

TERRA FIRMA

A STUDENT MAGAZINE
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IN THIS ISSUE

Page 4

Laying the Foundation

Page 8

Fall Retreat

Page 13

The Comedy of Errors



PROVIDENCE

CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Terra Firma, solid ground, represents a metaphor for the vision and mission of Providence. We seek to teach and train young men and women to reach their highest potential in truth and character, to cultivate minds “well-made” not simply “well-filled,” from this solid foundation. Rooted in Scripture, students prepare to go forth in service to God and man.

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Table of Contents

Christian Community.....	3
Laying the Foundation.....	4
Teacher Spotlight.....	5
Camaraderie.....	6
Fall Athletics.....	7
Fall Retreat.....	8
Fostering Fellowship	10
The Comedy of Errors	13
From Reformation Day to Narnia Day.....	14
Young Voices	15



CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

advice from Bonhoeffer, Plato, and the Bible

Ryan Evans, Headmaster



Years ago, I heard an encouraging observation in a conversation with a Providence father. “There are three places in my life where I feel the presence of the Lord,” he said. “My home, my church, and this school.” He was reflecting on a common theme we hear whenever we solicit parent survey feedback: the welcoming, friendly, Christ-centered community is something parents value and cherish.

One of the hallmarks of the Christian school is community. Providence families relocating out of state have shared a refrain that while they miss many things, one thing tops their list: the communal commitment of like-minded Christians that share common beliefs about the most important things in the Christian life.

Theologian, pastor, and writer Dietrich Bonhoeffer, offers sage observations about Christian community. Bonhoeffer was a pastor in Germany during World War II, protesting the Nazi regime through multiple means, including involvement in an assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer wrote prolifically, with classics such as *Letters and Papers from Prison* and *The Cost of Discipleship*. Tragically, he was martyred in prison shortly before the Allies ended the War.

One of Bonhoeffer’s key emphases in all his writings is the importance of Christian community. In his book, *Life Together*, he offers a simple yet profound observation: Christian fellowship is not an ideal, but a reality we must embrace. Along with practicing the habits of spiritual disciplines, Christians must be in fellowship with other Christians, not only for weekly worship but throughout the week for mutual support, accountability, and encouragement.

He advocates a balance between community and solace. “Let him who cannot be alone beware of community. He will only do harm to himself and the community. Alone you stood before God when he called you; alone you had to answer that call; alone you had to struggle and pray; and alone you will die and give account to God... But the reverse is also true: Let him who is not in community beware of being alone. Into the community you were called, the call was not meant for you alone; in the community of the called you bear your cross.”

Forsaking community, or seeking to find it through pseudo alternatives such as social media or online church can result in depression, discontentment, and despair. Discipleship is predicated on being around people who affirm, encourage, and sanctify us in our Christian growth. Plato wrote, “The overwhelming majority of individuals will prove incapable of resisting the voice of the culture that surrounds them: in the typical case, their values, their beliefs, indeed, their very perceptions will tend to mirror those of the surrounding culture.” The Scriptures say it even better: “Evil company corrupts good habits” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Our lives depend on robust and authentic community engagement, and a Christ-focused school environment provides an antidote to combatting the ills inflicted by detachment and isolation. Read Bonhoeffer’s *Life Together*. He re-tethers us to the “first things” that lead to freedom in the grace of Christ and the liberating grace found in Christian community.



LAYING THE FOUNDATION

how the grammar school works to develop
godly students

Theo Kloss

The student studied the paper before him with triumph, and basked in the glory of the big, broad A+ sitting in the top right corner of his test. Later, after class, he tells his friends about his perfect score, recounting with pride the diligence and thoroughness with which he studied. All day he brags about it, not giving his friends a moment of peace, annoying them out of their minds. You see, this student has forgotten and disregarded a very important virtue, one that is essential in life: humility. Providence's grammar school sees the danger of this and therefore prepares young students to contribute to which the godly standard Providence is committed.

In an interview with Mrs. Kniss, the grammar school principal, she explained that grammar school isn't just about the academics, it's about teaching and training kids to have a godly lifestyle. Helping kids learn how to live righteously is the "icing on the cake," or the "second layer," to their education.

Along with practicing the Providence Core Virtues of gratitude, kindness, respect, diligence, and courage in the classroom, grammar students learn and practice five academic habits: attention, humility, excellence, self-Assessment, and diligence. All these are taught with the end goal of turning out a student who is not only academically excellent, but also a decent human being. The goal of education is to shape and mold a person, an eternal soul, into a God-honoring image bearer.

The earliest stages of a child's education are where a lot of foundational beliefs are formed, so Providence strives to build a firm foundation so students can live a fruitful and obedient life.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

introducing three new teachers to the Providence community

Amelia Bato



Mr. Gerrit Hansen
Secondary

Mr. Gerrit Hansen is a secondary English, History, and Rhetoric teacher at Providence. He was born and raised in Everett, Washington, where he attended Mariner High School and studied business administration at the University of Washington. In high school and college, Mr. Hansen played piano in a Christian band, writing and arranging songs and vocals. One month after graduating, he and Mrs. Hansen travelled to Indonesia as missionaries, where they founded a classical Christian school in 2004. They also founded a college basketball team and a bakery there. After returning to the US, Mr. Hansen worked in catering before becoming a teacher at Providence. Mr. Hansen chooses to teach at Providence because teaching allows him to work with young people and make a difference in their lives.



Mrs. Kristin Mowat
2nd Grade

Mrs. Kristin Mowat is a second grade teacher at Providence. She was born and raised in California and attended Menlo College near San Jose, California. At Menlo College, she studied business administration and media studies. As a student, Mrs. Mowat played clarinet, traveling to Europe to perform in concerts. When she became a parent, she said that, “The Lord instilled a passion for raising up the next generation,” in her. Although Mrs. Mowat is not a teacher by trade, Providence was supportive and helped her teach students how to learn. She feels honored to partner with parents to educate their children and teaching has helped her become a better parent. In her free time, Mrs. Mowat enjoys cooking everything except pies, which she dislikes. She also likes reading, and her favorite book is *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen.



Mrs. Melissa Parks
5th Grade

Mrs. Melissa Parks is a fifth grade teacher at Providence. She was born and raised in Woodinville, Washington, and studied botany at the University of Washington. When she was younger, Mrs. Parks enjoyed slalom water skiing competitively. Mrs. Parks discovered Providence through her homeschool community after many families migrated to Providence. As a homeschool mom, Mrs. Parks enjoyed teaching her daughter and wanted to continue teaching at Providence. Mrs. Parks believes God called her to teach here, and teaching has positively impacted her life. Teaching has taught her to be patient, as each student learns differently. In her free time, Mrs. Parks enjoys going outside to hike, water ski, snow ski, or identify plants.



CAMARADERIE

upperclassmen's thoughts on athletics

Josiah Hansen

Each sports team has leaders. Whether it be in professional sports or a high school team, they all look up to specific captains. The leaders are usually older, wiser, and have experience and expertise in the sport. The same is true at Providence. This year, we are blessed with many upperclassmen who have taken leadership in our fall sports programs. With their wealth of experience, each athlete has unique thoughts concerning the benefits they see in doing athletics.

Odessa Kaufman, a junior on our varsity volleyball team, felt that the more time she spent playing volleyball, the more growth she saw not only in skill but also in bond with her team. With the stellar team this year, Odessa has really found a community and a bond not easily broken.

Adeo Lambright and Evan Graham, seniors and captains of our men's soccer team, chimed in on this point. They both said the camaraderie they found on the sports field was almost "indescribable. You form a bond

with others on the team in a way no other activity could. It's not so much a friendship, but a brotherhood." Not only are they a part of the brotherhood, but as captains, they are the ones cultivating the brotherhood. Evan reminds us of the Proverb "Iron sharpens iron." That is the job of a captain, and this job was done well. Providence is grateful for the hard work these upperclassmen leaders put into their respective sports day in and day out.

FALL ATHLETICS

Elizabeth Russ

Every year, Providence has soccer and volleyball for secondary students. This fall season, Providence provided both middle school and high school boys soccer teams. A middle school girls soccer team made its debut as well. Providence also offers both middle and high school girls volleyball. The high school volleyball team has officially split up into varsity and junior varsity for the first time this year.

The high school volleyball team had a great season this fall and went to tri-districts through great effort and strong friendship. The team grew together and improved over

the season through challenging games and finished the season with a near perfect record. The highlight of this fall season is the teamwork and hard work of the high school soccer team bringing them a third-place finish at the state championships.

Over half of the men in the secondary school play on the soccer team offering a unique opportunity to build community. Michael Worley, one of the coaches of the Highlanders, says, "Anyone can get involved, hang out with people across the school, and grow athletically as well."



FALL RETREAT

Evi Smith

Providence kicked off the school year with one of our favorite events— Fall Retreat. Fall retreat takes place at Lakeside Bible Camp on Whidbey Island and includes the entire secondary school. It's four days of food, games, and fun activities that everyone engages in and is a wonderful way to integrate seventh graders and new students.

Retreat hits the ground running by getting right into house competition and activities. The first games consist of girls' volleyball and while volleyballs fly everywhere, the boys race to win flag football.

The week is filled with exciting house games and sport tournaments. These tournaments continue throughout Retreat allowing students to form teams and compete for glory. Games run the gamut including everything from basketball and beach volleyball to carpet ball.

Non-athletic activities pepper the week where all houses can win points and glory for their house. Traditional games such as Name That Tune and house council-led activities, culminated in the wildly successful senior game, Slip-N-Slide Kickball! A couple new games and activities were added this year including an intense game of family feud trivia and a spooky stories night with s'mores.

Fall Retreat is a great way for students in different grades to connect and enjoy time together. That is what Retreat is about. It's about connecting with people you may not usually be able to connect with and spending time together as a community. So, thank you to all the faculty and those who helped to make this year's Fall Retreat a blessing full of new memories for the students!







FOSTERING FELLOWSHIP

how clubs at Providence build community

Alec Giacometti

Each week, many unique clubs come around. These clubs have become an integral part of the Providence community. But why? Why would a few meetings of people with a common interest be such a big part of this school? Well, it is because the students enjoy the fellowship and activities they offer. Mrs. Knudsen, our Director of Student Life, said, “Students truly do bond within their club and look forward to the time to meet either monthly or bi-monthly.” These clubs provide great opportunities for students to meet other students in different grades, building friendships that otherwise would not have been created.

But Providence clubs are not like clubs in most schools. Each club is led by one or more student leaders and a faculty advisor, which Mrs. Knudsen said makes our clubs “unique in that they encourage and develop student leadership.”

Providence has a dozen clubs ranging from art, music, games, and more. Mrs. Knudsen concludes, “Together we end up with a robust group of clubs that allow students to find their place at school, meet new friends, and they add to the richness of our Providence community.”



The Spirit Club decked the halls with Christmas cheer, creating an extra-festive atmosphere as students joyfully anticipated Christmas Break.

One of our biggest and most unique clubs is the simple Tea Club, led by Elizabeth and Rachel Duciuc and Mrs. Knudsen. In Tea Club, members bring desserts, enjoy fellowship with one another, and of course, drink tea. There are events within the club, with the Fall Banquet having happened this past November. This wonderful gathering of students all throughout secondary helps unite those with a common passion!

Another creative and unique club here at Providence is Spirit Club. Spirit Club aims to build community by

spreading school spirit. The club makes posters for senior nights, plans the March Madness school dress days, and more. Spirit Club helps students be appreciated by others by putting their incredible creativity on display and gives students great opportunities to be recognized for their work towards school spirit.



THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Grey Elliott

The fall drama production has become a staple in the life of Providence thanks to Mrs. Hilt's creative vision and leadership. This year Mrs. Hilt partnered with Shakespeare enthusiast, Mrs. Letsche, to helm a wildly successful production of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*. Hard-working and talented students also aided in the success of the show.

Hilt and Letsche delivered a rendition of this classic Shakespearean story that captured the audience from the opening curtain to the final bow with sensational slapstick, charismatic casting, and marvelous misadventures.

The actors thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Sophomore, Sydnie Owens, played Adriana and was overjoyed by the experience. "[It] was amazing! Especially with such a small cast, it was super fun to get to know and grow with such a tight knit group. While Shakespeare can be really challenging, Mrs. Letsche did an amazing job to make it really enjoyable."



Micah Wilson, who played Dromio of Ephesus, shared this sentiment, stating, "I really enjoyed getting to work and act with other high school students. It was an experience I'm glad I got the chance to be a part of." He particularly noted how the drama program builds a strong community at Providence. Both actors resoundingly agreed. Wilson went on to say, "The drama community builds a special relationship throughout all its casts. It definitely contributes to the strong community that Providence holds." Sydnie Owens added, "It is a very formative experience, working hard at your craft and building long-lasting friendships and bonds to last a lifetime." She was especially appreciative of the audience and said, "their laughter made all the difficult rehearsals worth it!"

Bravo, Providence Drama, and encore!



FROM REFORMATION DAY TO NARNIA DAY

how special events enhance learning and community

Lydia Janfa

Throughout each trimester, each grammar class participates in at least one special party event. On this much anticipated day, students get to connect with classroom material in a more tangible, exciting way. The typical party day features coming into a decorated and rearranged classroom wearing a fun costume or even just jeans and a t-shirt and getting to take a day off regular classwork and play games, have a themed lunch, and learn more in-depth about the topic. Mrs. Letsche, a beloved 6th-grade teacher, explains that these party days help students deepen their connection to a topic while fellowshiping with classmates, shifting the focus away from daily classwork and providing further community building while remaining in the academic world.

In addition to individual class parties, the grammar school also has a few annual events such as Reformation Day and Read-in Day. On Reformation Day, students in grades pre-k through 12th get to dress up as a medieval character and commemorate the Protestant Reformation on a shortened school day! Read-in Day is also a half day, on which students get to come to school with a stuffed animal, blanket, comfy outfit, and a book and spend the whole day reading with friends under desks. Some of the most loved and remembered events are Reformation Day and Read-in Day as well as others such as Teddy Bear Day, Go Dog Go Day, Narnia Day, and World War II Day! These party days are definitely highlights of the school year.



YOUNG VOICES

seventh grade english students become published authors

Delve into the poetic realm of *The Poetry Inklet*, an anthology written by the 7th-grade English class and available on Amazon. From tercets about homework and odes to bacon, to haikus of night and limericks to doorposts, these poems are sure to delight. We're proud to showcase four poems from the book on the theme of fall.

Mist

Christof Schultz

As the leaves fall from the giant tree
Mist settles down all around the forest
Fine dry leaves atter to the ground
Wafts of fresh air rise above
Signs of winter returning again

Hint of Joy

Fia Powers

The Earth burns like fire and coals
The air carries in its basket the smell of trees
sprinkling it over my head as I brave the outdoors
Trying to stay warm gets harder very day
The only sound is that of animals
tidying up their homes
Keeping out the miserable cold
But yet there is one thing good
When Thanksgiving comes
There's finally a hint of joy

Autumn Leaves

Elly Wilson

Red, orange, yellow
The color of autumn leaves
Their last performance

The Trees

Verona Bontrager

Trees blow in the wind
They turn colors in their time
Deserting their leaves

Weather

Landon Tomoiaga

A ballad of wind shows the way
The orchestrated leaves follow the sway
One day in winter it all goes away

The Great Dark

Noah Smith

The warm colors of squash and leaves
Houses filled with cinnamon candle scent
Cold bites from the wind, though refreshing,
Come from the bare trees
While animals are quiet and in preparation for winter
And the people all around are dancing
For the harvest, flavoring everything in
Pumpkin spice, or apple-cinnamon pie
Awaiting for the great dark

Final Bow

Estella Hall

Every year autumn comes and goes
The smell of thanksgiving dinners all around
Cold wind blowing sweetly at your face
While the rain knocks at your door
The colorful leaves fall everywhere
As you go for a walk
With your pumpkin spice lattes
But then the wind blows cold
The leaves are all dead
The birds migrate
The Autumn takes a final bow



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