

THE CAIRN COMPASS

Inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.

Winter 2021

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Finding our Way

by Kevin Huinink, Executive Director

You may have wondered what is happening at school this year. While we can report that 2020-2021 is a year like no other, we can also report that so many beautiful things are happening. This journey of growth and development at Cairn Christian School continues to inspire students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world!

When the ground shifts below your feet, you need to be alert, watch for sure footing, and be ready to move forward with decisiveness and precision. Looking up and checking that you are travelling in the right direction is important. Our mission statement, our community of supporters, our Board, and our supporting agencies have all continually reminded us not to lose sight of the big picture and our 'raison d'être', or reason for being.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6) Read on to see some of the ways in which trusting in God and seeking Him has made our path straight even in times such as these!



CAIRN COMPASS:
Published by
Cairn Christian School

Editor:
Kevin Huinink

**Consultant
Members:**
Wendy Colyn
Bonnie Desjardins
Joyce Koornneef
Doreen Van de Ban

**Cairn Christian School,
Stoney Creek**
795 Hamilton Reg. Rd 8,
Stoney Creek, ON
L8E 5J3

☎ 905.643.2460
✉ stoneycreek@
cairnchristianschool.ca

**Cairn Christian School,
Smithville**
6470 Niagara Reg. Rd. 14,
Smithville, ON
L0R 2A0

☎ 905.957.7796
✉ smithville@
cairnchristianschool.ca

Growing in Faith

by Jacqueline Scholman, Grade 8 teacher, Stoney Creek

What are some tangible ways that we can put our faith into action?

After completing the online Practising Faith Survey from the Center for Advancement of Christian Education, this is one of the questions that was asked of the Grade Eight students. The students were encouraged to think outside of our immediate school community, while recognizing that COVID protocols may also limit their ideas.

The students collaborated and came up with some great ideas that could be done immediately, and others that may still come to fruition before the end of our school year. Together as a class we agreed upon three different, but related initiatives. Students were

called on to be the leaders in the organization and in the execution of their ideas.

The first was a food drive for the Stoney Creek Food Bank prior to the Christmas holidays. Over the course of four weeks, students and staff were encouraged to bring in specific food donations that we could share with others in our community. In total, 658 lbs of food was donated through their efforts.

The second initiative was to create care packages for people in our community that are homeless, or find themselves in need of care. The students believed they would be able to create care packages of toiletries, snacks, and other essential items and discover ways to distribute them. Some of these items, as well as socks collected from Grade Four and hats and mittens knit by grandparents, were collected alongside the food

bank items. However, students asked, how would we be able to fill these care packages with things that weren't donated, but ought to be included?

This is where the third initiative came to life. One group of students took this initiative and decided that, as a class, we could create customized clothing to sell. This clothing would be pre-sold and include toques, masks and t-shirts. The students took charge of selling and taking orders, collecting funds, researching the best products and ensuring quality products were delivered. All together, through the efforts of this third initiative

and monetary donations received, the students raised \$700 to be used towards the care packages. Once we are able to be together again, we are looking forward to putting these packages together and distributing them in our local community.

What are some tangible ways that we can put our faith into action? Ask any of the Grade Eight students and they would be happy to share their stories with you.

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10



Student Support during Lockdown

by Claudia DeHaan and Freda Hoekstra, Student Support Specialists

As news articles and reports predicted an upcoming lockdown, our hearts were heavy with the thought of how we were going to meet the needs of our students with exceptionalities, through online platforms. From our past experience, this spring, we knew that remote learning would be a difficult barrier to their success in learning.

On the Friday before coming back from Christmas break, we heard about the government allowing students with exceptionalities to receive in-person learning in schools. Our leadership team told us to start dreaming about what this

could look like for our schools and gave us, as student support departments, the permission to create learning environments that would work for all of our students with exceptionalities.

This freedom and empowerment has created the opportunity to work with 26 students between the two campuses. Our paraeducators are busy each day supporting the educational needs of our students. The response from parents and students has been one of overwhelming gratitude. The smiles and engagement we see each day have been wonderful to witness as they learn in ways that work best for them.

We are so grateful to work at Cairn Christian School where we are encouraged to work together to find ways to best meet the needs of all students. What a blessing it has been watching our students with exceptionalities flourish in their learning!



A New Perspective: Harbor Me, a novel study

by Jill Walters, Grade 4/5 teacher Smithville

What does it mean to be a harbor for someone else? God has called us to “love our neighbour as ourselves”, but what does that really mean? Is there still racism in the world today? What is our role as Christians and students when it comes to racism, discrimination, and inequality? This year’s theme at Cairn Christian School in Smithville is “All the Children of the World”. As a school, we are learning about and celebrating the diverse world that God has created. One area that we recognized as lacking was the voice of minorities in our literature studies. As a teacher, I also wanted to celebrate culture and diversity, but also take a closer look at ourselves and see where we fell short.

Harbor Me by Jacqueline Woodson follows a group of six American students as they navigate the trials and tribulations of grade 5 and 6. As the book unfolds, each character speaks to their life: One experiences the deportation of a father, one experiences discrimination for speaking Spanish,

and the one white kid recognizes how the rest of the kids feel when he himself is outcast and bullied for the colour of his skin. Most deal with discrimination because of the colour of their skin.

But wait, we live in Canada! Why should we study a book on racism? Isn’t racism a thing of the past? If the events of this spring and summer have taught us anything, the answer is no. As a class we learned to recognize our privilege, and that we can heed God’s calling to change the world, one small act at a time.

The impact this book has made on the students is becoming evident. Students are eager to read more books by minority authors. They are eager to explore the world and cultures that are not their own. And they question how a minority could see things in a different manner than themselves. It is the seed of curiosity that our community needs to grow and nurture, as these students grow in their faith and in their knowledge of the world around them.

I'm back! What's new?

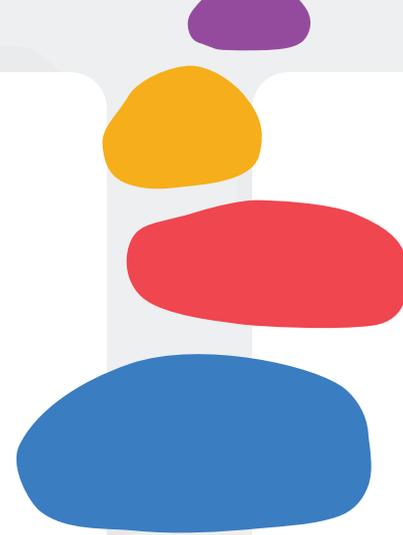
by Janelle Mulder, Grade 7 teacher, Stoney Creek

Coming back from my second maternity leave, there are some things I need to get used to this year. First of all, my students often remind me that our school is called Cairn Christian School, not John Knox Christian School (In my defense, I was a student a long time ago so "John Knox" is quite deeply entrenched in my way of thinking). My email address is significantly longer than it once was and many of my documents have required updating.

In addition, COVID has changed the way we do almost everything in my classroom. From hand sanitizing upon entering and exiting, to all day mask wearing, our days of passing papers and encouraging students to share their supplies with classmates are over. My teaching practice also looks very different this year. Group work is strategically planned and carefully executed. Teaching outside has become the norm and I've had to be very creative in my Physical Education instruction.

It is different, but at the heart of everything, I've noticed that it's really very much the same.

Cairn Christian School maintains its mission to equip and disciple the students who walk through its doors. As teachers, we remain as committed as ever to the needs of our students as they navigate this challenging time, develop and hone existing skills, and seek to learn new ones. Additionally, we continue to prioritize partnering with parents on students' educational journey. At the very heart of it, our desire to inspire our students to love, learn, and lead is unwavering. It is so good to be back.



The Path to Cairn Christian

by Denise Hughes, Stoney Creek Parent

My husband, Kenn and I were living in Mississauga for many years. At one time, he heard in prayer that we were to move. We did not know where, or why even at the time! It made no sense at all as everything about our lives were within a ten-minute radius. Life was pretty good! The niggles to move continued and we finally proceeded. Our family testimony increased dramatically for our listening to the Lord's prompting, and as a result we ended up in Stoney Creek!

During our search for a new home, we learned that Cairn Christian School was a five-minute drive away.

While waiting for a child through adoption, we kept this school

in our minds knowing that Christian education was the direction we would want to take.

Our son Luke came to our family in 2011 at ten months old and is currently

in grade four at Cairn Christian in Stoney Creek. It is a place where God's love, kindness and encouragement of both student and parent is the norm! Our son not only receives amazing academic training, but his every day includes life lessons from a Biblical perspective, enhancing our home beliefs and response to our Saviour to "train up this child in the way he should go". We trust those who are caring for him and it is not only regarding his schoolwork, but his nurturing and growing into who God designed him to be. It is evident in his own sharing and delight for being a student here, interconnecting every aspect to encourage him to grow in knowledge and faith.

Luke's love for Jesus is evident now, and to have this taught daily and incorporated into his academic lessons is a combination we do not take for granted, but rather cherish. We are grateful beyond measure for his place at this school. We appreciate all the staff and students who make this a safe haven for our little wonder. Christian Education is worth everything!





Thank you!

by Kevin Huinink, Executive Director

Cairn Christian School is planted in a community flourishing in resources. These resources come in many shapes and forms:

- One of those resources is **Heritage**. We have deep levels of experience and community on which to build - a solid foundation. Grandparents, former parents, longtime supporters, and decades of experience learning together.
- Another is **People**. Paid staff, volunteers, mentors, advisors, and partnerships. Daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, we reap the benefits of the expertise, hard work, and investment that our people put into our students because they know the transformative effects of Christian Education
- Finally, of course, is **Financial**.
 - This year began with a generous group of donors who came together to fund a refresh of our Chromebook (computer) holdings, giving teachers and students reliable technology with which to learn.
 - The annual golf tournament sold out, and despite a new format allowed us to connect with

and honour sponsors and donors in an engaging way.

- The annual Family Fun Fest recruited an excited group of volunteers and gathered our community together in a new way to drive through and pick up orders of goods.
- The annual Fall Drive met and exceeded budget expectations alongside an active capital campaign, as we asked our community to join us in Stepping Forward, Stepping Up, and Stepping Out in faith.
- Our Building the Way Capital Campaign continues to approach leadership donors to pave the way for building and improvement projects that will enable us to continue to pursue our mission and vision into the future.

To you, our supporting community, we say **thank you** from the bottom of our hearts for joining together and investing in us in so many ways; by your example, your time, prayers, and energy, or with your financial resources so that together we can do the work that God has set before us: inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world!!!

Being a Board Member

by Kei Dube, Board Member, Stoney Creek Parent

I joined the board in June of 2019 and it has been quite an adventure! My first year came with a learning curve in understanding how a governance board is run and the inner workings of our school. Our meetings are informative and give an opportunity for input from board members when reviewing those policies and reports from our Executive Director who is responsible for the operations of our schools. This past year was definitely not a normal school year and when our meetings switched to virtual Zoom meetings, we were still able to accomplish the many tasks set out before us all while remaining focused on our mission. Looking back, God has been faithful to us in providing committed and capable leadership and staff, a community who are passionate about Christian Education, and students who love their schools. It is a privilege to be part of a team that assists in and ensures that we are fulfilling the mission to love, learn and lead together in God's world.



Why Cairn Christian School



It's already the time of year when parents in our region begin to plan for their pre-school aged child to start school in September! Other parents are looking right now for a change to something that offers more or different educational experiences for their school-aged child. As parents seek out educational options and opportunities, there are many questions they are asking about the place where their child will spend much of their formative time over the next decade:

- Will my child enter a school that loves them and teaches them to care for others?
- Will the school be a place where my child's gifts and abilities will be nurtured?
- Will the teachers take an interest in my child, and communicate often and effectively with us as parents? Will our voices be valued and respected?
- Does the school have an excellent educational program that will prepare my child for their next steps, but that also aligns with our values as parents? Will it be drudgery, or will it be inspiring?
- Will my child have opportunities not only to belong and to learn but also to lead?

It can be overwhelming quite frankly, especially during a global pandemic when very little seems to be certain! Thankfully, schools are ready to help equip parents to make this very important decision.

The leadership team and staff at Cairn Christian School, with elementary campuses in both Stoney Creek and in Smithville, has prepared both virtual and in-person connections to learn more about how your child will grow, thrive, and be inspired to love, learn, and lead together in God's world. We can take a little bit of the overwhelming away by providing you with the right information to decide what the next decade will be like for your child. We can pray with and for you as you consider where God is leading your family.

Sign up now for a virtual presentation that covers the basics of what a Cairn Christian School education will offer your family, and then engage further either in-person or via videoconference appointment with our school leadership to ask questions directly about your child, their needs, how our programs will connect and nurture them, where our school buses run, what financial



The Cairn Compass is a quarterly newsletter distributed to the Cairn Christian School supporting community.

Our Mission *Inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.*

Our Vision *To be the leaders in education by inspiring a diverse and unified student body to love, learn, and lead with God's grace, bringing Christ's love to the world.*

obligations are as well as available bursary assistance, and/or anything else! We can also connect you with a parent who is already at the school to ask frank questions that only a parent can answer about what it is like to be a part of our learning community.

Ask them: 'Why Cairn Christian School?'

This time can be overwhelming, but we can make sure you have the information to make an informed decision about your child's future. You want to get this decision right! This small investment of time will help you understand #whyCairnChristian.

We look forward to connecting with you!

SIGN UP

for a virtual open house at
www.cairnchristianschool.ca/whycairn



Philip Dekker www.dekkersauto.ca

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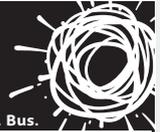
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