to where I want to be with God. Along with these classes, chapel and the devotions every morning are pushing me into a deeper relationship with God.

The more I ask questions and learn here at South Christian, the more I feel closer and closer to God and realize how much more I want that strong and close relationship with Him. I don't want to stray away from Him any longer, and I don't want to be guided by something or someone else. I want the Lord Jesus Christ to guide me through my ups and downs. I want to go to Him with everything. I want to lean on Him. I want to grow closer to Him, and as I continue to grow here at South Christian, I'm more and more grateful to be given the chance to come here.

In chapel, Pastor Chuck Swanson talked about only being able to see each step God is leading us on, one at a time. This school is one of the steps God has led me to, and I can see God is guiding me through the plan He has for me. I'm glad He led me to South Christian where I get to learn and grow through my opinions, my thoughts, my attitude, my behavior, how I look at life, how I love the people around me, and my faith. I'm very thankful to get to attend this school.

Hannah Evans
SCHS Student



STRONG FOUNDATIONS 5K RUN WALK

Thank you to everyone who came out to support this inaugural event—it was a resounding success! With 166 participants and \$60,000 in sponsorships, the event exceeded expectations. The funds were distributed among the five South Suburban Christian schools' foundations (Byron Center, Dutton, Legacy, Moline, and South Christian).

Despite the rain, everyone arrived with smiles on their faces, and the runners/walkers persevered, making it a truly great community-building event. We are already planning the next Strong Foundations 5K Run/Walk for the spring of 2025.

Congratulations to the Strong Foundations 5K winners:

Steven Johnson ('09)
won first place for the
men overall.

Rebecca (Winters '99) Wiltjer
won first place for the
women overall.



"SMALL" PROJECTS

big difference

The year-end appeal highlighted the 'Small Projects; BIG Difference' campaign, which centers on addressing the needs of our athletic facilities, auditorium, and the establishment of a sinking fund. As our student body continues to grow, it becomes crucial to maintain and improve our facilities. Investing in safe facilities and upgrading technology in the auditorium aligns with our mission, and stewardship of our facilities is vital for the long-term health and sustainability of our school. The establishment of a sinking fund ensures we can adequately care for and maintain our physical plant without necessitating an increase in tuition.

South Christian has been blessed by a faithful community who pray, give, and encourage!



Scan the QR Code
for more information.

VETERANS DAY ASSEMBLY



The Veterans Day Assembly was a deeply respectful and honoring event for our veterans, drawing a significant turnout from community veterans, friends, our students and staff, as well as classes from Byron Center Christian and Dutton Christian. The Kent County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard presented the colors, and the band paid tribute to America with renditions of the "National Anthem" and "God Bless America." Reverend Galen Meyer served as the guest speaker, and the veterans were honored by standing during the Armed Forces Salute.

At the reception following the assembly, a class of students engaged veterans with meaningful questions. The Veterans Day Assembly proved to be an impressive community-building event.

Save the date for next year's event, scheduled for Monday, November 11, 2024, at 9:00 AM. We hope to see you there!



Memorial Gifts
Fall 2023

Shelly Alman
Kenneth Ball
Marian Dobbs-Mulder
Marian Mulder

Irene Potter
Rev. Dr. David Schuringa
Rod VanDyke
Audrey Wiltjer

ATHLETICS

The Sailor Fall Sports teams experienced significant success. We are truly blessed with a great group of coaches and athletes who serve God to their fullest potential while working extremely hard on and off the playing fields.

The **Football Team** had a memorable season, finishing the regular season at 6-3 and securing the second place in the OK Gold Conference. They continued their success by winning both Districts and Regionals, ultimately finishing as the Division 4 State Runners-Up at Ford Field with an impressive overall record of 10-4. Congratulations to Coach Brown, the entire coaching staff, and players on an outstanding season. Notably, Luke DeJager, Mitch Lindhout, Ben Mulder, Austin Tiesma, Camren VanSolkema, Jake Vermaas, and Carson Vis were all named First Team All-Conference for the Sailors.



The **Equestrian Team** concluded another successful season, securing a commendable fourth place finish at Regionals. The team demonstrated dedication and had fun every day, showcasing their hard work. A heartfelt thank you to Coach VanderBand, her staff, and all our athletes for the countless hours and effort they invested this season.



Boys and Girls **Cross Country** wrapped up another successful season this year. The Girls' team secured a spot at the State Meet by finishing second at the Regionals. Although the Boys' team did not qualify, Thad VanderLaan earned an individual qualification for the State Meet. Congratulations to Coach VanderKooi, her staff, and all the athletes for a fantastic season. Notably, Ellia Agar and Rachel Berkenpas were both named First Team All-Conference for the Sailors.



Our **Sideline Cheer Team** had an incredible season. They played a crucial role in all game day activities, enhancing the overall experience, and we are grateful for their time and efforts. The girls even incorporated a dance routine this fall during some of our home halftime shows, which was fantastic to watch. A special thank you to Coach McGavin and all the girls for their hard work.

The **Boys Soccer Team** clinched the OK Gold Conference Championship, maintaining an undefeated record in league play for the second consecutive season. Under the guidance of Coach VandeKopple, the Sailors concluded with a remarkable 16-5-2 record. Recognition goes to Wyatt Sall, Will Kuiphof, Ike Kwantes, Will Raredon, Bryce Kilbourne, and Drew Bruinsma, all named First Team All-Conference for the Sailors.



Sailor **Varsity Volleyball** enjoyed another fantastic season, securing a second place finish in the highly competitive OK Gold Conference. The team continued their success by winning their third consecutive District Championship before a competitive run in the Regionals. Congratulations to Coach Jackson, her staff, and all our athletes for another outstanding season. Notably, Finley Arp, Erika DeWeerd, and Olivia In'tHout were all named First Team All-Conference for the Sailors.



Boys Tennis had a strong season, securing a second-place finish in the competitive OK Gold. The Sailors advanced to the Regional where they finished fourth, concluding their season on a positive note. The boys showcased their best tennis towards the end of the season, displaying continuous improvement throughout the year. Congratulations to Coach Stulp, his staff, and all our athletes on a tremendous season. Special recognition goes to Garrett Feyen, Nate Lummen, Vinny Klaasen, and Ike Schrotenboer, all named First Team All-Conference for the Sailors.



Varsity Girls Golf concluded a strong season, securing second place overall in the OK Gold Conference. The Sailors also claimed second place in Regionals, earning them a spot in the State Finals at The Meadows, where they finished fifth overall. Congratulations to Coach Cook, his staff, and all our golfers for a remarkable season. Special recognition goes to Ashley Thomasma, named First Team All-Conference for the Sailors.



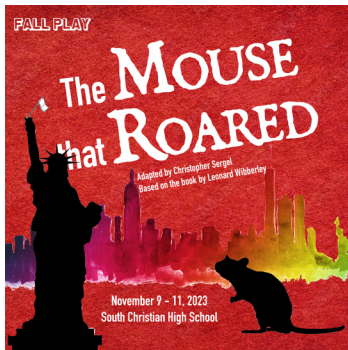
The Varsity Girls Swim and Dive team had a successful finish to their season, with three athletes making it to the State Meet in Division 1. The girls achieved significant improvements, dropping many seconds off their times and setting personal records. A special thank you to Coach Pearson and the rest of the staff for their hard work. We also express gratitude to all our athletes for their dedication. Notably, Sophie Gaylord was named First Team All-Conference for the CLS Co-op Vikings.



Check www.southchristiansports.com for schedules, photos, news, livestream, Sailor Gear, and more!



Follow @sailorsports on Instagram.



The cast and crew of the production *The Mouse That Roared*, a comedic political farce, skillfully presented the heartwarming story of the 'impossible' victory of the small country of Grand Fenwick and its residents.

A recurring theme throughout the play emphasized that the best-laid plans don't always succeed. The cast conveyed to the audience a valuable lesson: while we may have our own plans, they don't always align with God's. As Jeremiah 29:11 states, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"





The Madrigals were excited about the unique opportunity to perform at the 'Sparkle' event (formerly known as the Christmas Cabaret) at Frederik Meijer Gardens. The following morning, they embarked on the annual Christmas Tour, visiting the South Suburban Christian Schools, local businesses, and the Gerald R. Ford Airport. Grateful for a full calendar of events celebrating the Christmas season, the Madrigals praised our Savior through their performances.

After a busy fall performing songs from the movie *The Greatest Showman* at home football games, Victory Day, and Sailor Serve Day, the Marching Band was thrilled with the extended opportunity to perform at Ford Field. Additionally, the band took part in the inaugural Veterans Day Celebration at South, contributing to a meaningful morning that honored the service members in our community. We were proud to be a part of this special event.



On Sailor Serve Day, the SCHS Orchestra had the privilege of putting on a concert for the residents at Vista Springs Assisted Living. We were grateful for the opportunity to share God's love and the gift of music with them. The Orchestra's Christmas concert repertoire featured music from *The Lion*, *The Witch*, and *the Wardrobe*, a stunning arrangement of the hymn "I Wonder as I Wander," and the ongoing tradition of performing a piece from the Trans-Siberian Orchestra.

All Choirs, Madrigals, Band, and Orchestra worked diligently to deliver amazing concerts in December. A heartfelt thank you to our friends and family who attended the performances!



Explore our music programs online!

Follow us on Facebook at South Christian High School Music. Concerts and performances are recorded and available on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@SouthChristianMusic>.

You can also use the QR code for quick access.



CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

"I feel God's presence in chapel, in every classroom, in every student, and strong in my heart as I have before. I look forward to the future because I get to see His presence and d

Hannah

"Prayer is powerful and when we engage in prayer with others, it becomes even more powerful. More and more students are becoming bold with their faith and around them can see God shining through. Anaiya

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

God is powerful, transcendent, and immanent—present and working within our lives and our school, as evident at South Christian. As Christians, it's common to get caught up in doing things for God, such as praying, tithing, going to church, and loving our neighbor. In our Christian Ministries class, we emphasize the significance of doing things not just for God but with God.

Our chapels over the past year showcase how the South Christian community has embraced the idea of doing things with God. Students,

teachers, and staff have leaned into God's presence. Reflecting on the fruit we've seen this year, it points back to the verse in John 15. The growth we've experienced is not solely because of who we are or what we've done, but because of Christ. Our spiritual growth comes from remaining in Christ as He remains in us.

Whether in classrooms, studying, athletics, or planning and executing chapels, we do it all with God. It brings immense joy to work together as a community and to work alongside God in everything we do.

Ben Kroeze

Religion Teacher & Chaplain

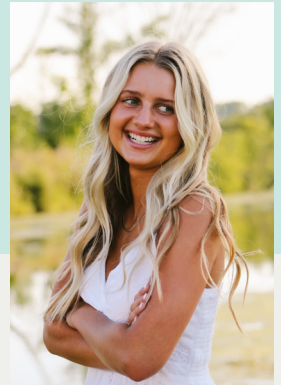


"I do believe that the presence of God is spreading not only through our chapels but also through our school. I have seen more acts of kindness, I have seen more prayer and encouragement, I have heard more people talking about Jesus and how amazing chapels were that day or that week. We are a school that doesn't just teach Christian classes and talk about God, we are a school that lives out God's love and His presence. I've seen that this year."

Olivia VanderSloot, Senior

"When we worship in chapel and include prayer, many students receive prayer and gather together in community. Students are leaning into their faith as they gather together in chapel in pursuit of one thing, our Savior."

Maci Oetman, Senior



"Chapel this year has grown my faith because it has taught me how to depend on God for my soul's deepest desire. God loves his people so much and I have seen that this year in chapel."

Seth Miedema, Senior

"It has been so humbling to see God move in chapels this year as students step out in faith through simple obedience. The simplicity of just seeking the heart of God together as a student body and seeing God move in the hearts of students through that has been evidence of the Lord's faithfulness to fill us when we hunger for Him."

Noah Funk, Senior



MORE THAN WE ASKED OR IMAGINED

Starting at birth, I had an unusual medical history. Before I ever left the hospital, doctors discovered that I had a stage III Wilms tumor and gave me three days to live. When I was alive well past three days, they decided to try something they had never used on an infant: high-powered cobalt 60 radiation. My doctors considered my survival a miracle.

When I was very little, I was given a firm foundation through teachings about God that I heard at home and Sunday School. Even at a young age, I knew God loved me and had walked me through a major challenge.

As I grew, the aftereffects of the cancer treatment left me with a curved spine and one leg shorter than the other. The resulting lack of sports abilities significantly impacted my relationship with my peers. I shifted my view of God, wondering why He had given me physical limitations. This carried over to my high school years at South and festered for years.

In 2005, when our three children were at South, my wife, Beth, was diagnosed with intractable migraine pain. I was invited to bring Beth to a healing service conducted by a pastor featured in *The Banner*. At the service, the pastor asked me what need I had. I explained my situation and said probably nothing could be done for me. He prayed over me, and miraculously my spine straightened out, and afterward my feet were even! Beth continued seeking God, and in two months she was pain free. Experiencing the touch of God certainly changed our view of Him!

My wife, Beth, and I have co-authored a book entitled *More Than We Asked or Imagined—The Spiritual Journey of a Sixty-Year Cancer Survivor*. Copies are available in the SCHS school office.

In the news: Scan the QR code to read an article about Steve's medical journey and the role President Carter played in it.



Several classmates from South also attended a healing service and experienced a touch of God. Later, they shared how much this impacted their realization that God loves them.

Our parents sent us to South with the intention of doing what they could so we would know about God. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6 NKJV).

At the 40th reunion of the class of '78, it seemed almost everyone I interacted with made a comment about the importance of God in their lives. People shared how God was there for them in times of sorrow and how He provided a way where there was no way. Some told of opportunities they had to minister to others, and one classmate was involved in international orphanage ministry.

The 1978 Anchor contains the following:
Reflection of a school.

Whose anchor is secured in the Word.

Whose peace comes from Christ's death on the cross.

Whose training and learning are applied by the Spirit.

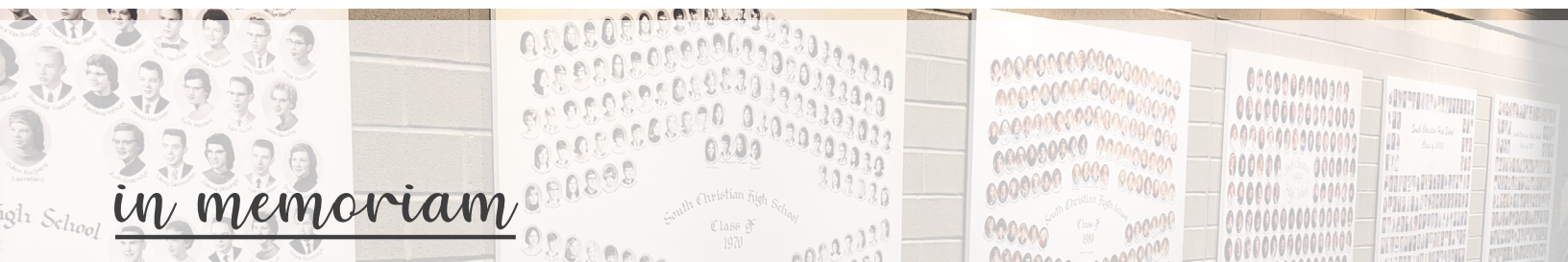
Whose graduates will in some way Have an influence on the world.

God not only fulfilled our parents' desire for us; everything predicted in the Anchor has also come to pass.

Steve Poll
Alumni, '78



ALUMNI BEACON



1950s

Peter VanPutten ('58) passed away on August 26, 2023.

Barbara (TePastte, '59) Kuiper passed away on October 3, 2023.

1960s

Douglas Koorndyk ('62) passed away on July 27, 2023.

Marinus James (Jim) Beukema ('64) passed away on July 11, 2023.

1970s

Richard Offringa ('72) passed away on November 27, 2023.

Herman Gary Alofs ('73) passed away on August 17, 2022.

Jilleen (Guikema, '78) Toth passed away on October 24, 2023.

CLASS REUNIONS



Class of 1976 Reunion

Class of 1959

September 27, 2024

Whistlestop Community Center
2120 76th St SW
Byron Center, MI 49315

Contact Duard Warsen
@ 616-881-8916

Class of 1974

September 14, 2024

Scheltema Barn
4554 7th St
Caledonia, MI 49316
5:00 Hors d'oeuvres
6:00 Dinner

Contact Mary (VandeMarkt) Stevens
@ 616-308-9378 (text message)

Reunion Website:
SCHS1974.classquest.com

Stay Connected

Visit our Alumni page at
www.schs.org/alumni/
or contact Kerri Holbrook
at kholbrook@schs.org.



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