

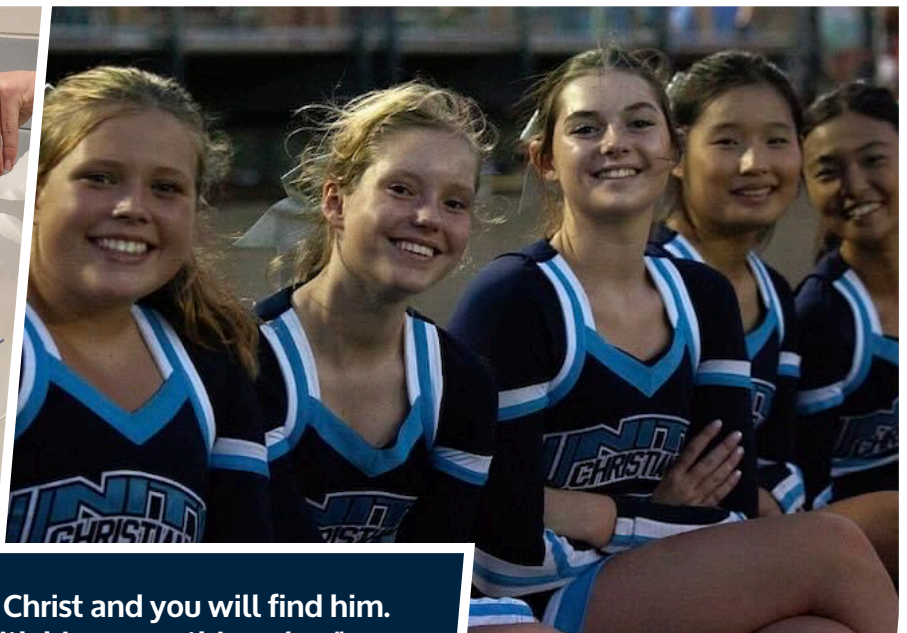
UNITY CHRISTIAN
IN HIS SERVICE



December 2023

BULLETIN

RESILIENCY In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. — John 16:33



"Look for Christ and you will find him.
And with him, everything else."

C.S. Lewis



Dear Friends of Unity,

What is the next beautiful thing we can create? It was a question a parent asked me in a recent meeting. The question was asked as we wrestled for solutions to a problem we gathered to solve, and it has been stuck in my mind ever since. What is the next beautiful thing we can create?

Christ came so we can be made beautiful, and we can make things beautiful again. As Christmas approaches, we remember once again how God redemptively turned the distortion back to beautiful through the redemptive arrival of Jesus.

In our world, there appears to be a polarizing fight for power at so many levels, politically and culturally. The good news to remember is that Christ has dominion over all of this. The thrones and powers that are waging war both literally and figuratively are under his dominion. (Colossians 1:16). As a Christian school, we have the opportunity to show another way, a Christ-like way, a beauty creating way.

Creating something beautiful is a counter-cultural filter we should apply to all of the aspects of our school and our personal lives. How can we make our community, our practices and our lives more beautiful? There is a unique opportunity and calling in Christian education to make all things more and more beautiful.

As a school, we are committed to living inside of the Teaching for Transformation framework. One throughline of this framework is being a “Beauty Creator”. “Beauty Creators are those who celebrate God’s creation by enjoying and creating what is good and beautiful.”

May the story of Christ’s birth call us more into living the lifestyle of our Savior, where beautiful things are being created each and every day.

**Merry Christmas,
Mr. Wayne Dykstra**

Campaign Update

Friends of Unity, we are asking for your consideration to help support Unity by raising the remaining \$1.4 million dollars in our building campaign. We are specifically asking for a 2 part gift from all of our supporters. Would you consider an end of 2023 gift? And, would you consider a 2024 gift before March 1?

Why March 1? This is the date when the construction loan ends and the long term financing plan begins. We hope to borrow as little as possible. Every gift of every amount received before March 1 is a blessing to our school.
Thanks for your consideration!





Shown L to R: Maria Wang, Amaya Vande Vegte, Ava Noyes, Lily Bonnema, Danielle Dykstra, Kenna Huizenga, Kaylee Dykstra, Lauren Noteboom, Emma Sandbulte, and Eliana Zhang.

Cheerleading: Excitement and Challenges

BY JENNESS WOOLEN

The 2023 fall cheerleading season was one filled with excitement and challenges for the UC Cheer Team. The team began practices and attended skill camps in early August. Practices continued to be held in the early mornings during the months of August, September, October, and November. Throughout the season the team built relationships and kept getting better and better at the cheerleading basics.

A few of the highlights in our year of cheer were:

- attending camps and getting to know cheerleaders from other schools
- prepping for the first day of school and welcoming the students to a new school year
- prepping locker notes and treats for the teams before events
- interacting with the student section and crowds at the events
- cheering at the Friday night football games
- preparing the combo routine with the dance team
- competing in the state cheer championships in Des Moines in November and the travel and togetherness that went along with a trip away from school
- having 3 team members (Amaya Vande Vegte, Eliana Zhang, and Maria Wang) qualify to tryout for All State Cheer
- having Ava Noyes selected to represent Unity at Honor Cheer
- planning, re-scheduling, re-scheduling, and finally conducting our UC Cheer Kids Camp -learning to be flexible with schedules and routines

All in all we had a great Fall cheerleading season and we appreciate the support of the Unity Community! *o/*

Historic Season

BY JAKE BYMA

The 2023 season proved to be a historic one for the Boys Cross Country team.

There were a number of new faces on the team with returning students joining for the first time and a number of freshmen giving the sport a try. That positive growth resulted in a robust team of 37 runners. Throughout the season athletes learned more about how to pace themselves, how to go the extra mile, how to encourage others, and how to be your best every day. The team adjusted well to some new training and a few new meets. Many miles and many laughs were shared by all as we strove for daily improvement and sought to honor the Lord with our abilities and attitudes.

The team performed at its best when it mattered most, winning their District meet on a tie-breaker and taking home a team 3rd place trophy at the State Meet, just one point behind 2nd place. The team is thankful for our numerous seniors that have dedicated a lot of time and effort into making this a strong program and looks forward to continuing on the tradition of excellence that has been in place for many years.



In the back row, from left, are Kellan Meyer, Lane Scholten, Stephen Schreurs, Jesse Huisman, David Winn, Dylan Obbink, Ryan Van Schouwen, Tyler Rozenboom, Eric Erickson, Ben Ploegstra, Ben Van Genderen and Ethan Wynia. In the middle row, from left, are Josh Statema, Joren Vande Griend, Josh Bousema, Rowan Oostra, Landon De Jong, Ezra Landman, Dylan Koelewyn, Isaac De Jong, William Breems, Elijah Nyenhuis, Sam Kamp, Brennan Obbink and Elijah Schreurs. In the front row, from left, are Aaron De Jong, Layne Vos, Brevan Obbink, Eli Geleyense, Cade Wynia, Logan Dykstra, Tyler Brunst, Micah Murphy, Calum Monroe and David Taylor

Unity Dance Team

by ANNIE BALDWIN

It has been a blessing and a privilege to coach the Unity Christian Dance Team through the fall semester, and I have seen an explosion of growth in leadership and community among the girls. The dance team experiences three stages of their season. In the summer and fall, the girls diligently work on routines for football season. Then, as football season drew to a close, the emphasis on the Iowa State Dance and Drill Team Association competition (ISDTA) increased. The girls learned three competition routines, Hip Hop, Lights, and Novelty, and spent countless hours rehearsing each dance. This annual competition was held from November 29th to December 1st, and Unity Christian proudly took home a Division 1 ranking Lights. Now, with ISDTA behind us, the girls look towards basketball season. Presenting their competition routines, and new dances, the girls will perform six times during this season.

I am deeply grateful for the intentionality of this whole team and want to commend those who will soon graduate. The character, leadership, and responsibility of upperclassmen have a profound impact on the future of the team, and the UCDT seniors set a high standard. They faithfully demonstrate Christian character, deeply rooted values, academic excellence, and the role of unity in a team. Thank you, seniors, for your willingness to be bold yet humble leaders. As we head into the last portion of our

season, I am reminded of Romans 15:5-6. "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."



Shown L to R: Summer Borchers, Jaiden Kooima, Marcella Namwanje, Jenna Folkerts, Addison Jacobsma, Laura Ross, Faith Elgersma, Lyndsey Calkhoven.

Praises for...

- Praising God for timely rains and proper growing conditions which allowed our corn crop to produce an average of 244 bushels/acre. We sold it at \$4.70/bushel for an income to our general fund of \$28,707. Thank you to Todd Rowenhorst, Harry Wieringa, Brian Obbink for donating the seed and to Bert Reinders and Kim Van Peurseum for planting and harvesting our crop.
- a great first quarter.
- all those who volunteer at Unity.
- the Booster Club and the work they do for all the activities at Unity.
- the birth of Mr. Jake Byma's daughter, Joelle

Prayers for...

- the Schrock family in the loss of the Triple Box. May God lead them in their next steps.
- students and faculty who have family members fighting cancer.
- students recovering from illnesses or surgeries.
- safety on the roads with buses and students.

Memorial gifts:

Ken Huisman
Ila Schiebout
Rodney Bolkema
Wilma Foreman

FFA Activities

by DENNIS BENSON

The following FFA members attended the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana during the last week of October. Jocelyn Mulenburg, Bryce Fedders, Abby Van Roekel, Danielle Dykstra & Caleb Wielenga, Lane Scholten, Elijah Hofmeyer, Chris Freese, Trinity Van Donkelaar, Ana Heynen, Caden Oolman, and Deker Mulder. Students had the opportunity to develop premier leadership and explore career success. Tours included Apache Sprayers and the Indianapolis Speedway and museum. Other events included the World's Toughest Rodeo, the National Convention & Expo. The opening session included the inspirational keynote speaker Juan Bendaña.



Thank you to all our Unity FFA supporters who make this possible through donations at our soup supper, fruit sales, plants sales and sweet corn sales. Members also took time providing service to our community. They sponsored an Ag Safety Day for Ireton & OCCS 5th & 6th graders, had a Feed the Farmer Day in Alton & Maurice, and also helped twice with snack pack.

Combo Night

by RUTH CLARK

Students, parents, and friends attended Unity's Combo Night event on Thursday, November 9, 2023 in the Knight Center. The evening began with a one-act performance titled "Storyville" by Lorraine Thompson and directed by Janie Van Dyke. Students shared a series of fairy tales with traditional elements and many funny additions. From farm animals, a fox, fishermen, and the gingerbread man, 16 students showcased their acting skills through quick costume changes and single actors playing many, many characters. The one-act was followed up by three songs from the Jazz Band directed by Carla Van Beek. The audience swayed to the beat, enjoying the rich smooth sounds, including solos by Mikayla Vollink (trombone) and Addie Oschner (alto sax). The evening closed with a series of improvisations from The Cast, a group of 17 students directed by Ruth Clark. With a lot of audience participation, these students acted out products from the shopping network, impersonated famous

people from history, and created still-life pictures, channeling quick thinking and imagination. It was a great night! We hope you'll join us next year.



Student Council Leads

by BRIELLE REITSMA

Unity Christian's Student Council is the team behind student-led events at UCHS. Our council consists of 3 representatives from each class. Our seniors are President Hezekiah Hanson, Treasurer Carson Noteboom, and Secretary Brielle Reitsma. The juniors that serve are Vice President Ava Noyes, and representatives Faith Elgersma and Tyler Rozenboom. Sophomore representatives are Lily Bonnema, Jaida Barrow, and Joren Vande Griend. And rounding out the team are our brand-new freshmen, David Taylor, Cael Milard, and Marcella Namwanje. The aim of Unity's Student Council is to serve the student body by crafting a school year full of relationship building, community strengthening, and God-centered fun.

The Student Council at Unity has had a busy and exciting year already. We kicked off the school year with our annual Freshman and Senior ice cream social to help our underclassmen ease into their new atmosphere. The next couple of events we had were the All School Retreat and Fall Spirit Week. During an afternoon off from school, our Living Groups, groups of a mix of all grades, competed against each other in a variety of games and activities, such as 9 square, dodgeball, trivia, and minute-to-win-it games. Fall Spirit Week was a week full of dressing up and rallying together to build school spirit. A favorite activity from Spirit Week was the second annual Powder Puff flag football game between the junior and senior girls. The senior's won again this year, making the class of 2024 back to back champions.

More recently, on November 17, we had our first praise and worship night. The event was held in the Knight Center and was led by our student praise team. We're hoping to hold another one in the near future, so look out for an announcement, we'd love for you to join us! The latest event that just wrapped up was our Coin War. Each class was given a large water jug to put their spare change in to raise money for your class. There was also an opportunity to sabotage other classes by putting dollar bills in their jugs, which would count against their total. The winners of the war, the seniors, were given the choice of what charity or cause they would like to donate all of the earnings to. We raised over \$1,200 for our senior class to donate!

Our next event for this year is Homecoming in mid-January. The council is hard at work planning HOCO 2024. We are hoping to implement some new events and activities for the student body this year while also keeping our favorite traditions alive. Look out for opportunities to come and celebrate Unity and participate in school spirit with us this coming January!

Thank you to everyone who supports the students at Unity. Parents, grandparents, family, and friends, we appreciate your support and prayers. Assisting in the shaping of student life is our largest concern and greatest joy, and we are grateful for everyone who encourages our students and lifts us up. We couldn't do this without you, our community and church. God bless!



Front row L to R: Kadence Driesen, Julia Dykstra, Anna Smit, Chloe Smit, Kyra Van Schouwen, Kiara Hickey, Autumn Visser, Emilee Shrock, Annika Goslinga and Elizabeth Hoogland. Middle row L to R: Jaidyn De Jong, Katie Young, Brynn Franken, Elena TeKrony, Kate Van Grouw, Amalia Visser, Kendra Breems, Esther Eppinga and MaKenzie Huizenga. Back row L to R: are Mikayla Vollink, Reagan Noteboom, Daylea Tinklenberg, Addison Liston, Aubrey Kuiper, Abby Klompier, Eden Moreau, Maddison Bosma and Oliva Hoogland

United On and Off the Course

by SHAUNA VANDER KOOI

The Girls Cross Country team did very well this year. We came together and became a family and more united on and off the course. This year we really focused on positivity and how we can live out our faith both in school and outside in our community every day. The girls did exceptionally well with continuing to push themselves harder each week and improve. Katie Young was our top runner all season and continued to get new PR's at almost every meet. She also placed 12th overall at state! Our seniors really stepped up and led the team with encouragement throughout the season.

The seniors members were: Olivia Hoogland, Madison Bosma, Kadance Driesen, Emilee Schrock, Aubrey Kuiper, Annika Goslinga, Reagan Noteboom, Kiara Hickey, Mikayla Vollink. At our state meet, we placed 6th overall and every runner had either a PR or a season best time at that meet. I am very proud of what every girl was able to accomplish this season. We will miss our seniors and wish them the best as they move on to greater things next year!



77th Annual All-State Music Festival

by **TIM VAN VOORST**

On Saturday, October 21, over 4,250 of Iowa's finest high school musicians were present for auditions held at six locations around the state. Of those who auditioned, 601 were selected for the chorus, 272 for the band, and 220 for the orchestra. These student musicians represent the top 1% of all Iowa high school musicians.

Unity Christian was well represented by five students at the all-state festival held on the campus of Iowa State University in Ames, IA on November 16-18, 2023.

Orchestra:

- Violin - Laura Ross, junior (3rd year); Caitlin Frens (alternate)
- Viola - Jaiden Kooima, senior (1st year); Lydia Vander Werff (alternate)
- Cello - Benjamin Ploegstra (1st year); Brynn Vanden Brink (alternate)
- String Bass - Jocelyn Muilenburg (2nd year)

Band:

- Trombone - Mikayla Vollink, junior (2nd year)

These five students spent three days rehearsing with nationally recognized conductors for their Saturday evening

performance. Benjamin Ploegstra earned the second chair in the cello section. Because of his high chair placement, he was a member of the chamber orchestra which accompanied the all-state chorus on one of their pieces.

If you wish to watch the concert, it can be streamed at www.iowapbs.org. The weekend is sure to be an unforgettable musical experience for each of the students who were selected for participation.

Soli Deo Gloria.





Officer Pollema completed the Freshmen Mystery Literature Unit with a C.S.I. activity that the students tried to solve.



The Living Groups added some Christmas joy to our halls by decorating various classroom doors.



1st Place Varsity Quiz Bowl Team at our home meet.



The King, Queen, and Donkey discuss the King's bad breath in the one act.



The team that competed at the Dordt Math Challenge.



Jazz Band players have rhythm.