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# THE PRINCIPAL'S PAMPHLET

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by Melodie McKenzie



PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

**exists to assist parents in the covenantal education  
of their children. We instruct students from a  
Biblical perspective, within a confessionally  
Reformed and classical framework, teaching them to  
exalt Christ by pursuing truth, beauty, and goodness.**



October 13, 2020

Dyer, Indiana

# Disruption

Remember the olden days of last February when we had our well-ordered lives, carefully planned and disciplined? Some now refer to that as BP, Before Pandemic. In just a few quick steps, we were thrown into chaos and disruption. Some jobs were lost, routine was lost, and some lost loved ones. Now, here we are many months later with the question of when will this end? What is the purpose? How shall I now live?

How do we escape this disorder? How do we face these days positively? Some turned to puzzles, and sales increased from 2019 – 2020 by 370%. Others baked bread causing yeast sales to increase by 647%. While these are fun pastimes, there was also a focus on what truly is essential. As so many activities that fill our lives came to a screeching halt, we were given the unexpected gift of bonus time with family. For some, our busy activities used to define us to a certain degree, but now we were able in the quiet to consider the true character of what constitutes our lives. While feeding upon the means of grace was always important to us, the period of not being able to assemble stamped upon us the starvation that occurs when we are kept from them.

Thankfully, there is a God who was not shaken or surprised by any of this. His plans are working out to the full extent of His sovereignty. We can rest content in His plan for us. Instead of focusing inward on what a trial this is for us, we switch our gaze to the upward view of finding how God is molding us to His image through these circumstances. As our view of ourselves decreases, we see others around us who may be struggling more than we are. We can use this time of struggle as a sort of trigger to prayer. Each time we find ourselves frustrated by circumstances around us, we can direct our thoughts away from complaint and towards prayers to those who have it far worse off. We think of those in California who are permitted to worship only outdoors but now cannot because of the fires. There are many countries where worship is never permitted and Christians are imprisoned for the faith. As we pray for our brothers and sisters, it softens our hearts so as to be more content with where God has placed us. We remember that all of this is temporary as we are citizens of another place.

As we reflect on what disruption has done to our lives, we must dwell on the fact that it is all from God's hand. When Jesus prayed His great high priestly prayer, he didn't pray that we would be removed from trial and from the world but rather that we would be united to Him through these times so that others may believe on

Him (John 17, esp. v.20-21). In these days, we must be very holy like Daniel whose foes could find no fault in him. Let us be seen by all who watch as those who are very consistent in doing right and in honoring authority. Also, we must be useful for God's work. Where is the doctor except with those who are ill? Where is the soldier except in the heat of the battle? No matter what viruses or riots or elections may come, we must be about the work of the Kingdom, never wavering for we know the end of the story.

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love."

| Corinthians 16: 13-14

## Distance Learning

At Providence Christian Academy, we love learning. It may seem like that should be a given, but the reason why it could not be left unsaid is that it is core to who we are and why we're here. We do not educate simply because it's a duty; it is also a joy.

“The first object of teaching is to communicate such knowledge as may be useful in gaining other knowledge, to stimulate in the pupil the love of learning, and to form in him the habits of independent study.”

~ John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*

Now, it's much easier to take joy in our duties when we're surrounded by others doing the same. We are so very thankful that we have the opportunity to reopen school full time this fall with in-person classes. We pray that there will not be a recurrence of a full cancelation, and it does seem very unlikely. Nevertheless, we've been working to improve and streamline our distance learning offerings since there is a greater possibility that this may serve one family at a time should there be a need for a family to quarantine. The following is a summary of our thoughts combining our planned improvements along with responses to concerns brought in the recent survey.

As you know, classical education tends to steer away from modern methods and specifically technology while instead making the most of the tried and true methods and the beauty of paper books. We are exceptionally thankful for the dedication of our families last spring to making the trip to school once a week in order to continue conducting school with paper and pencil materials. This choice is more ideal for increasing the children's writing skills and also for the habit formation of fine motor skills. Thus, we are dedicated to having few screen hours while still including the live or recorded classes where it makes most sense. This was noted with appreciation in the parent surveys.

For some classes, it is important not to miss the daily lessons taught as they are integral to understanding how the next lesson builds upon it. This includes math and phonics. In addition, some classes are of such content and structure that interacting with the teacher and classmates is an essential piece for the furtherance of learning. One example of this is our Omnibus classes in Logic School. For these classes, we plan to offer live-stream Zoom classes which will also be recorded in case there is a time conflict or trouble logging in. (These recordings will be deleted after their use is complete.)

On the other end of the spectrum, there are a number of classes which we believe are an essential part of our school week and a complete education, but they are of such a nature that the exact content of the given class is less important than the cultivation of a love for that subject area. One of the concerns from home learning last spring was that parents have many things on their plates making individual lessons a difficulty. In order to

accomplish the furtherance of education while also bringing this more within reach for families, we've written family lesson plans for some of these subjects. An example of this is a family Bible lesson. This way, a family can bring all ages together to learn. Our hope here is that the community of family will enhance the love of learning.

This article should bring some clarity to our overarching values during distance learning while also answering some of the matters brought up in the surveys. There is a further document attached giving the practical instructions for logging into our new Google Classroom site if there is a necessity to use it. Should a family need to remain home for a quarantine period, we trust that this plan can be a way that is both an increase to the children's education while also a workable scenario for our families.

“Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.”

~ Abigail Adams

## Sights and Sounds at PCA

- ❖ August Chapel: On our first day of school, Rev. Iain Wright from Covenant OPC led our first chapel opening our school year. As it has been an unusual beginning, he compared the wearing of masks to the slaves who cried out in battle to ancient Roman generals, "Remember, thou art mortal." Death comes by many means, and we must remember that our days are numbered. Then, in Romans 8:28-29, Rev. Wright directed us to God's purposes for us. God is conforming us to the image of His Son for the good of His Kingdom. We are immortal until we have fulfilled the purposes of God.
- ❖ September Chapel: Our second speaker was also Wright, Mr. Scotty Wright from Redeemer URC. Since our theme of the year centers on God communicating to Moses His name and His character, Mr. Wright started us at the beginning of the story with Exodus 2. Our God often works in ways that seem hopeless in order to work His sovereign purposes and bring hope. What seemed like an impossible situation of babies being killed is what God used to plan and bring about the leader who would save His people. This gives us great hope today as we rest in God's plan over our nation.
- ❖ School Culture: In addition to the multitude of math, Latin, history, etc. that we learn here, there are also the threads of humanity that weave their way through our children's lives. Here are a few snippets of things heard in our classrooms that exhibit the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness:

- *K*: When someone had been practicing a concept for a time and then grasped it, a fellow learner patted him on the back and told him, "Good job." A fellow-learner's encouragement goes a long way.
- *1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>*: After learning about Viking ships and creating an image in art class, a student built a 3D ship to go on water. When it sunk, he used what he learned to build a second one that was water-proof.
- *3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>*: When one student had a sad event happen in her life, she didn't want anyone to know at first. When the students noticed her sadness, the teacher explained how we all mourn with those who mourn, and then she shared her grief with her classmates who comforted her as friends.
- *5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>*: Some students saw a door knob on their classroom cupboard that didn't work properly. With different ones pitching in their skills, they resolved the issue until the knob worked properly.
- *7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>*: We typically write thank you notes at the end of the school year to anyone who has helped us in any way. Some students noticed that we have a new janitor and took it upon themselves to write a thank you note with an origami gift of a trash can complete with swinging lid to give to Mr. Trester.



## Announcements

- ❖ Thank You Received: Last spring due to being out of school unexpectedly, we were unable to complete our annual service project. Thankfully, the Vander Woude family arranged to have a donation box for Phil's Friends where we could donate to bless cancer patients. We received this thank you note from them:

Thank you for your generous in-kind donations for use at Phil's Friends. These donations were given on 08/20/2020 and are detailed below:

4 puzzle books, 12 playing cards, 1 adult blankets, 16 tissue packs, 5 lotions, 1 toothbrush, 5 toothpastes, 3 journals, 5tp/tb combos, 15 cards of hope

Friends like you enable Phil's Friends to bring HOPE through care packages, encouraging cards and hospital visits. When the words "you have cancer" are delivered, lives are turned upside down. Phil's Friends shares three words "We Bring Hope" and we bring hope with your help. Thank you for this tangible expression of support for Phil's Friends and the people that we serve.

In hope,

Phil Zielke, Founder and Executive Director

Phil's Friends

- ❖ Grandparents Day: In light of much uncertainty in these unusual days and also a desire to keep our most senior community members safe, we have decided to postpone Grandparents Day. We'll get back in touch with you if we decide to reschedule for the spring. Our grandparents

are welcome at any time to join a chapel service or contact us for further ways to visit or be involved. You are a treasure!

- ❖ Parent Teacher Conferences: We are planning our parent teacher conference schedule. The conferences are held on the evening of Thursday, Oct. 29, from 3:30 to 7:50 at the school in 20-minute increments (i.e. 3:30, 3:50, 4:10, etc.). We strongly encourage both parents to attend the conferences. We also encourage you to find child care for younger siblings (if possible) so that you can be free. Each family will be scheduled for a 15-20 minute slot with the homeroom teacher for each child (two slots if the same teacher has two of your children). An email will be sent soon to sign up for your slots.
- ❖ Treats for birthdays or other occasions: Oftentimes, children like to bring in treats for their own class on their birthdays. (This is not required.) If a child's birthday falls during the summer, he/she can choose between celebrating in May or celebrating at the half-birthday time. When sending a treat to your child's class for birthdays or for other occasions, please be sure it does not contain any nuts. We want to be sensitive to those with allergies to pine nuts, peanuts, and hazelnuts.
- ❖ Piano Players: Each morning from 8:25 – 8:40, we have all-school devotions and sign hymns. All parents are welcome to join us on any morning. If anyone is available to play the piano, we would love to have you. Please contact Val Knoll if this is a way that you could serve.