

THE CAIRN COMPASS

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



Inviting

by Kevin Huinink, Executive Director

You are invited! By turning the page, you are entering into our growth as a learning community. All learning begins with an invitation to be inspired, to find out something new, and to be moved by what you may find out. There may be wonderful things, there may be difficult circumstances, and there may be perplexing and confusing things. Into all of these, we invite students and you, to wrestle with and seek to understand together in the light of God's creative hand, word, and care.

Practically speaking, the beginning of a new school year is exciting as we invite staff and students back into their learning spaces. We invite our parent community to our opening assemblies and to welcome back socials and soon after into Parent-Teacher Interviews to discuss growth, progress and the next steps in learning.

As you read and reflect on the theme of invitation in this issue, our prayer is that you will celebrate the wonderful things God is doing at Cairn Christian School and that you continue to join us, taking your role as a part of our story, inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.

Fall 2022

Refined by
the Vine **2-3**

4-5 Starting School
for the First Time

Christian
Schools Canada **6-7**

8 Building Project
updates

From the
Board **9**

10 Drive us
forward

Sponsors **11-12**



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Refined by the Vine

By Michelle Nash, grade 8 teacher, Smithville

“Refined by the Vine” is this year’s tagline for the grade 8 class. This motto was inspired by John 15:5 when Jesus stated, “I am the vine you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit”.

Early in the first term, the students ventured on their first field trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake to visit a vineyard. It is here that students saw firsthand how a vine is rooted, grown, cared for, harvested, and cultivated for production. Additionally, this field trip was cross-curricular as it tied in nicely with our geography unit on Global Settlement. We learned about population patterns, growth and sustainability and what influences people to build settlements, including farming and agriculture. We discovered that the Niagara region’s unique location (situated below the escarpment and its proximity to Lake Ontario) makes it a viable region

to grow tender fruits, including grapes.

In a traditional rhythm of learning, students might be expected to learn in the classroom and work toward an end-of-unit trip to a place about which they were learning. Flipping this around, we began our year with an invitation to students to experience the subject material firsthand, anchoring the immersion into upcoming learning in the classroom. Referring back to the tangible contact with the vineyard, students can root their learning and extend it.

My deep hope for the students this year is that we grow together in our faith by following Jesus’ example to serve others so that we may glorify our Heavenly Father. By abiding in Christ and staying connected to him, like a branch on a vine, we can bear much fruit.



Starting School for the First Time!

If you would find a place in our schools where an 'invitational posture' is most evident, it would have to be our Kindergarten program. While other grades and age levels experience invitation in tangible ways, there is something essential about being invitational when all of your students are entering their school and academic career for the very first time.

It's quite inspiring to watch as our kindergarten team reaches out to families and students already before the school year begins to ensure that a child's first days and weeks at school are a gentle landing into a brand-new world. We frequently hear that this is one of the beautiful things about beginning school at Cairn. What does this look like?

- Intentional connections between teachers and class groups either in a park together in August to meet their teacher and their classmates (and for parents to connect), or a home visit by the teacher.
- The opportunity to visit the classroom in the week before school to see what their new space looks like, to bring their shoes, blanket, and extra items so that on the first day of school, they know that they already belong.
- Invested teachers who seek to understand each of their student's strengths and even their (or their parent's) anxieties or worries as they leave home for extended periods throughout the week.
- A name tag in the school shows that they have a place, and communicates that the teacher is happy that they are on their class list!!
- Finally, our buddy class program ensures that our youngest students work together with older students early on and regularly, nurturing friendships and connections that last for years.

WHAT ARE OUR PARENTS SAYING?

It's amazing to see our son grow and be surrounded by the Christian community and to want to grow and share his faith. (He was reading his Bible to his new baby brother!)



From the warmest greeting in the morning to the song sung at the closing of each day and every small moment in between, I know my child is invited and accommodated for. This type of hospitality goes beyond learning numbers and the alphabet but also includes the whole child, and I am at such peace knowing that my daughter feels at home while at school.

My child's class has never been just a group of students to the teacher; they are all individual little people that she loves individually. This "personalized love" has meant so much to me as a parent and I am so thankful for the welcome each of my children have received from her.



Invited & being Invitational as Leaders

By Bonnie Desjardins, Stoney Creek Principal

Cairn Christian School is part of several larger support organizations, one of which is Christian Schools Canada. Conferences are held bi-annually across Canada; this year, the leadership team met for three days in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with over 200 colleagues who are leaders in their respective school communities.

The first day was a pre-conference workshop that focussed on Christian Deeper Learning. Over the course of the day, we were challenged and encouraged as we started to create a work plan as a leadership team. Our plan aims to empower and equip teachers to design Christian learning experiences that meet Ministry of Education expectations and are intentionally created from a Christian worldview.

We spent a day at the National Museum of

Human Rights on Wednesday. During our time at the museum, we engaged in small group conversations with colleagues about inclusion, discrimination, diversity, and Christ-centered educational experiences. The museum staff led us through each of the displays, reminding us of the many injustices that people have experienced over the years. Intentional times of reflection were built into the day, and dialogue continued well into the evening about our shared and individual experiences.

Thursday's devotions were led by troubadour Steve Bell who meaningfully invited us into a time of worship, including moments of praise, lament, and hope. Danielle Strickland challenged us on a number of levels to anchor our experiences of transition and challenge in the humility of

knowing that God is at work in our lives and our schools. She encouraged us to use our places of power and authority to bless and empower others as Christ did and to further shalom in this world.

On Friday, the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, we, as a leadership team, found ourselves immersed in activities, including a march with thousands of others, in support of the indigenous community of Manitoba. This experience alone is one that will not quickly be forgotten.

The Cairn Christian School leadership team is strong and well-connected. One takeaway we appreciate from conferences like this is the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across Canada. More specifically, we discovered a core group of principals and school leaders who, along with us, have a desire to see students flourish. We connected with people we didn't know prior to the Christian Schools Conference. Just prior to the conference itself we invited Dave Johnston, a school administrator from Australia, into our school and deepened our relationship with him and his colleagues while we were in Winnipeg. In addition, in November, we will invite two school leaders from London onto our campuses to touch base with teachers about Teaching for Transformation and how it's being implemented in our learning spaces.

Being invited to share with colleagues across Canada, in turn, enables us to be invitational in our practice and pursuit of inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world!



Building Project Updates



At the time of writing, we are about halfway through the building projects associated with the *Building the Way* campaign. Due to a capital campaign that took place through a pandemic, these projects have been long anticipated and have required patience. Seeing the work unfold before our eyes is a blessing and an answer to many prayers!

In Stoney Creek, we no longer have to worry about heavy snowfall or torrential rain and the leaking that might occur. Thanks to the new roof installed above our back section, science/music room, and rear foyer, we will no longer be placing buckets to catch drips. On the topic of rainfall and water, the water pooling issues next to the rear entrance and fire lane have been corrected and tied into existing drainage tiles to the creek. Finally, trees were lovingly planted and watered all summer to enhance the playgrounds as a part of the outdoor learning projects. Over the coming months, a new playground will be placed, fencing installed, and outdoor gardens and learning centers will be landscaped!

In Smithville, the summer was a hive of activity as demolition and renovation crews worked on updating the current building for new administrative and learning spaces. The fall and winter will continue to be busy as we watch a building addition rise to extend the school's space and early learning wing. We can't wait to have these enhancements finalized and invite you to a grand opening of these new learning spaces. As we work and learn in an active construction zone, this year has been dubbed 'an adventure' by our principal as we have needed to be flexible around unanticipated and changing trade work schedules. All of this we count a blessing in anticipation of the final product!

We continue to add photos to digital photo albums as each of these projects moves forward. You can keep up with our work at the links below! We also invite you to continue to be a part of the joy by helping us 'Fill it up!' Each project has fixtures, furniture, and equipment to complete the spaces they are creating. To see what is needed to fulfill this vision, visit <https://bit.ly/CairnFillitup>



From the Board



Greetings from the Board of Directors of Cairn Christian School. As our schools emerge this year, the Board has been able to renew its focus on strategic initiatives and ensure that our schools' long-term health and direction are on track. As a policy governance board, the work we do on policies is important in directing how our schools are run. As a result of training undergone by our leadership team and some board members with the Colossian Forum, one of the ways we are becoming more invitational is born out in our 'Membership Engagement' Policy: "Member input will be solicited when making significant decisions in order to invite diverse perspectives from all who are affected and to seek to surface differing points of view."

We want to make sure that we are deliberately invitational to all of our stakeholders so that well-informed decisions can be made for the flourishing of our association. Watch for ways in which you can actively connect with us! (You can learn more about the Colossian Forum at <https://colossianforum.org/>)

We are also excited about the work of the Education and Engagement committee, which has re-focused its work to reach out and engage our parent and member communities in the work of our schools.

The Board covets your prayers as we do the challenging, necessary, and beautiful work of directing our schools! We also want to encourage and challenge you to commit to the work we do financially in our year-end appeal: Build, Fill, Drive! We thank you for continued prayers and support of our mission!



Drive us forward!

You have hopefully received an invitation from us recently to 'Build, Fill, and Drive'. You, our supporters, have been the driving force behind our work, enabling us to Build the Way, Fill it up, and now to Drive us Forward!!

While Building and Filling are important, it is the activity at school each day that our mission is all about! Tuition fees fund about 80% of our revenues annually, and for the remaining 20%, we count on fundraising and generous donors like you to keep us running forward.

Your decision to include Cairn Christian School in your annual giving allows us

- to provide bursary support to families to access Christian Education who might not otherwise be able to send their children to a Christian School,
- to support both technological and teaching innovation through infrastructure and inspiring professional development, and finally,
- to get behind our students who need additional support for their learning.

God has begun this work through the generosity of donors who have already given more than \$40,000 this year toward our \$150,000 goal. Join them in driving us forward to inspire students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.

For ways to support our work, visit www.cairnchristianschool.ca/donate



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.



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