



The

# KNIGHTLY NEWS

Columbia Christian School • PreK-12th Grade

Fall 2024

## Gratitude: A New School Year

By Ami Vensel, President

It's that time of year – fall has arrived! The leaves are changing colors, the wind is blowing, and temperatures are dropping. God's handiwork is on display with the beauty of the changing seasons. Columbia's campus is beautiful this time of year – we are grateful to witness the many radiant colors of our trees and flowers that declare the creativity and brilliance of our creator. God is good!

This year at Columbia, our focus is to reflect a **posture of gratitude** – to express our **Gratitude** to God for His faithfulness and rich blessings. Our theme verse is appropriately Colossians 2:6-7, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." **Gratitude** goes beyond thankfulness; **gratitude** is showing appreciation for something done or received – it includes a response.

*"To reflect on your blessings is to rehearse God's accomplishments. To rehearse God's accomplishments is to discover his heart. To discover his heart is to discover not just good gifts but the Good Giver. Gratitude always leaves us looking at God and away from dread. It does to anxiety what the morning sun does to valley mist. It burns it up."*

– Max Lucado



As we wrap up our first academic quarter, we are **Grateful** for God's many blessings:

- new families joining the Columbia community
- a positive school culture
- successful Fall Sports season (soccer, volleyball, and cross country)
- activities with Big-Buddies & Little-Buddies
- Christian College Expo on campus
- elementary students raised over \$10,000 from their Jog-A-Thon event for playground upgrades
- 6th grade Outdoor School at Camp Yamhill
- growing number of teens joining campus Bible study on Wednesday nights
- computer lab upgrades for new CAD class, Yearbook, and Programming club
- variety of educational field trips – taking students out into community
- growing partnerships with Multnomah University, George Fox University, and Northwest Nazarene University to expand our college concurrent class offerings to our high school students
- ...and so much more!

For over 77 years, Columbia has partnered with families to offer students a safe and encouraging community where teaching and learning is from a Biblical worldview. In a world that is embracing conflicting values, morals, and...

**Continued on page 2...**

## Gratitude (Cont..)

priorities, Columbia Christian remains focused on the core values of faith, character, and academics. For this, we are humbly **Grateful**.

We believe, now more than ever, that children need an educational environment where their faith can be nurtured, where character matters, and where academics focus on the subject area and rigorous content (without political, social, or other hidden agendas). When children have the benefit of a biblically-based education in a community that protects them intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and physically, they have the best opportunity to achieve success and thrive!

Whatever your connection to Columbia Christian, will you please join us in thanking God for His gracious gifts? A posture of **Gratitude** is a blessing – both to the bearer and to those around them. In this season of change, we find that this perspective can have a big impact. Again, as Colossians 2 tells us, we should be “rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” Amen!

**HOST FAMILIES NEEDED!**

We need host families for our amazing international students

**Upcoming Needs:**

**February 27-March 31**  
2-4 students from Japan, high school

**Winter Camps from South Korea**  
January 31-February 27  
20 students, 1-2 chaperones. Grades 3-11

Email Laura Walthinsen to sign up!  
lwalthinsen@columbiachristian.com  
or  
office@columbiachristian.com

\*All hosts receive a stipend  
amount dependent on which program and duration.

## Back to School BBQ



*By Carrie Rude, Admissions Director*

One much-anticipated tradition at Columbia is the “Back to School BBQ”. Hosted in the heart of campus – around the Womack Fountain, all families are invited to attend. Parents are encouraged to bring a lawn chair or picnic blanket to sit in the courtyard area or Davis Garden while the kids run around and play. There are lots of games of tag, soccer, and other field games, as well as the option of the bounce house (which is a big hit for the younger children)!



The PTF (Parent Teacher Fellowship) coordinated our BBQ again this year and did a fantastic job pulling together all the details. Two fundraising elements they incorporated this time included a raffle drawing for a Knights merch basket and bringing in the Kona shaved ice truck (which donated a portion of their sales from that night). A table was also set up to sell a variety of school swag like T-shirts and stickers.



The menu for the evening included beef hot dogs (grilled by Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Schultz), macaroni salad, chips, veggies, and drinks. Eastside Church of Christ donated a variety of homemade cookies that were very appreciated. Faculty and staff members signed up to volunteer on the food line and they did a great job of serving the meal with a smile.

All in all, it was great opportunity for our school community to relax in the warmth of a late summer evening, enjoy some good food, listen to uplifting tunes, and visit with old friends while making new ones!



# Elementary Jog-A-Thon



*By Carrie Rude, Admissions Director*

On a foggy morning in October, Columbia Christian elementary students donned their matching navy “Gratitude” T-shirts, tightened up their shoes, and headed toward the center of campus. After gathering in the Davis Garden for the large-group aerial photo (taken by Mr. Dukes from high up in the bucket truck), the classes moved through their running rotations around the soccer field. Parents came to cheer them on with gold/black pom-poms, cowbells, and shouts of encouragement as the participants hustled around the orange cones.

The PTF worked hard to get all the details just right for the day of the event – from the energetic playlist and water/snack station, to managing the volunteer lap-counters and schedule of runners. Thanks to their careful planning, everything ran smoothly and efficiently. It has been tradition to invite some of the older students to come out to the soccer field to cheer on the younger kids as they run, but even more involvement was encouraged this year. All middle and high school students had time scheduled into their day to actually JOIN their “little buddies” as they ran the course. Oftentimes, the “big buddies” found it challenging to keep up with their smaller partners!

Money earned from the fundraiser this year was earmarked for playground maintenance and updates, as well as new bark chips for the recess area. Thanks to the hard work of the students and the generosity of family and friends, the school was able to raise over \$10,500! Way to go! The class that brought in the largest amount was Mrs. Traugher’s 4th grade class; in addition to other rewards, they earned a class party with a free Jamba smoothie for each child!

Leah Fletcher, 5th grade teacher and Jog-A-Thon leader, commented: “Jog-A-Thon is a wonderful community-building activity for elementary kids to raise funds for playground maintenance. This year was extra special because we invited all the middle school and high school kids to join us! Our beloved PTF crew put together a great event and every Columbia student was able to be involved. Thank you all for your donations!”

Special appreciation goes to the sponsors of this year’s Jog-A-Thon: Avi Auto Repair LLC, Columbia Christian PTF, Cornerstone Security Group LLC, Eastside Church of Christ, Jason Preuit Real Estate Broker, MVP Commercial Roofing LLC, and Womack Auto Body. We are grateful for your support!





# Fall Sports Review

*By Kevin Yaws, Athletic Director*

After a variety of open gym/field sessions and a couple of camps over the summer, fall sports at Columbia began officially practicing on August 18 for the high school volleyball, soccer, and cross-country teams. They were soon joined by the middle and elementary teams: 7th/8th grade volleyball, 5th/6th volleyball, 6th-8th soccer, and 5th-8th grade cross-country. There was a lot going on!



## 5TH AND 6TH GRADE VOLLEYBALL

The 5th and 6th grade volleyball team had a great year, focusing on learning the game and improving their skills under the guidance of Coach Stephenie Perkins. They had lots of fun and were an encouragement to one another.

## 7TH AND 8TH GRADE VOLLEYBALL

For 7th and 8th grade volleyball, we had 25 girls sign up to participate this year. Due to the large turnout, they were divided into two sections for their games. These athletes played hard and experienced growth under Coach Ranson – narrowly missing the playoffs this year.



## HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL

The high school JV and Varsity volleyball teams saw growth in numbers and talent this year. They welcomed many returning and new players to the team. They played many close matches and showed promise for the future with many young players. This team loved each other and enjoyed playing together. Elizabeth Adams was voted onto our league's 2nd team.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

Middle school cross country showed promise for the future with runners of all ages and abilities. Each athlete improved greatly while learning how to compete under the capable direction of Coach Han.



## HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

The high school cross country team had a successful year. Both the men's and women's teams performed exceptionally well – achieving the top rankings among Columbia's teams in this century. It was a pleasure for me to coach this team, as they consistently sought to improve, worked hard, and showed great care for one another.



# Fall Sports Review (Cont...)



## MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER

Middle school soccer was co-led this year by Coach Rude and Coach Heath. The players started with a variety of skill levels and continuously improved through the season. The athletes learned the value of consistent effort and teamwork.

## HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER

High school soccer had an outstanding season, making the playoffs for the first time since 2018. Three players earned recognition on the all-league teams: Hayden Arthur was named to the First Team, Evan Martin received Second Team honors, and Noah Carver was given an Honorable Mention. The team was coached by co-coaches Ben Arthur and Andrew Martin.



We would like to thank all of our players, parents, families, students, and coaches for an amazing Fall Sports Season.  
Way to go, Knights!

# What is Chapel?



*By Carrie Rude, Admissions Director*

Chapel is an integral part of the Columbia Christian experience, and new families often ask us what it's all about. Chapel is a designated time each week for students and faculty/staff to gather together for worship, Bible lesson, announcements, and community-building. This year, the elementary classes continue to have their chapel session at Eastside Church of Christ on Wednesday mornings, while middle school and high school have separate times scheduled in the Rehearsal Hall midday on Tuesdays. In addition to the weekly gatherings, at least once per month, the entire school (preschool through 12th grade) has a special all-school chapel session.

During this combined chapel time, our big buddies and little buddies enjoy sitting together and interacting through special activities.

The theme for chapel this year is "Gratitude" – focusing on Colossians 2:6-7. Monthly themes include topics like Attitude of Gratitude (The Ten Lepers), Rooted in Gratitude (David), Overflowing with Gratitude (Joseph), and Grateful in all Seasons (Paul). The chapel sessions this year are planned by a committee comprised of David Rude (Associate Minister at Eastside Church of Christ), a few teachers: Lynn Haney, Douglas Moore, and Sam Schultz, and students from the middle and high school leadership teams.

Mr. Rude shared his thoughts about chapel, "My goals in chapel are that students understand and see who Jesus is, that He offers fulfillment and peace in a broken world, and that through this understanding they will decide to make Him Lord of their lives. Elementary chapel focuses on the fundamentals of who God and Jesus are and implementing the idea of a Christian worldview. In middle school, we are continuing with these ideas, but adding in a bigger reality of showing the need for Jesus in their lives. High school chapel expands on this by getting more in-depth with the topics and becoming a little more technical with singing and worship. My favorite part of chapel is definitely the singing!"



# New Wednesday Night “Youth Group”

By Carrie Rude, Admissions Director

A growing number of teens and preteens have been joining the new Wednesday Night Youth Group that meets on campus each week. Hosted by the Metro Church of Christ and Eastside Church of Christ, utilizing the space in the Lower Johnson Center (Student Center), this is a time when 6th-12th grade students are invited for fellowship, dinner, Bible study, and worship. The initial meeting this year had just 22 students, while more recent meetings have had 40-50 participants. Members of the sponsoring congregations and other friends have been donating meals, drinks, and desserts for the kids to enjoy during their time together.

David Rude, Associate Minister at Eastside Church of Christ, and Joe Johnson, Youth Minister at Metro Church of Christ, have been the ringleaders for this new venture. They were happy to share their thoughts about it:

**What do you hope to accomplish through this new program?**

*David: Our hope is to show and share Jesus together – creating a culture of Bible study.*

*Joe: We want to share Jesus. We want to make it a habit for teens open the Bible and sing songs simply because we all love Jesus so much.*

**What has been your favorite part(s) of Youth Group so far?**

*David: The response and implementation of our call to action, the way the high school boys are showing the younger ones how to behave during the lesson time, AND the eagerness for worship.*

*Joe: I have been blessed to see the joy it brings to the teens to study and sing together in this environment. It is truly something special to share His joy with so many who are eager to experience it.*

**Anything else to add?**

*Joe: Something I never anticipated is happening. We have students coming to Columbia to worship together from David Douglas HS, Gresham HS, and some who are homeschooled. Their response to come worship Jesus is actually impacting (and motivating) adults who attend at Eastside and Metro in ways I haven't ever seen.*





*Columbia Christian*  
presents

# *The Sound of Music*

*Youth Edition*

## *Ticket Information*

*Adults \$12*  
*Children/Seniors 55+ \$10*

*On Campus – stop by the high school  
office to pay by cash/check*

*Card/Online – visit  
[www.columbiachristian.com](http://www.columbiachristian.com)  
under "News  
& Announcements" or  
through the QR Code*



## *Dates & Times*

*Friday, Dec. 6, 7:00PM*  
*Saturday, Dec. 7, 7:00PM*  
*Sunday, Dec. 8, 2:00 (Matinee)*

*Friday, Dec. 13, 7:00PM*  
*Saturday, Dec. 14, 7:00PM*  
*Sunday, Dec. 15, 2:00 (Matinee)*

*Doors open 30 minutes prior to showtime*

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*Performances at the Vera Johnson Rehearsal Hall 9101 E Burnside Street Portland, OR 97216*



# Expanded Course Offerings



*By Pearl Howarth, Guidance Counselor*

Columbia remains committed to providing students with the most relevant education possible while also preparing them for life beyond high school. In 2024, it is imperative to remain adaptable and flexible in order to respond to what students need to be successful in the world after graduation.

Columbia Christian is pleased to announce a variety of new classes have been made available to high school students this year. These new courses provide an array of opportunities for our students that will help them pursue their passions. These classes are also a testament to the innovation and creativity of our hardworking and talented faculty.

Studies predict that in the next decade, more than 80% of jobs will require STEM skills. Hands-on STEM classes help students discover real-world applications, spark their creativity, and develop 21st-century skills including media and technology literacy, productivity, social skills, communication, flexibility, and initiative.

STEM learning also promotes critical thinking, curiosity, persistence, decision-making, leadership, entrepreneurship, acceptance of failure, and more. Regardless of a student's career aspirations, these skill sets will go a long way in preparing them for their future.

Columbia's new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) classes include:

- Marine Biology
- Pre-Engineering
- Ecology
- Intro to CAD (Computer Aided Drawing)
- Forensic Science

Humanities classes can help high school students develop skills that are important for a well-rounded education and for their future success. Humanities help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. From them, students learn to communicate clearly, express their thoughts, and better understand the stories that shape the world and connect people. Humanities classes also prompt students to establish values and concepts that will be important throughout their lives.

Columbia's new Humanities classes include:

- Journalism
- World Geography
- History Through Film
- Photography
- Geography of the New Testament

The skills and competencies gained in these classes will allow our students to engage in the modern world faithfully, creatively, and courageously as they pursue their academic and career callings.





# Autumn Album 📷



Elementary Reading Buddies



6th Grade Outdoor School at Camp Yamhill



Christian College Expo on Campus



4th Grade Leaf Walk Around Campus



High School Retreat at Camp Yamhill



Middle School Olympics Competition



Fall Sports Pep Assembly



Kindergarten & 1st Grade Pumpkin Patch



# Vensel's Voice



**President Ami Vensel**



## Newsletter Staff

Mark Beekman  
Eli Dukes  
Pearl Howarth  
Luke Moody  
Carrie Rude  
Ami Vensel  
Laura Walthinsen  
Kevin Yaws

## Seasons and New Beginnings

Seasons not only describe the four divisions of the year (spring, summer, fall, and winter), but also define a period of time. King Solomon writes, "to everything there is a season, a time for every activity under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

It was late August when my husband and I received a phone call from our oldest son and daughter-in-law. They met when they were students at Abilene Christian University, and as luck would have it, Texas is where they now call home. Our phone conversation was the typical back-and-forth exchange about church, work, recipes, home projects, and how all of the brothers are doing (there are four of them). What we thought to be a usual check-in, turned out to be an announcement - "Congratulations, mom and dad, you are going to be grandparents!" What?! Grandparents? The shock was followed by cheering, laughter, and tears of joy. Seasons.

We all go through seasons in life. Raising a child. Building a career. Caring for a parent. Strengthening a marriage. Losing loved ones. Grandchildren. And for some, great-grandchildren. Seasons.

A new school year is the beginning of a new season. We welcome new students and families into the community, and are grateful to rekindle relationships with those who are returning. We enter into this new season filled with great anticipation of God's goodness and blessing; we can know He will bring growth and flourishing.

*"But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."*

Jeremiah 17:7-8

## Important Dates

**December 6-8, 13-15**  
Fall Drama Performances

**December 12**  
All-School Christmas Program

**December 20**  
Homecoming

**December 23 - January 3**  
Christmas Break

**January 6**  
Back to School

**January 17**  
Semester 1 Ends



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