



The

KNIGHTLY NEWS

Columbia Christian School • PreK-12th Grade

Winter 2025 - 2026

Honoring Those Who Serve



Important Dates:

March 9-13

Elementary Read-A-Thon

March 23-27

Spring Break

April 9

Elementary Learning Fair
Middle School Science Fair

April 11

Auction & Partnership Dinner

April 16

High School Evening of Scholarship

April 24-26

Spring Musical Production
(Weekend 1)

May 1-3

Spring Musical Production
(Weekend 2)

May 5-8

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 21

Spring Music Program



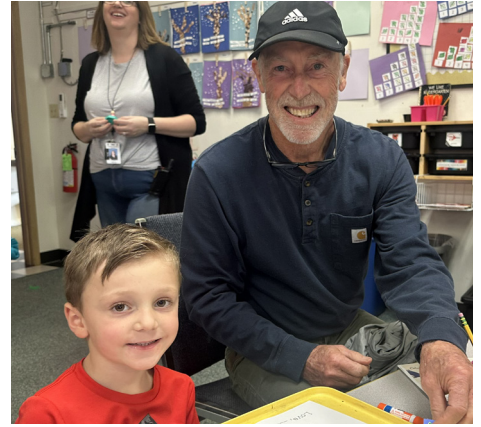
By Anna Carter, Music Teacher

Of all the programs and activities we have on campus, the Veterans Program has a unique goal. We are not celebrating our students' accomplishments, simply entertaining an audience, having fun, or creating an opportunity to solicit support. We are, as a school, using our time, talents, and resources to show honor outside of our community. And this year, our school theme, *Overcomers*, encouraged us to consider what being an overcomer looks like through the experiences of a Veteran. The combined voices, from pre-kindergarten up to our 6th grade

and high school choirs, presented an aspect of service that requires an overcoming spirit, culminating with the realization that God is our overcomer, regardless of the challenges. One of the highlights was when the 1st and 2nd grades were singing and a technical glitch left the students without accompaniment. Not only did they flawlessly continue, but sang louder, creating a beautiful acapella expression of appreciation that left the audience wondering if it was deliberate.



Grandparents Day



In November, our elementary students welcomed their grandparents (or other special friends) for a memorable morning together. Guests enjoyed breakfast and fellowship, a heartfelt Veterans Day music program, and time in the classroom with engaging activities.

Serving with Purpose: Student Committees



By Pearl Howarth, Guidance Counselor

This year, Columbia Christian High School launched Student Committees, a weekly opportunity for students to serve our campus in intentional and meaningful ways. Each 9th-12th grade student is part of a small group focused on a specific area of service, including Worship, Elementary Support, Publications, Appreciation, Outreach, Service, Facilities Support, and ASB Leadership.

By building service into the regular rhythm of the school week, Committees help students see that serving others is not an extra activity – it is part of our calling as followers of Christ. Students are developing leadership, teamwork, and responsibility while learning how their gifts can be used to bless others.

One student shared, “I like that we get to help in real ways every week. It makes school feel more like a community, not just classes.”

Through Committees, students are discovering that service truly matters and that every contribution – big or small – has value. It has been encouraging to see students grow in Christ-centered leadership as they faithfully serve one another. These shared experiences are shaping CCS students into leaders who lead with humility, serve with joy, and carry Christ’s love into every space they enter.



Christmas Music Program

By Anna Carter, Music Teacher

While Christmas in many venues is filled with a variety of joyous activities, traditions, imaginary elves (and their jolly leader), decorations, and gift giving, Columbia gets to include the Christian message of the season in all of our Christmas programs. This year's program, *Let Earth Receive Her King*, celebrated the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies through the birth of Christ by connecting the prophecies to Mary and Joseph, their journey to Bethlehem, the shepherds, and the wise men. The combination of considering the challenges for Mary, the animals recognizing Jesus and wanting to praise Him, and traditional Christmas songs of praise, led the audience through the journey of Jesus's birth, culminating with "Joy to the World" being sung by everyone in attendance. What a joy to focus on the true reason for the season!



Ho, Ho, Holiday Fair

By Carrie Rude, Admissions Director

We are delighted to see Holiday Fair re-established as a cherished tradition on the Columbia campus. Historically an annual fundraiser hosted by Women for Columbia/Cascade in the gymnasium, the event was revived in 2023 by our Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF) and is now held in the Upper and Lower Johnson Center. Our renewed Holiday Fair has once again become a highly-anticipated occasion, blessing our community in a variety of ways.

Kelly McLeskey, Columbia parent and volunteer coordinator for the event, shared her thoughts: *The biggest highlight of the 2025 Holiday Fair was the fellowship. It was wonderful to have a joyful space for our Columbia family to gather, shop, and celebrate during the special season. I was inspired by the new, young vendors this year, including several Columbia students who shared their artistry and creativity. I also loved the new coloring station near Mrs. Claus; I think it added an extra dose of family-friendly fun.*

The Holiday Fair raised about \$3,000 this year – a wonderful blessing for the PTF! These funds will help bring joy and support to Columbia's students, teachers, and staff in many meaningful ways. It truly takes many hands and generous hearts to bring an event like this to life. I would like to give a heartfelt "thank you" to all the vendors, Rici Preuit, April Beerbohm, Carrie Rude, Christy Barrett, Leah Fletcher, Dave Astin, the senior and junior classes, and so many more. I cannot express enough gratitude for the countless hours of dedication they all gave to make the Holiday Fair a success.

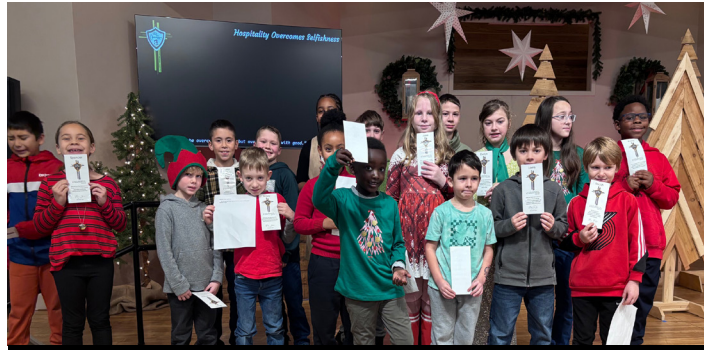
Looking ahead, I am excited to welcome fresh ideas and greater involvement. With enough interest, we hope to open an additional space for more vendors and continue growing this meaningful tradition for the Columbia community and our neighbors. Events like the Holiday Fair bring us all closer, offering the chance to meet new people, reconnect with old friends, and share experiences that strengthen our bonds.



The Coolest Memories: Winter Highlights



Big & Little Buddies enjoyed snacks and a movie at the Charlie Brown Thanksgiving Party



Elementary students were honored for outstanding character traits



Students having fun at recess, indoors and out



New U.S. flag installed in the gym thanks to generous donors



Creative Communication students practiced reading in elementary classes



School-wide Christmas caroling chapel celebration



Projects from the new 3D printer donated to the lab



High school students enjoyed a Finals Breakfast from PTF

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026

Tickets



A
KNIGHT
UNDER
THE
STARS

Columbia Christian School
Annual Benefit Auction & Partnership Dinner

2026 AUCTION SPONSORS

Eastside Church of Christ
Gentry & Gentry, CPAs
Heritage Bank
Jason Preuit, Real Estate Broker
Metro Church of Christ

Paschal Foundation
PDX Cart Builders
Peaceful Paws, Pet Cremation & Memorials
SeaStar Senior Services
Womack Auto Body

A Flurry of Talent: Frozen Jr. Takes the Stage

By Sam Schultz, Drama Director

Our winter musical, Frozen Jr., was an excellent challenge in many ways. For some of the students, it was either their first show or their first time in a substantial role, and while there were some ups and downs along the way, everyone worked together to make an amazing show. Beyond the work of the students, this show was also a huge technical challenge. Capturing the magic through lighting and projections was easier said than done, and there were a variety of iterations before we finally pulled it off.

My favorite moment is always after the first show opens. Seeing the excitement on the kids' faces after a job well done and the relief that it went so well is always priceless. If you came to any of the eight(!) showtimes, you likely witnessed this joy and sense of accomplishment from our cast and crew as well.

I would like to give a special shout-out to all the parents who helped with this production – and specifically Rici Preuit and Kelly McLeskey! Also, Erik Walthinsen was a technical wizard who made a lot of the show possible. Thank you to everyone who supported our amazing students in this fun and memorable experience!



Homecoming Celebrations



By Carrie Rude, Admissions Director

Homecoming at Columbia Christian traditionally involves several days of festivities leading up to the big event. All grades participated in a variety of fun dress-up days during this year's Spirit Week – from Twin Day and Christmas Characters, to Pajamas and Prep vs. Jock. The pep assembly on Friday included zany games like Simon Says, wrapping high school teachers up as presents, and the much-anticipated staff vs. high school boys basketball game. (The varsity team was victorious!)



The 2025 queen-crowning ceremony was held before the boys varsity game against Falls City/Kings Valley Mountaineers on Friday, December 19. The gym was packed with current families, alumni, and other friends of the school, as our Knights pulled off a solid win: 57-22. Represented on the Homecoming court were 9 senior princesses: Chisom Agum, Madison Loggins, Anaiah Martin, Lana Muffenbier, Cailin Schwam, Sophie Sibert, Carmen Walthers, Melody Yaws, and Emma Zuniga. Each of the girls was escorted into the hushed gym by a senior boy while Columbia memories were read aloud. Finally, the young squire (Ty Waldrop) presented the crown, and the young lady in waiting (Lena Brandt) bestowed a bouquet of roses at the announcement of the queen. Congratulations to Anaiah!



When the basketball game concluded, and the school song was sung by the audience gathered around the gym floor, the high school students moved over to their "After Party" in the Johnson Center for more excitement. Teacher coordinator Clara Brandt shared, "The kids had lots of fun at the formal this year. Special thanks to 'DJ Mr. Moore' for spinning the tunes, and Christine Schultz for teaching the line dancing. We appreciate all the parent chaperones and food donors, and we are grateful to Amanda Himes and Jen Partlow for the balloon arch. Student leadership ASB did a great job with set-up and décor for the evening as well."

Teacher Feature



Mrs. Kendra Johnson

CURRENTLY TEACHES:

1st Grade

THOUGHTS ON TEACHING:

I truly enjoy helping each child discover their God-given gifts and ways to use those blessings to grow in knowledge. Plus, I aim to help children not only grow in earthly wisdom but heavenly wisdom as well. Finally, teaching brings joy to my life and I love the ever-evolving nature of it; there's never a dull moment!

BACKGROUND:

Kendra received her BS in Education from Cascade College and her Master's in Education with a Reading Endorsement from Concordia University. She has been married to her husband Joe for 15 years and they have 2 kids who attend Columbia. They are members at the Metro church of Christ where Joe is the Youth Minister. For fun, Kendra loves to travel! So far she has been to Korea, China, Africa, Mexico City, and several states in the US. She also enjoys spending time in nature, including hiking and backpacking.

TEACHING:

14 years total, 9 of which have been at Columbia.

FAVORITE VERSE:

1 Timothy 1:7 "They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm."

Global Knights

By Laura Walthinsen, International Student Coordinator

Each year our international population is a little different, with a unique mix of long-term students and short-term visitors. This year we were thrilled to welcome students from Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Brazil, and Germany! While being intentional about regularly checking in with our students and building relationships with them, we've also scheduled a fun get-together each month.

For November, I wanted to prepare them for some foods they could potentially encounter at their host homes over the Thanksgiving holiday. We set aside one of their class times for a sampling of traditional American fare, including pumpkin pie, Cool Whip, cranberry jelly (complete with can rings!), cranberry sauce, and "Watergate Salad" (that strange but interesting mixture of pistachio pudding, cool whip, pineapple, mini marshmallows, and walnuts).

The girls were rather skeptical, only really trying the pie and Cool Whip, and a smidge of the "salad". The boys, however, not only tried it all, but began to make their own mixtures and combinations of flavors. They got creative and had fun exploring. It was definitely a fun and memorable Pre-Thanksgiving celebration!

Each year God blesses us with incredible students and new friendships. While our two Brazilian students have completed their time with us and moved back home to begin their Senior year, we were excited to welcome a new eighth grade student from South Korea this semester!

As we look ahead, we are working hard to stay in contact with various individuals and agencies to line up our enrollment for Fall of 2026. If you have ever considered hosting an international student, we would love to talk to you about what is involved. We are always looking for more host families as our program grows!



Vensel's Voice



President Ami Vensel

Celebrating God's Faithfulness

What does it look like to step forward in faith when God invites us to trust Him with the future?

Before the Jordan River parted, God's people stepped forward. "As soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan, and their feet touched the water's edge... the water from upstream stopped flowing." (Joshua 3:15-16) Faith, then and now, begins not with certainty, but with obedience – and a willingness to trust God with what lies ahead.

For nearly eight decades, Columbia Christian has been more than a school – it has been a Mission Outpost, formed by faith and propelled by God's call. Now, as we stand at the edge of what God is doing next, we hear the charge of Joshua 3 to step forward in faith and follow His leading. With Christ at the center, His light shines boldly through our classrooms, relationships, worship, and service. Honoring God's faithfulness in the past, we move forward with confidence and holy expectation, trusting Him to lead, equip, and prepare future generations to grow in knowledge, character, and unwavering faith.

As we reflect on God's faithfulness and look to the future with confident hope, Columbia's Board of Directors has launched the **Legacy of Stewardship Campaign**—an invitation to link arms in sustaining and strengthening a ministry God has faithfully established and continues to use for His Kingdom. Your prayers, support, and partnership help ensure Columbia Christian continues to flourish academically, spiritually, and missionally for generations to come.

As the priests stepped into the Jordan before the waters parted, we too are invited to step forward in faith, trusting God to lead the way. Now is the time to join in what God is doing at Columbia Christian. Through prayer, partnership, and generous support, you can help strengthen this ministry and shape lives for generations to come. Step forward with us—and watch how God makes a way.



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LEGACY OF
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