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Administrator
Elaine Obbink



22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit **Galatians 5:22-23, 25**



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Merry Christmas

Alumni and Friends Newsletter

Angels Aware

We have dusted off the old Angels Aware Christmas program and brought it back out for this year's Christmas celebration. Over the years, it has made its appearance here and there. Seeing the entire student body dressed all in white with glittering halos and hearing all the students sing "Glory to God, Glory in the Highest" with arms raised, is a marvelous way to enter the Christmas season.



It is true that we performed this epic tale in December of 2019, so we are dusting off the program a bit earlier than we would ordinarily do so, but the message of Angels Aware is one that we all desperately need to hear. It is the story of God's great plan of salvation. The amazing plan that sometimes gets lost in the world's clamor around Christmas.

The setting is heaven, the angels are assembled, an announcement is made that God is going to earth. The script and songs quickly review the message of the Old Testament and

Elaine Obbink, Administrator

our desperate need for a savior because "I Trouble" has permeated the earth. God's mercy is highlighted. The angels begin discussing how God should go to earth. After dreaming of all the possibilities, they are disappointed to find out that God's son will come to earth as a baby, and he will be born in Bethlehem. How often are we disappointed by God's plan until we see that plan fully unfold?

There is another beautiful truth found in this simple production. "God knew that if he went to earth as someone important in the world's eyes, a lot of people would feel that they could never approach Him...never be close to Him." God wants a relationship with you and with me. His love is free, assessable, and fills us to the point of overflowing so that we may impact our world for Him.

The production ends with these simple truths: "God sent his Son to earth" (1 John 4:9), "the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23) and we are aware that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

I am praying that your heart is filled with the good news of Christmas!

There's Joy at MCS

Jalaine Guerra, Kg

Cheerful, joyful faces greet me each morning as I welcome my precious kindergartners to class. Regardless of the current chaos in our world, these beautiful five and six year-olds arrive with smiles, hugs and stories of their mornings. Each day we are blessed to experience little pockets of joy together, such as when an academic concept clicks with a student or we all dress up for Wacky Wednesday.



However, there are times when we share such joyful occasions that we celebrate and talk about them for some time. One of these occasions had its start before my students even arrived for school in September. Through the immense generosity of one of the larger stores in our community, each student received a pencil box filled with a plethora of school supplies, along



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with folders, all about me plaques, white boards and so much more. These pencil boxes were received on the first day of school with such joy, "ohhh's" and "awww's" from every child as they eagerly explored each item!

More recently, our student desks finally arrived after much delay. I wish that I could have captured the pure joy and excitement from each child as they ventured into class and found their own desk, which now holds their own school supplies. There was great exclamations of, "oh!" and my personal favorite, "It's magic!" when referring to the shelf beneath the desktop that held their supplies out of sight.

My joy overflowed to see their gleeful smiles and excited exclamations as each

student arrived to find this surprise. Presently the word contagious brings negative connotation to mind, but our students' joy is absolutely contagious, and in only a positive manner!

"A happy heart makes the face cheerful," Proverbs 15:13. Through the challenges and trials of teaching through this pandemic, I often reflect and remember to be ever grateful of the joy the Lord brings through the door in the form of these precious little ones. I am reminded of the song by Phil Wickham, there's joy in the "House of the Lord" today. There is certainly joy in the house of the Lord today at Monroe



Seasons

Sue Jansons, Pre-K



One thing we can always count on is the changing of seasons. As a teacher I always try to squeeze as much out of my summer as I can. Between visiting out of town family, to camping, biking, and hiking, my summers fly by. On summer's heels comes fall, and it's time to embark on another adventure with a new batch of students.

For me the start of a new school year is always full of new hopes and possibilities. What do the students already know? How much can I teach them? What are the most important things I hope they learn this year? This last question holds the weight of my purpose and calling as a teacher.

Being a teacher during the COVID pandemic presents a variety of challenges. Some of the obvious ones are wearing masks, the extra cleaning and handwashing, and the frequent absences. But the things that are hardest on me are the ones that affect me personally. Last year, I was unable to visit my parents and in-laws until I was vaccinated. Being a teacher potentially exposed me to the virus on a daily basis. I couldn't take the risk of passing it on to my loved ones. As difficult as this was, I knew it would only be for a season, albeit a long one, and that seasons do change in time.

My students are so young that they may not even remember the time before this pandemic season. So, what do I most want them to learn? I want them to learn something they can take with them as they grow and inevitably encounter their next tough season in life.

My hope is that they experience God's love through Bible stories and memorizing Bible verses. Each morning the students confidently recite their Bible memory verse together. They listen intently to the Bible stories taught each day. We have even been listening to Bible verses set to music during our afternoon rest time. I often hear the student singing or humming these songs. Someday, maybe years later, they will read the Bible words or hear them, and they will remember the tune. These words will be hidden in their hearts and will sustain them season after season.

What's the Difference?

Kris Hvattum, 5th

I am the "new kid" at MCS this year, but after teaching 5th grade here for several months I can tell you what a difference it makes that we are a *Christian* school! As a disciple of Christ in today's educational climate, it is a luxury to have the freedom to include a spiritual element in staff dynamics, discipline, and school culture. I am constantly reminded what an honor it is to be able to study the Word and share the Gospel at work!

The first impression I had after joining the staff was that this is a group of people who is not afraid to support and grow with each other. I have never been part of a team that met together for devotions and prayer each morning and I believe it makes a big difference. I have found that taking a few minutes to check in with each other and wait on the Lord enables the staff to be in the right mindset to support students and pour into them however they are led. Rather than rushing around making copies and gathering materials, for those few minutes we are making sure that we are spiritually ready to be the leaders our students need.

One of the most delicate moments in a classroom is when we are correcting behavior. Working at a Christian school means that, rather than just reminding children that they need to follow the rules, we can address issues at the heart level. I love to help students develop their interpersonal skills in a way that honors God. Even the youngest students can be shown that God wants us to "do to others as you would have them do to you." In practice, we can show students how to recognize when they have wronged someone and take steps to make it right!

The difference that comes with being a distinctly Christian school goes beyond staff devotions and training students in teachable moments. I have quickly come to realize there is a culture of loving one another and seeking God that pervades MCS. One of my favorite ways this is fostered is through weekly chapel. This year the entire school is learning all we can about the fruits of the Spirit discussed in Galatians 5. Thanks to these entertaining weekly lessons I can encourage any student to make sure they are showing love and it would have a deep meaning. Rather than saying "wait until you are called on to speak," I can simply whisper "self-control" and they know that this is not just a rule to be followed but a virtue that flows from their relationship with God.

It is difficult to overstate the difference it makes being in an environment like Monroe *Christian* School where staff and students strive for the fruits of the Spirit and Christ is at the center of it all!

Thankfulness

Mrs. Enochs, Preschool & Pre-K

Whenever someone does something good or kind, we like to figure out which fruit of the Spirit "power" they are using! Although our school theme is *The Fruit of the Spirit*, our classroom theme this year has become thankfulness.

I've never had a class where all the kids are so excited to be at school. For many of these children this is their first school experience. So socializing is a big part of what we do in preschool. Why is it so important to learn how to get along with others? Spending time together helps us learn to care about others, to practice sharing, and taking turns. It prepares us to have good relationships, and to understand our place and purpose in this world. It gives us confidence and helps us learn how to solve problems.



One of the ways that we are learning what it means to be a friend is to learn something about what is near and dear to our hearts, our families. We are bringing in family pictures to share with our friends, hanging them in the classroom, and counting how many members are in our families. Focusing on our families has brought even more opportunities for us to learn about thankfulness.

I know I am so thankful to have all these kids here at school with me this year. They are such a blessing and make me smile every day!

New Friends and New Learning

Courtney Haggerty, Kg

It has been an amazing blessing to meet all these new kiddos this year! They are all so excited to be working and learning alongside peers. Friendship has been a huge component to our learning goals this year. We are practicing how to be a kind friend who shares, waits our turn, and listens to what others are saying. We love reading books about friendship, especially Elephant and Piggie books, which are our favorites!

This year we are also learning what it means to be a child of God and to exemplify the fruit of the Spirit as per Galatians 5:22. We have learned that we can pray about anything anytime of the day! All the students have been doing an amazing job at

learning verses and sharing them. One of our favorite ways to show God our love is to worship through song!

We have big work to do together this year. We have started the year off with a lot of science which has been engaging and exciting. We have learned how bees help pumpkins and apples grow,

which animals are nocturnal and diurnal, and even did a little chemistry! As we continue through the year we will learn new phonics, vocabulary, math skills, physical and animal science, and best of all how to read! I cannot wait to see how much learning we accomplish this year.



Field Trip Fun

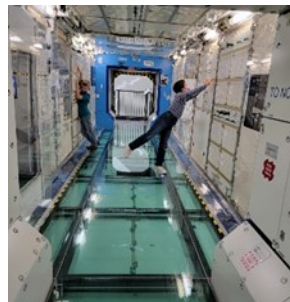
Monique Coburn, 3rd

This year the third graders at MCS have been studying the United States. As part of our United States unit, we have been learning about different landmarks around the U.S. We got to visit a landmark here in our own state of Washington. At the end of October, the students and I, along with the help of several parents, visited The Future of Flight Museum in Everett as our Washington state landmark.

When we arrived at the museum, we were greeted by the staff and given an awesome tour of the gallery. After the tour, students were able to explore all the exhibits in the gallery. They were able to fly a drone, design a plane and then fly it, fly like a bird, experience different forces of flight, and work with the Ozobot robots and write the code to help them move. There also was a space state capsule to walk through and many other exhibits to experience. Each student got a passport to find answers in

for each exhibit, and once they answered all the questions, then they got a sticker.

The students and I had such a wonderful time going through all the exhibits, the gift shop, visiting the sky deck, and watching all the big jets take off and land. We had so much fun, we can't wait to go on our next field trip!



Welcome, Miss Emily

Dorie Hughes, 4th



We are so blessed to have a student teacher in our 4th grade classroom this year. Emily Trudgeon joined our classroom in September and will complete her student teaching experience in December.

Emily went to Kamiak High School in Mukilteo and then went on to get her bachelor's degree from the University of Washington. She is currently working on her Master of Teaching Elementary Education degree from Western Governors University.

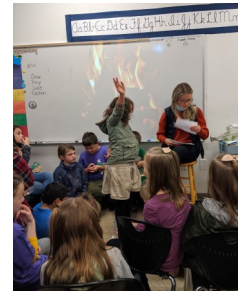
"Miss Emily" brings joy and excitement to our 4th grade classroom. She always has a smile on her face and speaks words of encouragement to all the students. Kylie said, "Miss Emily is a kind-hearted woman. She is awesome! I like everything about her!" Ethan said, "She's nice, she gives us compliments, and she tells us to never give up!"

One day, Miss Emily brought a teepee and some "logs" to class. The students discussed why history is important as they sat around the "fire." They looked at drawings they had made for their Lewis and Clark timeline. The students enjoyed learning around the campfire!

She is always coming up with innovative ideas and shares them with the students. They read their writing assignments at a "fireside chat" while snacking on s'mores mix Miss Emily had brought for them.

Miss Emily loves the Lord. Her relationship with Him is evident every day as she brings the light of Jesus to our classroom. We are so thrilled that she has come to Monroe Christian School.

Thank you, Miss Emily, for making our classroom an exciting place to learn!



New Experiences for This Experienced Teacher

Leanne Sytsma, 1st

After 30+ years of teaching at Monroe Christian School I thought I had experienced most everything. Until this year.

This year is unlike any other at Monroe Christian School. There are two kindergarten and two first grade classes, a first for Monroe Christian.

I never would have imagined needing four teachers for two grades. I have the pleasure of partnering with Mrs. Tracy Moore to teach 39 first grade students.

Going out for recess is another new experience. When I began teaching at Monroe Christian in 1989, the entire school would be outside during recess time. Today there are so many students we need to combine them into groups. That is a lot of little people to carefully track.

Throughout the years God has been faithful and has never failed to meet all the needs at Monroe Christian School. It has been interesting to find enough desks, chairs, classroom

space, and chapel seating let alone figuring out recess, PE, and music class schedules this year. However, through these new challenges God has been right beside us providing and meeting all our needs in a mighty way.

All I can say is WOW! God you are so good. Thank you for these new experiences for this experienced teacher.

GOD
is good

Blessings

Deanna Bailey, 2nd

So many blessings I do not know where to begin listing them all! Following are a few of the highlights:

Academically, MCS has been blessed to update the elementary reading program to better meet the individual needs of the students.

Spiritually, MCS has been blessed with new students curious to hear about God and his love for them. MCS has also been blessed with amazing new staff members passionate about sharing their knowledge and love of God.

Socially, MCS has been blessed with new P.E. equipment for students to share, tables where students spend time together, and new playground equipment arriving soon.

Physically, MCS has been blessed with innovative technology within many classrooms, new desks and chairs, and magnetic whiteboards for teacher and student use.

Unless you walk the hallways or lean in and listen to student interactions, it is hard to describe the level of excitement and energy within our little class. While our year is still a bit unconventional, there is no doubt how excited the children, in 2nd grade, are to be here!

My favorites are hearing the children learn how to problem solve and reconcile with each other, discussing our Bible devotions and lessons, and seeing their excitement when they have worked hard to make connections with their learning. We have phrases and a Bible verse that have anchored our time together. We know that mistakes are proof that we are trying, and we will not give up. We know there is power in the word yet! We also frequently recite 1 Timothy 4:12 to be reminded that little kids can do big things too! I am truly blessed God has chosen me to be here during this time with His precious children.

When asking the 2nd graders what they like about 2nd grade and MCS their list was long!

-math, our mystery math time, learning to add and subtract, learning about ones and tens, problem solving. "I'm getting better at telling time."

-handwriting, learning how to be ready for cursive. "I can make my letters better this year."

-our new desks and chairs, the new automatic projector screen. "It is fun to have room to put all my books in my desk."

-the bright decorations in our room, fun chairs to sit in. "The room makes me feel happy."

-donut day!!!!!!!!!!

-reading our morning devotion book, practicing the Bible verses. "I am learning how much God loves me."

-reading groups, phonics to help read better. "I like all the interesting books we read." "I have learned so much that my brain is going boom!"

-friends at recess, when playing soccer, and in the classroom. "I am making lots of new friends."

God is so good to us! We are blessed!

Be Strong and Take Heart

Tracy Moore, 1st

This is my second-year teaching at Monroe Christian School. Last year, I had the privilege of teaching 4th grade to an amazing group of students. This year, I am delighted to be teaching 1st grade to a group of equally amazing students. Last year, there were opportunities to get to know this year's 1st grade students. One of those opportunities was through fourth grade reading buddies with the kindergarten students.

Once again, God brought so many new faces and families to our school. Along with new faces and new families it takes time to get to know every student and to meet their academic, social, and emotional needs. Each day, as I prepare lessons for my students, there are two resounding thoughts that God is continually whispering in my ear – **be grateful** and to **wait on Him**. I am so grateful to have a full classroom of students and because this is the first time I have taught 1st grade. I am grateful to have an amazing teaching partner in Mrs. Sytsma. Her knowledge and enthusiasm for the content and curriculum is so appreciated and helpful. She has been an inspiration to me, and a wonderful prayer partner for our students!

I am also learning to wait on God for his perfect timing. It is easy for me to feel like I have failed myself and my students if everything isn't perfect or if they are not where I think they should be at this time in the school year. It is hard not to rush ahead and want so much for my students and their future. However, God is continually reminding me that He is the master of time, and each student is right where they are according to His divine purpose for them. God knows what he is doing, and it is my privilege to be his hands and feet with my students, loving them and caring for them as he would.

So, I will continue to lean into Him and the plan He has for each of them. I am grateful for the students and staff at MCS, and I will continue to wait on His timing for all things. Psalm 27 begins, **"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?"** and ends with **"I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."**

The Gift of Giving

Heather Moses, 6th

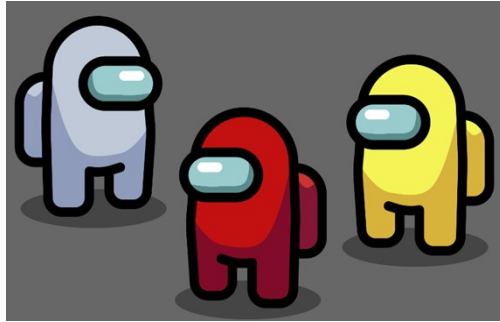


Everyone loves to receive gifts! I know we all have received a memorable gift at one time or another that touched our hearts and brought us great delight. Yet we've heard over and over, and probably even said it to our kids that, "It's better to give than to receive." Recently, I've had occasion to see that in action. When the Junior High took a day in early November to attend Missions Fest 2021 in Edmonds, I mentioned to the 6th grade class that one of the workshops I was interested in attending was about Operation Christmas Child. I was surprised to see that by the end of the day most of my class had chosen to attend one of their seminars.

If you're not familiar with it, Operation Christmas Child is an organization run by Franklin Graham with the sole purpose of delivering gifts to children in poverty by filling millions of shoeboxes with small toys and other much needed items. Best of all, each child receives a booklet in their own language sharing the Good News about Jesus. An awesome gift! Watching the videos of some of these children opening their boxes I saw incredible joy on their faces, with smiles to light up a room. Truly wonderful, but what you would normally expect. What was less expected was the enthusiasm and pure joy on the faces of my students when I shared with them that same video, and the opportunity to fill shoeboxes in class for children in another country. Such eagerness and joy on their faces! They were excited because they were given the opportunity to give joy to someone else. And because of their joy, I too was filled with joy. That's a lot of joy from a couple of shoeboxes! So, if I ever had reason to wonder at the phrase, "It's more blessed to give than to receive," I have only to remember the faces of my students to realize how true it is.

That's so 'sus'

Eric Warren, 7th



No, the title is not a mistake. Perhaps it shows your age. Students today are from a new era. They grow up in a different culture, one that so often we as adults are unaware of. Do you know what it means to DM someone (Direct Message)? Are you current with the latest memes? Who's your favorite streamer? Which app is better Insta, Snap, or Discord? Do you even know what those are? For those of us not up to date on today's lingo, 'sus' is short for suspicious.

How has teaching changed? The culture of today's youth is different, but the lessons we are trying to teach remain the same. Perhaps the job has become harder because of the many different distractions that students face today. This ever-present era of connection has changed so much about our lives. Technology has its advantages and can be used in so many ways that benefit our lives. This same technology has created a whole new world that our students live in. They may not live in this new world all the time, but they are exposed to it enough that they understand what their peers are talking about while many adults just chalk it up as some new "youth" phrase. Which, by the way, many youths would not even understand the "chalk it up" phrase because they no longer use chalk or chalkboards, or chalk the lines of a field because fields are often not even real grass.

All this to say that what we encounter as teachers is not the same as what many of us experienced, or even were trained to do. The reality is that teaching content can be done by just about anyone. Content is perhaps the smallest part of teaching. One aspect of teacher training is understanding that the best teachers are three-fold, those that are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and care about their students. The best of teachers are those that convince students they truly care for them. In fact, you can probably think back to the "best" or favorite teacher you have ever had, and I would vote that it was the teacher that best displayed those three characteristics; knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and caring.

We at Monroe Christian School not only have the desire to learn about our students, but to also meet them where they are at. We not only care about our students, but we also get to love them as Christ loved us. It is in this process that we can help them fulfill our Mission Statement that at Monroe Christian School we are a Christ-centered community, engaging, equipping, and empowering God's children for joyful service in His Kingdom.

The Long Wait

Jaclyn Waltman, 8th

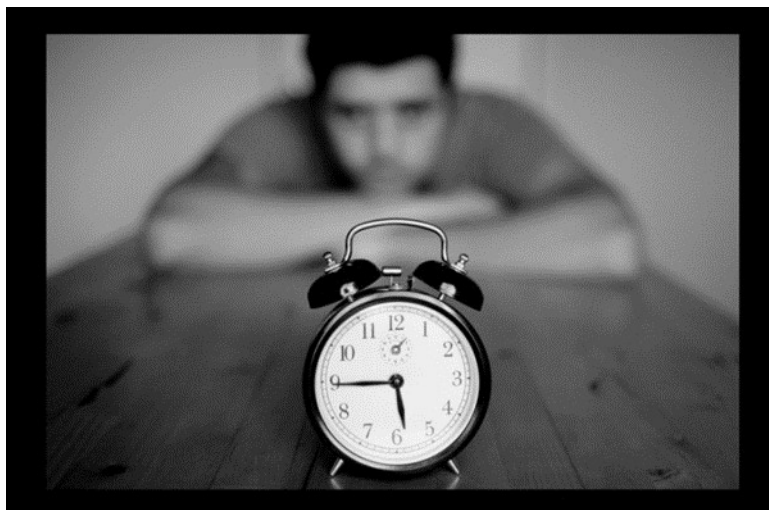
We recently completed the first 50 days of school. When I told my students this information, they were somewhat in disbelief. I then told them that we still have about 120 more to go, and they were rather less excited. 120 more days to them seemed like such a long time. These students actually enjoy school, but their response was not unusual. We all have things we look forward to. For many students summer break is just pure fun, thus the desire to be there quickly is understandable.

This lesson fit well when we started to examine the story of the Israelites in the Old Testament. Did you know that Abraham was promised to be the father of more people than could be counted? He never saw that day. In that same promise the descendants of Abraham would come back to the land that was promised to them. Perhaps Abraham's son Isaac would see that day? Nope. Maybe Abraham's grandson Jacob? Nope. The promise had been spoken, but it took over 400 years before God would fulfill his word and bring the Israelites back to the land he promised them.

It is so easy for us as believers to get caught up in this trap. As we continued in our Bible class, we came to the story of the Golden Calf in Exodus 32. The Israelites were unsure of what happened to Moses because he had been meeting with God for so long. They begged Aaron to make them a god to worship and so he did.

Too often this is our response as well. We pray for any number of things. The question we should not ask is "Did we pray?" but rather, "Did we wait?" Sometimes we wait and the wait is longer than we had ever hoped and so we assume that answer must be no. Perhaps we need to step back and remember that even though we cannot see what God is doing, we should rest in the fact that he is still at work. As Jesus says in John 5:17, "But Jesus replied, 'My Father is always working, and so am I.'"

This does not help time go faster, but I like to think that as students reflect on the meaning of these stories, they can start to understand that God has many different ways of showing that He is still at work in their lives.



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