

SERVING GOD AND NEIGHBOR

UNITY CHRISTIAN BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2025



"Praise the Father, praise the Son, Praise the Spirit, three in one. God of glory, Majesty, Praise forever to the King of Kings!"

"KING OF KINGS"-HILLSONG WORSHIP

Friends of Unity,

In a nationwide survey of 21,678 U.S. high school students, researchers from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the Yale Child Study Center found that nearly 75% of the students' self-reported feelings related to school were negative. The three most common words surveyed students used to describe high school are stressed, bored, and tired.

As Christmas approaches, it is fair to ask ourselves: are we stressed? Tired? And at times even... bored? What is the cure to stress, tiredness, and boredom?

To all of the above, we shout out the truth of Isaiah 60:1-2. "Arise and shine for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you."

Look up and around you, for the light of Jesus can knock out:

1. The Stress - Matthew 28 and Romans 8 remind us that we are not alone in our challenges; and nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Matthew

11 reminds us that Jesus walks with us, helping us carry our stressful burdens.

2. The Boredom - how about Colossians 3:1-2 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. We are privileged to serve God in building his Kingdom.

3. The tiredness - we can go to sleep at night with a clear conscience - I am forgiven forever. Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." Psalm 103 reminds us that as far as the east is from the west, so far has our sin been removed from us. Rest well in His redemptive presence.

Jesus is the light of the world. He is the answer. He is everything we need to move through the halls of high school into adulthood. What a joy it is to stop and pause that Emmanuel, God with us, is indeed actually with us.

Wayne Dykstra
Head of School



Hiring Need For January 2026

Unity Christian is seeking a compassionate and dedicated full time paraprofessional to support students in both general and special education classrooms. In this vital role, you'll provide essential assistance to a student with physical disabilities while also supporting other students throughout the school day.

Your responsibilities will include helping with mobility and daily activities and ensuring full classroom participation, as well as providing academic and behavioral support to students as needed. You'll work closely with teachers, the Director of Academic Support, and other paraprofessionals to create an inclusive learning environment where every student can

reach their full potential academically, socially, and spiritually.

The ideal candidate will have a heart for serving young people, patience, physical capability to assist with student mobility and care, and a commitment to our Christian mission.

If you're passionate about making a meaningful difference in students' lives and want to be part of our faith-based school community, we'd love to hear from you!

To read more about this position and/or to apply, head to our website at <https://www.unitychristian.net/employment>. If you have any questions about the position, please reach out to Jon Holwerda at jholwerda@unitychristian.net or 712-737-4114.

A Season of Growth

By LINDSEY VAN SCHEPEN

This group of girls had a lot of new faces and roles to fill this year, but it was a season marked by continual growth. Looking at the big picture, our team finished 27-11 overall with a 7-1 conference record. For the second season in a row, we shared a piece of the conference title with Sioux Center and MOC-FV. The girls also worked in the postseason to make it to the sub-state game, falling to the eventual state semi-finalist Kuemper Catholic team in a 5 set thriller. Some of the more memorable games for the year were a comeback win in the Pizza Ranch classic against MOC-FV, a big comeback win in set 3 against Sioux Center, and beating Hinton at the Western tournament.

The public can see the scores and records, but some of the smaller moments that these girls shared are what make a season special. For me, some of these moments included program-wide team building nights in the preseason at Fields of Fun and a picture scavenger hunt in Orange City, summer camp and tournament trips to Des Moines and Glenwood, and team devotions with partner prayer times before practice.

I want to thank our coaches, Jill Haan, Angie Jansma, and Jenny Vogel for all their work with the program this year. The foundation and support they give to both the lower levels and the varsity group is invaluable. They each bring a different perspective and flair to the gym that builds our program.

I would also like to thank our seniors, Jaida Barrow, Aubyn Jansma, Ella Penner, Chloe Vanden Berg, and Marissa Feikema. Whether these seniors were in uniform on the floor or supporting on the sidelines, the effort, love and commitment they gave our program set a tone for the whole year. The



F - L-R: Shaylee Plasier, Makenna Haan, Addyson De Boom, Sienna Rosenboom, Chloe Vanden Berg, Celeste Van Kley
B - L-R: Ella Penner, Annika Kroeze, Cheyenne Hulshof, Jaida Barrow, Avery Rowenhorst, Aubyn Jansma, Summer Schouten

expected hard work and unity while keeping things fun, and having this atmosphere in the gym made the season fly by.

We were blessed to be able to honor a few of our athletes with post season honors this year. Jaida Barrow earned 1st team All-Conference, All-District, 2nd team All-State and NWI All-Review team. Other All-Conference awards went to Summer Schouten on 1st team, Addy De Boom on 2nd team, Makenna Haan on 3rd team, and Aubyn Jansma as Honorable Mention. Summer, Addy, and Makenna also earned 3rd team All-Review team. It is great to honor these athletes, and at the same time, these accolades speak volumes about our team as a whole.

This was such a great group of girls to coach this year, and the future of the program is exciting!

Fall Drive - Halfway There!

We are halfway to completing our Fall Drive! A significant part of the Drive was completing the payments needed for our most recent capital campaign. As a constituency, you have been engaged, generous and instrumental in supporting the largest campaign in school history! Thank you.

Fall Drive Components:

- Elimination of Building Debt - 21 Campaign \$190,000 (completed!)
- Repair of roof damaged by the July 2025 storm. \$100,000
- Funds to refurbish our 5 oldest classrooms. \$60,000
- New Choir Risers and Sound Shells. \$50,000 .

Here is a revised giving chart of what is still needed to complete this Drive:

- \$25,000 - 2 gifts needed at this amount.
- \$10,000 - 6 gifts at this amount.
- \$5000 - 11 gifts at this amount.
- \$1000 - 15 gifts at this amount.
- \$250 - 50 gifts at this amount.
- \$100 - 75 gifts at this amount.

\$200,000 left to raise
159 more gifts needed to complete this Fall Drive.
Would you prayerfully consider a wrap up gift in these final days of 2025?

79th Annual All-State Music Festival

By MR. TIM VAN VOORST

On Saturday, October 25, 4,196 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, 273 for the band, and 215 for the orchestra. These student musicians represent the top 1% of all Iowa high school musicians.

Unity Christian was very well represented by 10 students at the all-state festival held on the campus of Iowa State University in Ames, IA on November 20-22, 2025.

BAND:

Marielle Visser, flute 2, 10th grade, 1st year

Adalade Ochsner, alto saxophone 1, 12th grade, 1st year

CHORUS:

Millie Brommer, soprano 2, 10th grade, 2nd year

Corrie De Vries, alto 1, 12th grade, 2nd year

Lucas Erickson, bass 1, 12th grade, 1st year

Karsten De Jong, bass 2, 12th grade, 1st year

ORCHESTRA:

Caitlin Frens, violin 1, 12th grade, 3rd year

Adelyn Groenewold, violin 2, 10th grade, 1st year

Naomi Ploegstra, viola, 10th grade, 1st year

Benjamin Ploegstra, cello, 12th grade, 3rd year

These ten students spent three days rehearsing with nationally recognized conductors for their Saturday evening performance. Of special note, Benjamin Ploegstra earned the third 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 <https://www.iowapbs.org/shows/musicfestival>.

The weekend is sure to be an unforgettable musical experience for each of the students who were selected for participation. Soli Deo Gloria.



Student Leaders

By MR. RICKY RIETVELD

The 2025-2026 school year has started strong and is full of events that the student council is excited about. The Student Council Team - made up of three student-leaders from each grade - has stepped up to the challenge this year, planning events like Fall Spirit Week, the Powder Puff football game and dance, an all-school retreat, the Block Party volleyball game, a combined chapel and day of fellowship with Western Christian, and some great Christmas activities for students and staff to participate in.

We have a wonderful group of leaders this year committed to serving the student body at Unity Christian. These leaders demonstrate a desire to grow the collective community at Unity by upholding some of our student body's favorite traditions, like decorating walls in the Courtyard during homecoming week, and thinking of new ways and events to engage our entire school in community. In particular, the Student Council is excited to bring back the Unity talent show during homecoming week this year.



Western and Unity student councils planned mixer games that we played in the two gyms.

Cheerleading 2025

By MRS. JENNESS WOLGEN

The 2025 Fall cheerleading season was filled with excitement, hard work, and tremendous growth for the UC Cheer Team. This year's roster included:

Seniors – Mina Abadia, Eve Baart, Kenna Huizenga, and Olivia Murphy

Sophomores – Ruby Murphy and Anna VanDenBerg

Freshman – Emma De Boer

Practices and skill camps began in early August, with the team meeting for daily early-morning practices throughout August, September, October, and November. As the season progressed, the team not only strengthened their relationships but also continued to refine basic cheer skills while mastering advanced stunts and choreography for the state competition in November.

Season Highlights Included:

- Attending summer camps and connecting with cheerleaders from other schools
- Preparing for the first day of school and welcoming students back
- Engaging with the student section and energizing game-day crowds
- Cheering under the Friday-night lights at football games
- Planning and leading the UC Cheer Kids Camp

- Preparing and performing a combo routine with the dance team

- Competing at the State Cheer Championships in Des Moines—a highlight of teamwork, dedication, and shared celebration

- Learning flexibility with schedules and routines throughout the season

- Growing in faith and maturity as a team and as individuals

All in all, it was a fantastic Fall cheerleading season, and we are grateful for the continued support of the Unity community!
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L to R: Emma De Boer, Annabelle Van Den Berg, Olivia Murphy, Kenna Huizenga, Mina Abadia Murrieta, Ruby Murphy, Eve Baart

Celebrating Together

By MRS. CARLA VAN BEEK

The 2nd annual Christmas chapel combining Unity and Western was held on Tuesday, December 2 at Unity's Knight Center. Last year we celebrated Christmas together, both students and faculty. This year the two schools added different elements to this time together. Pastor Bob Pollema, from Faith CRC in Sioux Center, gave a short message followed by the praise team composed of both Unity and Western students presented a Christmas praise chapel. Following the chapel, both student bodies headed to the gyms to play games created and organized by both student councils. We then finished with some fellowship and cookies.

This shared experience provided an opportunity for both schools to gather and reflect on the spiritual meaning of Christmas, highlighting the unity and shared values that define our Christian school communities.



It Takes What It Takes

By MR. JOSH VANT KEMPEN

We talked before the season about resetting the expectations for Unity Football, and this team did exactly that. Our theme was "It takes what it takes," with our verse coming from Proverbs 14:23. This group embodied that mindset as we worked through a very tough non-district schedule and an equally tough district slate. According to Bound, we played the toughest schedule in 2A and the third-toughest schedule overall.

We also talked about blocking out any outside noise, since no one outside of our locker room was going to give us a chance to do anything. I am incredibly proud of how these guys continued to respond and believe in what we were trying to do throughout the season. As coaches, we really felt that how we finished at West Lyon, in our last non-district game, was a positive step. Yes, we lost, but we saw an incredible amount of fight and competitiveness all the way to the end.

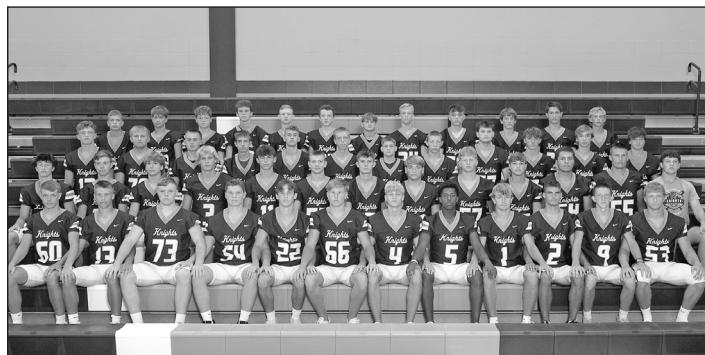
A common response to being 0-3, including dropping two rivalry games, would be to fold — but not this group. They battled through a tough district to earn a playoff spot and secure the program's first playoff win, in the round of 32, since 2008. With two weeks left in the season, we could have finished anywhere from 1st to 5th in the district, and we ground out an awesome win at BHRV to guarantee we would be in the playoffs.

We were undersized in every game we played this year, but our guys competed with a ton of heart — heart that was built by pushing each other in practice, in the offseason, and on Friday nights. These players, especially the seniors, have taken the weight room seriously, and that was a major reason we were able to compete the way we did.

This was a very close group that enjoyed spending time together on and off the field, and that was a big part of why they

were an absolute joy to coach. One huge area of growth we saw — and needed — was guys stepping forward as vocal leaders and buying into the importance of practice and preparation. You can't just show up on Fridays, flip a switch, and expect to compete. Great teams are led by players, and our leaders set that tone. I hope the younger guys and returners continue to build on that.

The season always ends abruptly and sooner than you want it to, but I want to thank the players for who they are, what we were able to accomplish this year, and for being an absolute joy to work with.



Front - L-R: Joshua Campbell, Caleb Altena, Brayden Schoellerman, Paul Pullman, Weston Huisman, Brayden Harskamp, Austin Wieringa, Jonah De Jong, Dylan Bosma, James Foreman, Micah Van Donge, Tyler Poppema; Middle - L-R: Keagen Winterfeld, Trevor De Boer, Jacob Breen, Tyce Van Donge, Kash Huisman, Isaac Van Den Berg, Brody Hulstein, Owen Vanden Berg, Joey Wieringa, Eli Rushmann, Gage Roorda, Cael Millard, Kaleb Obbink; Middle back - L-R: Greysen Moret, Troy Wiuff, Kaden De Weerd, Jacob Penner, Carson Foreman, Jordan Reinke, Conner Van Dyke, Austin Mouw, Skyler Altemeier, Cade Vander Veen, Henry Zylstra, Case Tinklenberg; Back - L-R: Levi Dykstra, Gavin Mills, Colby Olson, Colin Hulstein, Mason Wieringa, Colin Rose, Renner De Haan, Trey Oolman, Ely Van Beek, Chase Punt, Josiah Beutler, Colter Schiebout

Looking ahead

By MR. JONATHON HOLWERDA

As we head into exam week, there's a unique mix of nerves and excitement in the building. Students are studying hard, teachers are helping them finish strong, and at the same time you can't miss the Christmas spirit everywhere you turn. Walking through the halls, you see decorated doors, rooms glowing with Christmas lights, and a joyful buzz from students counting down the days until break. But once exams are behind us, we get to look forward to one of the best parts of the school year—a fresh start. Second semester brings new classes, new combinations of students, and a chance for everyone to reset, refocus, and step into something new. Schedules shift, classrooms remix, and students get the opportunity to learn

alongside different peers and under new teachers. It's a natural moment for growth, renewal, and new rhythms.

And of course, the second semester comes with all the fun and tradition that make Unity feel like home: Homecoming, Spiritual Renewal Week, the Box Lunch Social, and (hopefully!) some warmer temperatures on the horizon. This past semester has been full of creativity in the classroom—teachers trying new approaches, designing meaningful activities, and helping students grow not only academically but in their walk with Christ. Those moments matter, and we're grateful for each one. As we wrap up the year and look ahead to what's next, we're thankful for this community and excited for all God has in store for semester two.

Veterans' Day Memories

By MRS. JULIE DE GROOT

Like so many young men of their generation, my father, James Coffer, and my father-in-law, Harvey De Groot, both answered the call from their government to join the military. Both left behind families who loved them and sweethearts who waited patiently at home for their return. James Coffer was stationed in Japan during the latter part of the Korean War, while Harvey De Groot served in Korea. Neither was involved in active combat during their years of service to the United States, and both, by God's providence, returned safely to their homes after 2 years in the Army.

Many years passed before either family would have another member join the military. Unlike their grandfather, it was not a draft that caused two grandchildren of James Coffer to join the military, but individual choices. My nephew Kevin Coffer joined the US Army in 2004 and served until 2010, part of that time being spent in Iraq. My daughter Megan De Groot joined the Air Force in 2021 and served until 2024, being stationed in Cheyenne, Wyoming, for much of that time working in the Security Forces division.

These individuals share a common service to our country, but their stories are as individual as they are. Like so many people from all different walks of life, they sacrificed so that others, including me and you, might enjoy the freedoms our country was founded on. Each year, on Veterans' Day, we have the opportunity to thank the many men and women who have served in our Armed Forces, some still living and some having passed away. Many of your families have similar stories. Let's never let our service men and women think we don't appreciate all they have given for us.

Praises for...

- Congratulations to Josh and Vanessa Van Kempen and family in their new addition, Sunny Darlene. She was born at 4:44 AM on December 4 and weighed 6 pounds 11 ounces and was 20 inches long. She joins big sister, Adrian, brother Jansen, and sister Rory.

- We give thanks to the Todd Rowenhorst, Harry Wieringa, Brian & Benji Obbink for providing the seed for our land. Thanks also to Bert Reinders, Kim Van Peursem who farmed the land, and harvested it. Sold it as silage, raising \$18,925.

- Give praise that enough funds have been raised to pay off the bank loan on the last building project.

- Congratulations to Ms. Shauna Vander Kooi and Mr. Jake Byma for receiving the 2A At Large Coach of the Year Award.

- Congratulations to Cody Harskamp for being selected to coach the 2026 Pizza Ranch IBCA All-Star team.

- Congratulations to Ben and Emily Kuiper on the birth of their baby girl Lydia Lynn, born December 9.

Prayers for...

- Prayers for students who are recovering from injuries, accidents, or surgeries.

Memorial Gifts:

Marjorie Dykstra
Gert Boer



Sergeant Major Wade Vanden Berg led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.



Faculty and students visited with the Veterans after our program.

Girls Cross Country

By MS. SHAUNA VANDER KOOI

This season of cross country brought countless surprises — new personal records, moments of grit, and relationships that transformed our team into a family. The girls set big goals, committed themselves to the work, and then stepped out and achieved them. Our seniors led the way so well, modeling positivity in every circumstance — whether it was a tough practice, a meet that didn't go as hoped, or an injury that challenged them. They also guided our team through meaningful weekly devotions and demonstrated beautiful growth in their personal walks with Christ. As their coach, it is such a blessing to witness the girls come together in both the triumphs and the heartaches, surrounding each other with genuine love and support.

Katie Young had another standout season, running some of her best high school times yet. We were also thrilled to welcome freshman Autumn Bonnema, who surprised everyone — including herself — by improving with every single meet. Each girl showed incredible strength and determination throughout the season, especially at the state meet. Every athlete gave everything they had, and it showed as we finished third in the state as a team. We had three girls place in the top 15 — Katie Young (3rd), Kambrie Dekkers (4th), and Hailey Koelewyn (12th) — and every runner played a crucial role in securing that top-three finish.

When the season ends, it's always a bittersweet moment for me. As I reflect, I am deeply thankful to the Lord for all He provided. From the beautiful 60-degree weather at our early meets, to the mudslide the girls bravely conquered at conference, to the Monday night team meals filled with laughter, and most importantly, to watching them grow closer to Him — this season was a gift. I am so grateful for a team that becomes a family.



Front Row (L to R): Eilie DeHaan, Anneke Van Bruggen, Olivia Bootsma, Anne Cooley, Autumn Bonnema, Millie Brommer, Autumn Kroeze, Ariel King, Elena TeKrony; 2nd Row (L to R): Kate Van Grouw, Katie Young, Esther Eppinga, Haley Schuller, Hailey Koelewyn, Elsie Vander Tuin, Kambrie Dekkers, Sarah Nyenhuis, Daylea Tinkenberg; Back Row (L to R): Manager Lily Bonnema, Manager Adelyn Groenewold, Manager Anna Vander Pol

Boys Cross Country

By MR. JAKE BYMA

The boys cross country team continued their recent string of success with a 5th place finish at the State Meet. With a number of runners graduating from back to back podium teams, the group worked hard over the summer to mix in new runners and develop a strong foundation for the season. Of the 33 runners on the team, 11 were new to high school cross country. The team did a great job of encouraging and supporting one another while pushing themselves in practices and meets to be the best they could be. One of the "highlights" of the season was finishing up the last full team meet with a muddy Conference meet at Dordt. Even though the conditions were less than ideal and many slipped throughout the race, everyone had positive attitudes and walked away with great memories from the meet. While a number of seniors will graduate from the team, a strong core remains and the future is bright for those young men.



Front Row (L to R): Logan Dykstra, Collin Dykstra, Kaden Klein, Calum Monroe, Caleb De Jong, Aidan Vos, Carter De Boer, William Phinney, Aaron De Jong, Layne Vos; 2nd Row (L to R): Cody Vis, Benjamin Bailey, Mikiah Pennings, Brevan Obbink, Josh Statema, Tyler Brunst, Cade Wynia, William Breems, Eli Geleynse, Ryne Brummel, Joren Vande Griend; Back Row (L to R): Grant Feekes, Joel Kuperus, Jacob Ross, Isaac De Jong, Elijah Schreurs, Jared TeKrony, Ben Philipsen, Dillon Kramer, Rowan Oostra, Levi Groenewold, Joshua Bousema, Brennan Obbink, Benjamin Ploegstra; Not pictured: David Taylor

Creating a Place

By MRS. RUTH CLARK

On November 13, Combo Night, a performance highlighting music and drama, centered around the idea of “place” this year. The one act, Our Place by Terry Gabbard, brought the audience on an emotional journey taking place entirely on a worn dock by a lake. Cast members, embodying their characters, invited the audience to appreciate the places and people that have shaped them and their community. My colleague, Janie Van Dyke, often references how we are story-formed people. Similarly, we are people formed and

shaped by the places we inhabit. Students reminded us of first dates – the places where we bring our first loves and the often inevitable break-ups that later follow, childhood family outdoor adventures, and the hilarity that accompanies these places and stories. Contrastingly, we experience places filled with hardship – an aging parent with dementia, an argument and loss of a years-long friendship, a tragic death of a family member. The path, though marred by loss, is also filled with rich glimpses of beauty and growth. Our one-act cast did a great job leading the audience to reflect on our own journeys, and to remind us of our eternal hope. Thank you, Jesus.

Next, Combo Night showcased local student talent from our place, NW Iowa! Two bands, filled with Unity students, shared their musical talents between the one-act drama and the improv group. “The Girlists” and “Brothers Under Tough Times” had the audience tapping their feet and clapping along to their impressive performances. The evening closed with our brave students who thought on their feet and brought silly circumstances to life through small group and larger group improv games, often gleaning audience suggestions for places and conflicts. A hearty thanks and congrats to the actors who grew in their skills and invested their time and energy. Together, we created places filled with laughter and creativity. Thanks to the many who attended, and we hope to see the rest of you join us next year!

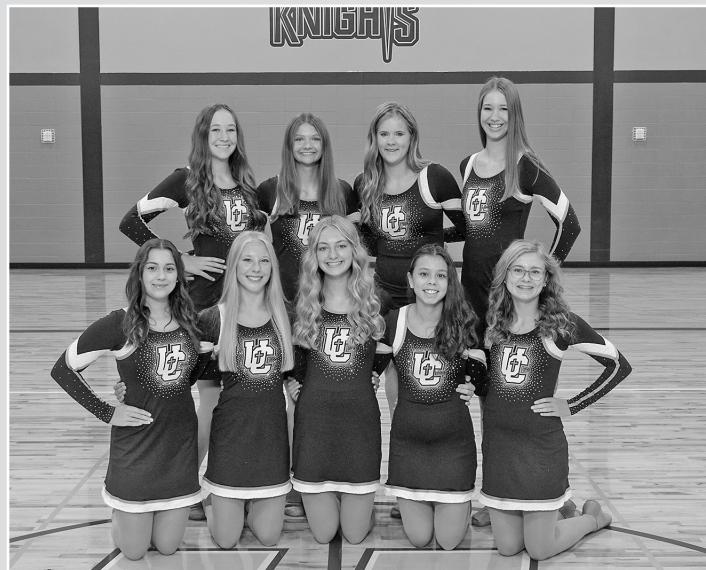


The One Act Cast

Our Dancing Season

BY MRS. JESSICA DIAZ

The Unity Christian Dance Team has had a great start to their season. The team loves dancing at football games and had the privilege to dance at three home football games this past fall. The team competed at the ISDTA championships in Des Moines in December and took home a Division 1 rating in all three of their categories. We are excited to perform these routines throughout the upcoming basketball season. The team is currently working on their famous lights routine that they will perform at homecoming. This year we are planning to perform a Christmas routine, a co-ed routine, and a father daughter routine in addition to our regular performances. We are also looking forward to our kid's camp on January 27 where we will be performing to “World on Fire” by For King and Country and Taylor Hill. We have a special surprise planned for our kid's camp this year, and the dancers are very excited!



Front Row (L to R): Nayibe Diaz, Rilee Kooima, Cambrie Vis, Sophia Bailey, Claire Hellinga; Back Row (L to R): Ella De Boom, Marielle Visser, Addison Jacobsma, Naomi Ploegstra



These senior guys are proud of their completed puzzle!



Junior girls help each other deck the halls (or doors)!



Quiz Bowl in action!



Lunch with a smile!



A senior group competed at Dordt's Math Competition.



Behind the chapel scenes are Mr. Kuiper, Mrs. Van Beek and Levi Tintel. We appreciate their work!