



THE PROVIDENCE POINT

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From the Board Chair

RICK LENTING

Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: "Whoever believes will not be in haste." Isaiah 28:16

In this edition we will focus on 'Building on the Foundation'. I think I can say with some certainty that many of us know the importance of a solid foundation for our faith, homes, lives, and our future plans, but who really spends time acknowledging the significance of a foundation. Some of you may have knowledge of construction, the depth needed for footings, how the forms are placed for concrete to be poured, and the rebar placement to maximize wall strength. Many details of the foundation go unnoticed as we focus more of our attention on the beauty that rises above it. No one aside from the concrete crew and the builder knows how much time and effort goes into a foundation. What is the focus for many people, is the businesses and residences that occupy a building.

This can be similar to our focus right now as well. When you think about Providence or read updates, do you focus on the beauty of the building or the newer busses that pick the children up each day? Or do you think more about the day to day routine aspects of Providence Reformed Collegiate? It is a humbling challenge for the Board of Providence to take a deeper look at the foundation of Providence Reformed Collegiate. Our task challenges us to look at the foundation of this school, the constitution, articles of incorporation, mandates and policies these documents are really the foundational aspects of Providence. These are the rock, stones, blocks, and concrete of what the day to day learning activities rest upon. Many dedicated parents and supporters have been involved in building this foundation these past 25 years, a labour of love that clearly defines our school to this day. God also provides His children with a promised cornerstone, a firm foundation that we lean on, one that lets us stand tall in days of trouble. We can be so thankful that Providence can be a beacon of hope and a proud Christian educational resource for all of our children in darkening days.

In the past few months and now moving ahead to the next two months we will take more time to review the governing documents and articles that incorporate our school. As explained in past membership meeting updates as well as Providence Points, the government is requiring every non-profit to align with ONCA (Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act). It is our plan to present at the April membership meeting the changes that have been required to meet the ONCA expectations.

An additional requirement that we have within our school is the need for committee volunteers. The wisdom, character and guidance that come from all of our supporters is an amazing testament to the Christian desire we have as supporters to keep Providence strong and lively.

As you read this part of the Board report, I would ask you to consider your talents and abilities: whether you're younger or older, we all can help. As a community we can pull together to help in the week to week support the PRC needs, whether that is physically visiting the school, staff and students, or joining a committee that provides guidance and support or financially supporting Providence for the fund drive or the capital campaign. It takes a community built on a strong foundation to keep the doors of Providence Reformed Collegiate open and active. The Board would also like to give thanks for many of you who have been actively supporting PRC over the years. It honestly is a joy to privilege to know this school as intimately as we do in our work here at Providence.

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Principal's Report

MR. MICHAEL VANDER DEEN

At this point in the semester, my English 9 students are writing their short stories. The goal for their short story is "to write a compelling story by building tension through external and internal conflict, creating a memorable character arc." In other words, these students are telling the story of how their main character has faced a challenge, and that the challenge has changed the main character for good.

That story line, which is the backbone of so many books and movies, reflects a Christian story. Spurgeon said, "There is no university for a Christian like that of sorrow and trial." "Ah," said Luther, "affliction is the best book in my library." Hebrews 2:10 says, "For it was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." James 1:2-4: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."

Renewal through trial by the power of the Holy Spirit is an important theme in God's great story. A great example of this is God's work by the Spirit in shaping the people of Israel through the years of wandering in the wilderness.

It probably wouldn't be good to make too strong a comparison between God shaping His people through suffering in the wilderness, and God shaping this generation of students through a new semester, but there is some value in the comparison.

We want to avoid trouble

The Israelites wanted to avoid the wilderness. Many times, they thought about returning to Egypt and to slavery. It could be that there are some assignments or courses that students would prefer to avoid. But God can and will shape and form us through the challenge – the course, or the assignment. As one author wrote, "People naturally seek comfort and stability. Without an inciting incident that disrupts their comfort, they won't enter into a story. They have to be forced to sign up for a marathon. A ring has to be purchased. A home has to be sold. The character has to jump into the story, into the discomfort and fear, otherwise the story will never happen." Is there a course or assignment that we want to avoid? Are we seeking the comfort of not completing, and then missing the growth that comes with the trial?

We have a tendency to grumble

If you read through Exodus-Deuteronomy, we read many times of the Israelites grumbling. I'm not saying there's grumbling in the hallways, but I'm not saying there's not grumbling either. "When something happens to you, you have two choices in how to deal with it. You can either get bitter, or get better."

Both are preparation for Kingdom service

God did not intend to bring a nation of slaves into the promised land, but rather he formed and shaped a generation of His people through suffering and trial in the wilderness, bringing them as Kingdom citizens into the promised land. God does not want to bring up this generation of students as slaves to sin, slaves to their distractions, but rather as Kingdom citizens ready to serve as ambassadors of Christ in our world.

"There is no university for a Christian like that of sorrow and trial."

"Ah," said Luther, "affliction is the best book in my library."

"Count it all joy... for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."

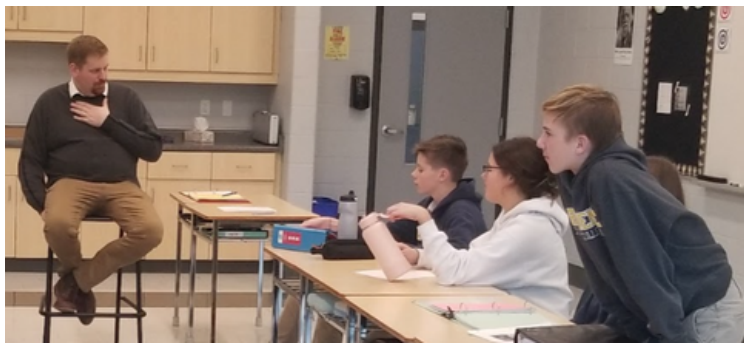
Principal's Report cont'd

Our theme for the school year is from Titus 3 – to “Be ready for every good work.”

On February 28, we were privileged to welcome Pastor Steven Huisman from Living Water URC in Brantford. His message on the great power and gift of the Holy Spirit deeply resonated with our theme, reminding us of our great need for the Spirit, and for the great power that is ours through the Holy Spirit.

In Titus 3:5-6, we are reminded that our salvation is not by our own deeds, but by Christ's mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, poured out on us richly through Christ. Pastor Huisman connected this renewal to the story of Pentecost in Acts 2, where the Holy Spirit was poured out on the early church with mighty wind and tongues of fire.

He drew parallels to the Old Testament, where God's presence was often associated with wind and fire, such as at Mt. Sinai and in the cloud leading Israel. This power of the Holy Spirit, Pastor Huisman emphasized, is available to us today. By earnestly seeking the Spirit, we can be empowered to be fruitful ambassadors of Christ, prepared for every good work.



We were also blessed to have a seniors' group from one of our supporting churches join us for the assembly. It was a reminder that our community extends beyond the walls of our school, and we are grateful for their presence among us. It is always great to have visitors, and it was a special blessing to have these seniors. It makes me think of Hebrews 12:1-2, “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith.” This crowd of witnesses encourages us in our trials and our stories.

May we continue to be inspired by the message of renewal and empowerment through the Holy Spirit as we strive to be prepared for every good work set before us.

Finance Report

IAN BENJAMINS

The beginning of the year is a busy time of year for the Finance Committee. We are busy with the ongoing work of the school and also looking ahead to plan for the 2024/25 budget. Each committee has been asked to review their budgetary requirements and look for savings. At the time of writing, we have received \$328,000 towards the Fund Drive, which is approximately 70% of the goal. We are thankful for the generosity of God's people and their commitment to PRC!

The foundation for the management and operation of PRC was put in place by committed parents and community members over the years and we are thankful for the 25+ years of experience that we can build on. It takes a tremendous amount of effort by many committees (Education, HR, Building, Promotion, Computer, Transportation, Finance) all working together to run Providence.

At the end of 1 Chronicles, God tells King David that he may not build the temple, but that this task would be given to his son, Solomon. David's response was not to walk away. He worked diligently to make all the necessary preparations for the building of the temple. He gathered the skilled workers, provided materials, organized the Levites, the priests, the musicians, the gatekeepers, the treasurers, and officials.



David did all of the groundwork, laying the figurative foundation, for Solomon to build on. PRC continues to build on the foundation laid by past generations. PRC is an ongoing project, requiring skilled workers, materials, funds and cooperation from an engaged community working together to educate our children to know, love and serve the LORD.

David charged Solomon with these words in 1 Chronicles 28, “Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed for the LORD God, even my God, is with you.”



The instruction that our children receive at PRC will assist in forming a foundation for their relationship with the Lord and those He has placed in their lives, their Biblical and academic knowledge, and their future endeavours. In this light, we can be thankful that the Lord has richly blessed the PRC community with a team of teachers and administrators who are committed to assisting parents in providing an education that forms their children's head, heart, and hands for a life of service to Christ.

The committee continues to work to ensure that ad hoc HR matters are handled efficiently and appropriately, that we adhere to our calendar of responsibilities, that we review and develop policy and procedures as required, and that we facilitate a good relationship between staff and the board.

Another duty of the HR committee is to solicit and receive applications for vacant positions and propose suitable candidates to the board, which is a duty that we will need to undertake as we approach the 2024/2025 school year. As you may be aware, two of our teachers, Mr. de Visser and Mrs. Barrett, have indicated that they will likely not be returning to PRC for the coming school year. While this loss of exceptional skills, wisdom and godly character will certainly be felt, we are primarily thankful that we know this is God's plan and we can trust Him, and secondarily that these teachers are moving on to other opportunities or stages of life that in themselves are blessings from the Lord.

With this we are reaching out to the PRC community to assist in identifying suitable candidates for teaching positions at PRC. Maybe you have felt a calling to be an educator, or maybe you know a current or potential teacher from elsewhere who would be interested in enjoying the benefits of our unique community and relatively affordable geography. In either case, please keep this matter in your prayers, and please feel free to speak with Mike Vander Deen or Mark Vanberkel for more information or questions.

Capital Campaign Update

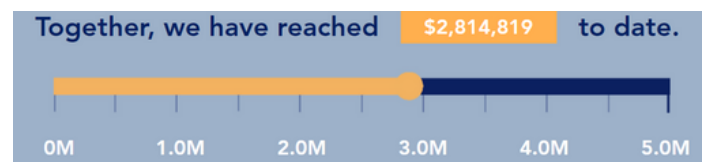
For the past several months the Capital Campaign Committee has been working hard to raising funds for a new expansion at Providence Reformed Collegiate. This expansion will provide a wonderful space for staff, students and our membership to gather for assemblies, for students to play intramural sports, as well as host league school tournaments. This addition also includes extra classrooms for tech courses and regular courses offered at Providence. The committee meets monthly to provide updates on the past months work. Through these meetings one thing is quite clear to us, God has certainly blessed our school with a loving and devoted community. It is our goal to provide as many updates as possible, to respectfully engage our community as well as many outside resources to help in the fund raising efforts. It is our aim to



Welcome to Miss Hiemstra

We are thankful to announce that Providence has hired Jenna Hiemstra to join the PRC staff starting in the 2024/25 school year.

Miss Jenna Hiemstra was born and raised in Watford, Ontario. She graduated from Providence in 2019 and moved on to complete a 3-year Bachelor of Arts at Brescia University College (Major in French for Teaching). She has just completed her Bachelor of Education at Western University with a focus on French and General Science, and she looks forward to officially graduating in June. She currently teaches Grade 8 part-time at John Knox Christian School, as well as supplying for the Lambton Kent District School Board. Miss Hiemstra will be teaching French and Science courses at Providence in the upcoming school year.



reach our fundraising goal within the next two months. Our many volunteers continue to reach out to supporters and community at large to provide updates and information on the expansion. We anticipate completing a phone campaign in the near future. We ask that you please keep this capital campaign in your prayers, that the Lord would bless our efforts and that this expansion would be able to proceed with our full support. A big thank you to everyone for your support to date!

Al Noorloos, Berthiene Feddema, Brad Pennings, Hilco Tamminga, Janelle DeVries, Rick Lenting

Are we doing what we set out to do? Are we setting out from a good foundation? Part of what it means to be on the Ed Com is to be intentional and always (re)evaluating our education program.

Ed Com may be one of the more rewarding committees on which to serve, working with board, staff, and parents, always reassessing what we do to ensure our education program continues to be relevant and true to our school mission and vision. The mandate of the Ed Com includes to “consider all matters relative to the education program and policies of the school” and to “keep itself informed in regard to the scholastic quality and Scriptural character of the institution”.

Current Ed Com members are Mike Boeringa, Leanne DeBoer, Will Nywening, Lynda Schouten, Tracy VanBerkel, Renskje Vanderveen, and Pastor Vellenga, with the Principal and Vice Principal as ex-officio, advisory members. Ed Com members meet monthly and are also active with regular visits to classrooms and teachers. Subcommittees of Ed Com work with teachers to review course curriculum on a 5-year rotation. This year we’re reviewing history, law, civics and careers, business and accounting, and physical education. We’ve also been working through relevant recommendations of the League review, and (to ensure we keep on track) we’ve been reviewing and updating the policies that direct Ed Com.

Some of the more visible things done under the perusal of the Ed Com in this past year are a remaking of the library space, development of a computer use policy and information sheets, and another successful “pursuit of a calling” day. We say “under the perusal” because much of what gets done under the umbrella of Ed Com is done thanks to the ideas, initiative, and hard work of staff and volunteers.

Ed Com has also been reviewing the Unit Design framework used in developing and reviewing our course content. The Unit Design approach challenges our teachers to ask how each course’s content fits into the Biblical story and to identify the big (key) ideas that we want to communicate in each course. This approach ensures we do more than just meet minimum Ministry requirements. It can give both teacher and student a sense of relevance and purpose in learning. It helps to distinguish PRC even from other Christian schools and to maintain the integrity and Reformed character of our education.

Many see Christian education as a neutral or vocational exercise or reduce the gospel to social justice, and Ed Com must remain vigilant against such drift. Particular challenges for the near future include the needs of more split classes as we continue to expect large in-coming grade 9 classes, the addition of mandatory technology credits to the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, and saying goodbye to some key staff members at the end of this year.

Ed Com is very grateful to be able to work closely with wonderful staff and also the volunteers and subcommittees that help pull off events like “pursuit of a calling”. Staff puts much love and sweat into the education of the children we entrust to them. Ed Com praises God for the opportunity to serve as “watchmen” over the excellence and integrity of an education program designed to help our students recognize their place in God’s Kingdom. May God find us faithful and committed as a school community to always prioritize our call to raise up our children in the fear of the Lord. May we always be intentional to remain standing on the firm foundation. We trust God to supply our needs this year and the one to come.



Studying the Holocaust through literature helps us to connect to the characters' stories, whether they are fictional or biographical in nature. Historical figures come alive through the pages of memoirs such as *Night* by Elie Wiesel and *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom. Even more impactful is hearing first-hand the stories of Jewish people who survived the Holocaust. Today, there are around 245,000 Holocaust survivors living in over 90 countries; in Canada, there are only 5,800 survivors still alive. On Tuesday, the English 12C class had the opportunity to meet with two of these survivors at the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) in London. Alice and Claire come from Zwolle, where their parents owned the Hotel Wynberg, in the Netherlands. Alice was born in a forest while her parents were in hiding from the Nazis. Claire, her younger sister, was born just as the war was ending in 1945.

"When I first contacted the JCC, a connection was made around the Dutch heritage of many of our students and their grandparents' or great-grandparents' experiences through WWII. Alice and Claire were open, honest, and generous in how they connected with the students. They told of the deportation of Dutch Jews to Westerbork at the beginning of the war, of their Aunt Selma Engel's escape from the Sobibor concentration camp, how their older brothers were hidden by Dutch families in Friesland, and of their parents' decision to move to Canada in 1953 to find peace and safety. There was a beautiful point of connection when one of our students shared how her grandparents hid Jewish people during the war and have been named "Righteous Among the Nations" by the government of Israel. A deep gratitude was expressed by our Jewish hosts for the bravery and courage that this act would have taken.

Language was very important to Alice and Claire. They emphasized that 6 million Jews and other non-desirables didn't die in the war, they were murdered; that Sobibor was not a concentration camp but an extermination camp.

"He who touches you, touches the apple of his eye"
Zechariah 2:8

Being careful with the words we use in an effort to be accurate and honest is a lesson that the students will take with them in and beyond this course. Towards the end of our visit, we talked about forgiveness and hope. Both Alice and Claire emphasized that they will never forget what happened to them and to their families, despite the attempts at reconciliation being made by the Dutch government. "Never Forget" is a phrase used by Holocaust survivors.

Memory is also a key theme in the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel who famously said that "To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."

In Zechariah, God says that "he who touches you [the children of Israel], touches the apple of His eye." The evils committed during WWII scarred many people, even those who survived carry burdens of anger and trauma with them. What is the way forward? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor who stood against the Nazi regime and whose writings we will be studying in our class, had this to say: The world is overcome not through destruction, but through reconciliation. Not ideals, nor programs, nor conscience, nor duty, nor responsibility, nor virtue, but only God's perfect love can encounter reality and overcome it. Nor is it some universal idea of love, but rather the love of God in Jesus Christ, a love genuinely lived, that does this.

The connections that we make and the stories that we share have an impact on how we make sense of the world around us. Alice and Claire showed incredible vulnerability and generosity in sharing their families' stories. We are so thankful for the opportunity to learn and grow.



Upcoming Events

You are invited to join us for these events.

Spring Membership Meeting - April 22

The PRC Spring Membership Meeting will be held D.V. on Monday, April 22 at 8pm. The meeting will be held in-person at Providence Reformed Collegiate. In order to achieve quorum, we ask that all members make attendance a priority.

The Lord has blessed Providence Reformed Collegiate in many ways. We can rejoice in the faithfulness of our covenant God as we continue to educate our youth. Come and join us at this membership meeting to hear about these many blessings.

If you would like to become a member, please contact our Board chair, Rick Lenting at lenting.rick@providencerc.com or our board secretary, Anne Marie Baker at baker.annemarie@providencerc.com.

Grandparents/Grandfriends Day - April 3

All grandparents and grandfriends are invited to join us on Wednesday, April 3 for Grandparents Day. Coffee will be ready for 9:30. We'll begin with a short program including student presentations, after which you'll have opportunity to visit students in their classrooms, enjoy fellowship and also a delicious lunch! Please RSVP to office@providencerc.com by March 27.

PRC Auction - April 11 - 13



Join us for the
**PRC Spring
Dinner & Auction**
at the Komoka Community Centre
(133 Queen Street, Komoka)

ONLINE AUCTION - APRIL 10-12
DINNER & LIVE AUCTION - APRIL 13

Register and buy tickets at
auctria.events/PRC2024
**Dinner & Live Auction Tickets
Must be purchased by March 30**

*dinner & auction
ticket \$40*

~ Doors open at 5:00 pm
~ Dinner at 5:30 pm
~ Auction at 7:00 pm

Festival of Praise - May 3



PROVIDENCE REFORMED
COLLEGIATE

Festival of Praise

**EVERY GOOD WORK
TITUS 3:1**

Friday, May 3, 2024

Small Choir
Art Gallery
Student Performances
Refreshments

Providence U.R.C
Strathroy, ON
447 Second St, Strathroy

Alumni Feature

CAROLYN & TIM WESTERVELD

With the words of Miss Bydevaate, "Stop talking, start working," still ringing in my ears, high school days seem like only a short while ago. Counting back the years, it's been 17 years. Wow!

Following graduation, I went on to get my Registered Practical Nursing license at Lambton College and worked as a community nurse for VON. Tim had a different schooling experience being homeschooled from K-12. Directly after graduating, he worked as a framer for about 10 years. We were married in 2010 and have been blessed with 4 children- our oldest is set to begin PRC in 1 1/2 years!



TIM & CAROLYN, IAN, KARLEE, ZACHARY, JENNA

Tim and I started Silver Ridge Design Build Inc., a residential construction company, after our fourth child. While I no longer work as an RPN, I now act as office administrator and designer for our company and have worn many hats in between. I recognize how these roles have shaped me, as well as served the community around me.

What advice would I leave the students with? I would say don't put so much pressure on yourself to know exactly what you want to do after high school. For some it means college or university, for others maybe work for a year prior to post secondary education, or even going directly to the workforce fulltime. God gives a unique set of circumstances and gifts to each, that teaches us to love Him deeper and live for Him. Use your gifts. Do what you are good at. Continue to take hold of learning opportunities. And see where the Lord leads.

May God bless you as you serve in His kingdom!

Our Community's Vision - Why We Operate a Reformed Christian School

Our community's vision is that God, through the means of home, church, and school, would raise up a generation that loves God, desires His Kingdom, and offers all their gifts in personal submission to Jesus Christ as prophets, priests, and kings, looking forward to the day when the fullness of the Kingdom comes, and Christ will be all in all.

Our School's Mission - What our Reformed Christian School Seeks to Do

Providence Reformed Collegiate seeks to glorify our covenant God by assisting parents in:

1. Providing students with an excellent Reformed Christian education
2. Nurturing students in the knowledge and fear of the LORD
3. Equipping students for service in the kingdom of God as ambassadors of Christ in this world.

Rick Lenting (2025)

Chair, Capital Campaign

Anne Marie Baker (2024)

Secretary, LCRSS

Ian Benjamins (2024)

Finance

Will Dokter (2024)

Promotion, Building

Al Noorloos (2026)

Fundraising, Uniform

Will Nywening (2026)

Education

Ted Schouten (2026)

Transportation, Computer

Mark VanBerkel (2025)

HR, ONCA

Kevin Werkema (2025)

Property