

HILITES

WINTER 2025



The *Magnificence* of God

CALENDAR

JANUARY

27-31 Winterfest Week

FEBRUARY

- 3 Blood Drive
- 3 Music Boosters Soup Supper @ 5:00-7:00 PM
- 10 String Fling Orchestra Concert with SCHS & South Suburban Schools @ 7:00 PM
- 12 Band Concert with SCHS, BCCS, & LCS @ 7:00 PM

MARCH

6-8 Musical "Annie" @ 7:00 PM

APRIL

- 18-19 Scrap Metal Drive
- 19 Strong Foundation 5K with SCHS & South Suburban Schools
- 27 Orchestra Concert with SCHS & DCS @ 3:00 PM
- 28 Blood Drive

MAY

- 2 Grandparents/Grandfriends Day
- 4 Band Concert @ 2:00 PM
- 4 Choir Concert @ 7:00 PM
- 7 Society Meeting @ 7:00 PM
- 16 Student Directed Plays @ 7:00 PM
- 22 Graduation @ 7:00 PM

JUNE

7 Rod VanDyke Memorial Golf Outing – Thornapple Pointe

Please refer to the 2024-25 Events School Calendar on our website for more information.
www.schs.org

On the Cover: Violet Jansen, 12th grader, excelling at welding in Industrial Arts.

The South Christian HiLites publication is produced two times per year.

SCHS is an equal opportunity institution. SCHS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, or physical/mental handicap in its educational programming and activities, including enrollment, employment, and contracting.

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I see the
magnificence
of God...



SCRAP METAL DRIVE Friday & Saturday, April 18-19, 2025

Put your old scraps to good use!
Metals (steel, aluminum, copper, brass, etc.),
tired appliances (washing machines, dryers,
water heaters, etc.), worn-out farm equipment, used car
and equipment batteries, electric wiring, stripped or
unstripped copper wire, tools, old cars, and more.
Proceeds will benefit Tuition Assistance.

ANNUAL SOCIETY MEETING Wednesday, May 7, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

Please join us to vote for new Board members and the proposed budget for 2025-2026. In April, you may visit our website (schs.org) to review the nominees and financials.

SAVE THE DATE! ROD VANDYKE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING Saturday, June 7, 2025 Thornapple Pointe Golf Club

SPORTING CLAY SHOOT Saturday, September 20, 2025 Caledonia Sportsman Club

One of the best parts of working at South Christian High School is that I have a front row seat to the magnificence of God working in the lives of families, teachers, and students.

- I see the magnificence of God working through adults who He has vocationally called to teach, mentor, care for, love, and equip young people to live Christ-centered lives.
- I see the magnificence of God as I listen to our students share their testimonies in chapel of how God has been teaching them more about who He is.
- I see the magnificence of God when I worship with nearly 2,000 Christian Educators from around the Midwest, reminding me that we are not alone in this Kingdom work.
- I see the magnificence of God through the generosity of a community committed to Christian Education, allowing South Christian to build needed classrooms for our growing student body.
- I see the magnificence of God when I watch students put God on display through their gifts and talents on the court, the stage, and the field.
- I see the magnificence of God as I hear stories of how our graduates impact the world in their jobs, in the military, and in their continuing education.

This issue of HiLites is an invitation to the front row; to see the magnificence of God on display through the work of this ministry. Thanks for your role in South Christian's story.

Aaron Meckes
Head of School

Faith Reflection | God's Magnificent Brilliance

Roberta VanHaitsma, Art Teacher

A couple of weeks ago my heart and mind were flooded with joy as we sang a familiar hymn during a Sunday morning church service. You see, I remember singing this particular song when I was an adolescent, and I can recall thinking, "This is a hymn for a lifetime; these words are words that encompass what I want to be in the highs and lows of life." That Sunday, many many years ago, was probably the first time that I was singing from my heart, not just enjoying the melody and how it fit with the lyrics, but I was claiming these words for myself.

Fast forward, forty-some years, and the lyrics of "Fill Thou My Life; O LORD, My God" still fit precisely what I believe a Christian life should look like.

*Fill thou my life, O LORD, my God, in every part with praise,
that my whole being may proclaim thy being and thy ways.
Not for the lip of praise alone, nor e'en the praising heart,
I ask but for a life made up of praise in every part.
Praise in the common words I speak, life's common looks
and tones,
in fellowship enjoyed at home with my beloved ones,
enduring wrong, reproach, or loss with a sweet and
steadfast will,
forgiving freely those who hate, returning good for ill.
So shall each fear, each fret, each care be turned into a song,
and every winding of the way the echo shall prolong.
So shall no part of day or night from sacredness be free,
but all my life, in every step, be fellowship with thee.
(Lift Up Your Hearts. Words: Horatius Bonar.
Music: Gesangbuch der Herzog)*

In God's faithfulness, He has made these lyrics a reality for me on most days. I do sing my way through heartache, I do see the sacredness in everyday realities, and, I dearly hope my students can see that in the way I teach and speak with them.

Many of us do not sing old-fashioned hymns any longer. This story really isn't about what type of song is being sung to praise God; it is about God's faithfulness over time. His love reaches into the lives of adolescents who do not fully understand who they are, or who He is calling them to be; yet He gently leads them toward goodness for His name's sake. Hallelujah! God's story is merging with our stories and mine!

Chapels at SC are often filled with songs and prayer. I marvel each week at the work God is doing in our hearts and what He will do over the decades to come. Praise Him for His faithfulness to each of us; those songs and scripture verses are shaping how our students, your beloved children, will think and work and embrace the joys and sorrows to come for a lifetime.

Praise God! He is amazing! His magnificent brilliance demonstrates His glory, year after year.



Brad Brewer capstone address on "Thoughtful Communicators and the Lead of Love"



Local teachers led the the inspiring worship time



CEA Convention

Hosted at South Christian High School

South Christian was honored to host the annual Christian Educators Conference this past October. Nearly 2,000 people gathered on our campus to worship together and learn from one another. It is a huge blessing to have a building capable of hosting an event like this, which included corporate worship, 96 different sessions, and 34 roundtable group meetings. Teachers left encouraged and better equipped to continue the Kingdom work of Christian teaching and equipping disciples of Jesus.

"Let's Build" session - Josh Klomp & Jason Lawrence
Photo: Violet Jansen, 12th grader



"Unlocking the Bible - Teaching Six Lenses of Context" session - Eric Schrotenboer

THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE



10 YEARS
JOSH KLOMP
Industrial Arts/
Technology Teacher



10 YEARS
CHAD ROZEMA
Band/Music Teacher



10 YEARS
JOSH ROZEMA
Math Teacher



20 YEARS
GWEN SIKKEMA
Teacher/Study Instructor



Faithfully FORWARD UPDATE

BUILDING EXPANSION

A groundbreaking was held on October 31, 2024, with students, staff and community members present. With the construction right outside the windows, it is encouraging to see the progress. The site has been excavated, the footings have been poured and, at the time of writing this, the bathrooms and stairwell are being constructed by the masons. Further progress will be made by the time of publication.



With the walls going up and the second floor being completed, one might ask, "What about that first floor?" "It is like building a house and not finishing the basement." But with the immediate need for more classrooms next school year, the leadership decided to split the campaign into two phases allowing the construction to move forward this winter.



Phase 1 includes the construction of the building's exterior and a complete finishing of the second floor.

PHASE 1 WILL PROVIDE:

- Six general-use classrooms
- Common space for collaborative and flexible learning
- Adequate space for students next school year

Phase 2 will include finishing the first floor and making minor renovation to existing spaces. This next phase, with a cost of \$1.9 million, remains unfunded.

PHASE 2 WILL PROVIDE:

- Larger, more specialized spaces for our Educational Support Services
- An Inclusive Education classroom
- Five additional general-use classrooms

WHERE WE ARE NOW

At this time we have received or have commitments that bring us to \$5.3 million. For this we are very grateful. At the time of writing, there is still a need of \$1.9 million to begin the construction of the Phase 2 first floor.

As construction is underway, we're asking you to partner with us as we move *Faithfully Forward*.

Please contact Sandy Dobbs at sdobbs@schs.org or go to the website at schs.org/giving to make a gift.



Memorial Gifts Fall 2024

Shelly Alman
Gertrude Beuker
Sue Drenth
Cornelia Jansen
Edward Morren



The South Suburban Christian Schools will again be hosting the Strong Foundations 5K Run/Walk. The goal of this community event is to raise funds for the foundations of the five schools, which reduces the overall tuition costs for all students.

SAVE THE DATE!

Strong Foundations 5K Run/Walk

April 19, 2025 in the AM

**Signups will be available on our website
(www.schs.org) starting on January 10, 2025**

Foundation | Restricted Fund

If you're interested in supporting South Christian High School through a restricted fund, here's how you can set it up:

STEPS TO ESTABLISH A RESTRICTED FUND:

Minimum Gift:

A minimum initial gift of \$10,000 is required to establish a restricted fund.

Additional Contributions:

Once the fund is established, additional contributions of any amount may be made by anyone at any time.

Funding Period:

You do not need to provide the full \$10,000 up front. The fund can be fully funded over a maximum period of five years.

Distributions:

Distributions from the fund will begin once the \$10,000 minimum is reached.

CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For further details or assistance in setting up a restricted fund, reach out to:

Sandy Dobbs

Email: sdobbs@schs.org

Phone: 616-262-7205

This is a wonderful way to demonstrate your passion for a specific program or purpose at SCHS through an endowed gift!



The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe

Ashley Hansen, Artistic Director

Many people love stories because they take us out of our own lives and into the world of characters and adventures beyond ourselves; however, I've always loved fairy tales and fantasy because of the unique way these stories reveal to us glimpses of ourselves, the things we struggle with and hopes of the people we wish to be. We resonate with characters, and as we grow to love them, we discover that they become a very real part of us that in turn inspires very real action in our own world.

C.S. Lewis, the beloved author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* series, found his original inspiration for his story in images of forest animals, a queen on a sleigh, and a magnificent lion. The Christian elements soon appeared of their own accord. It is evident that God used Lewis's literary gifts to craft a tale that would introduce young and older readers alike to themes of bravery, friendship, forgiveness and sacrifice -- and the greatest story of all time: The Bible.

These students worked incredibly hard and poured so much of themselves into this production. It is my hope and prayer that you experienced the awe and wonder of God's presence in the magical world of Narnia and in your lives beyond the wardrobe, today and always.



This season, we're reminded of The Magnificence of God—His creativity shining through the arts. Every song sung, every piece of art created, and every effort given reflects His beauty and goodness. Thank you to everyone who responded so generously to the Fine Arts mailing! Your support truly makes a difference in bringing these programs to life. Whether you've given financially, shared your time, or cheered on our students at events, you've played an important role in celebrating the arts at South Christian. We're so grateful to partner with you as we celebrate God's creativity through the incredible talents in our community!

Melissa Scholten, Fine Arts Coordinator

Explore our music programs online!

Facebook: South Christian High School Fine Arts
 Instagram: southchristianfinearts
 YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@SouthChristianMusic> for a recording of our concerts and performances.

Learn more about
 SCHS Fine Arts!





THE BOYS' AND GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS had exceptional seasons, demonstrating determination and teamwork throughout. The girls' team claimed the OK Gold Conference Championship and secured a spot at the State Meet by finishing 3rd at the Regionals, which were hosted by South Christian. They went on to place 13th overall in Division 2, marking their impressive 5th consecutive trip to the State Finals. The boys' team also had a strong season, finishing as runners-up in the OK Gold Conference. Congratulations to Coach VanderKooi, her staff, and all the athletes on a fantastic season filled with hard work and success!



THE VARSITY GIRLS' SWIM AND DIVE TEAM had a successful season, achieving both personal and team goals. Several athletes improved their times significantly, setting personal records along the way. Three athletes—Sophie Gaylord, Aliya VanHofwegen, and Amelia McCann—qualified for the State Meet and earned All-Conference honors. Their hard work and dedication were evident throughout the season. A big thank you to Coach Pearson and the rest of the staff for their leadership and effort, and congratulations to all the athletes for an outstanding season!



THE BOYS' SOCCER TEAM had a phenomenal season, showcasing exceptional strategy, skill, and teamwork. The Sailors won the OK Gold Conference Championship and remained undefeated in league play for the third consecutive season. Under the leadership of Coach VandeKopple, the team finished with an impressive record of 18-2-2. Congratulations to the players and coaches on an outstanding year!



THE BOYS' TENNIS TEAM had a memorable season this fall, demonstrating precision, perseverance, and outstanding teamwork. The Sailors won the OK Gold Conference Championship and claimed the Division 3 Regional title at Holland Public for the first time since 2017. They capped off their season with an impressive 5th place finish at the Division 3 State Meet at Cranbrook Kingswood. Adding to the team's success, Coach Stulp was honored as both the Regional and State Division 3 Coach of the Year. Congratulations to Coach Stulp, his staff, and all the athletes on a tremendous season!



THE VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM showcased incredible skill and unity this fall, making an impressive run in the playoffs. Despite finishing the regular season with a 5-4 record, the Sailors earned a first-round home playoff game due to their strength of schedule. They defeated Holland Christian in the District Semifinals and went on to beat Unity Christian to claim their 5th consecutive District Championship. The team continued their success by defeating Whitehall in the Regional Championship before concluding their season in the State Semifinals. Congratulations to Coach Brown, his staff, and all the athletes on an outstanding season filled with hard work and sportsmanship!



THE VARSITY VOLLEYBALL TEAM had another outstanding season, bringing energy, enthusiasm, and a strong team spirit to every match. The Sailors finished 2nd in the highly competitive OK Gold Conference and went on to win their fourth consecutive District Championship by defeating Lakewood in four sets. They advanced to Regionals, where they secured impressive victories over Holland Christian and Grand Rapids Christian to claim the Regional Championship. The Sailors' remarkable season came to an end in the Division 2 Quarterfinals with a hard-fought loss to top-ranked Harper Creek. Congratulations to Coach VanderSchaaf, her staff, and all the athletes on a fantastic season!



THE VARSITY GIRLS' GOLF TEAM had an excellent season, demonstrating consistency, composure, and strong individual performances that contributed to their overall success. The Sailors won the OK Gold Conference Championship and finished 2nd at Regionals at Pigeon Creek, earning another trip to the Division 3 State Finals. They capped off their season with an impressive 5th place finish at the State Finals. Congratulations to Coach Cook, his staff, and all the golfers on a fantastic season!



THE VARSITY SIDELINE CHEER TEAM had an amazing season, providing unwavering support at games and showcasing their enthusiasm and dedication to building school spirit. Their energy played an essential role in enhancing the game day atmosphere, and they even introduced a dance routine during some of the home halftime shows, which was a fantastic highlight. A heartfelt thank you to Coach McGavin and all the cheerleaders for their hard work and commitment throughout the fall season!

THE EQUESTRIAN TEAM had another successful season, capped off with a 4th place finish at Regionals. The team's hard work, dedication, and daily enthusiasm were evident throughout the season, as they balanced effort with fun. A big thank you to Coach VanderBand, her staff, and all the athletes for the countless hours and commitment they put into making this season a success!

Check www.southchristiansports.com for schedules, photos, news, livestream, Sailor Gear, and more!
Follow @sailorsports on Instagram.



Thank you to all of our Anchor Club participants who continue to help our Athletic Department flourish. A special thank you to all of our Sports Boosters who volunteer at all of our home events and help run fundraisers throughout the year to support our Department. Lastly, thank you to our special South Christian community who supports our teams and coaches by attending many events each and every season. We are all a team and we appreciate all of you. Go Sailors! - David Kool, Athletic Director

Servant Working

Following the example of Christ's selfless love through exercising kindness, empathy, and compassion.



"Thank you South Christian High School Volleyball for packing Snack Packs for *Corinth Hand2Hand*. They chose our ministry as their service project...providing all of the food, special notes, and prayers. Thanks again for caring for our community."

- CORINTH HAND2HAND



"Thank you students of SCHS for coming to *Next Step* for your Sailor Serve Day! The students helped us clean and organize our sale products and pack snacks and lunches for *Hand2Hand*!"

- NEXT STEP



"A big thank you to students from South Christian who came to the Mission to volunteer in the *Mel Trotter Ministries* kitchen! We appreciate all their hard work!"

- MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES

Veterans Day

with guest speaker, John Hendrikse, former U.S. Army Captain



THE VETERANS DAY ASSEMBLY featured South Christian's social studies teacher, John Hendrikse, as the guest speaker. A former captain in the U.S. Army, John shared his story about his military service and delivered an impactful message, challenging students to serve their community in meaningful ways—whether by raking leaves, baking cookies for a neighbor, creating gift packs for the homeless, visiting a VA clinic, or shoveling a neighbor's driveway. His message was well-received and resonated deeply with those in attendance.

The assembly was made even more special with the participation of 8th-grade students from Byron Center Christian, Dutton Christian, Legacy Christian, and Moline Christian, filling the auditorium. Following the assembly, guests were invited to a reception where students engaged veterans with meaningful questions, fostering a powerful and memorable community-building experience.



"We are grateful for the hard work of volunteers from SCHS! As part of their annual Sailor Serve Day, they helped beautify our campus by weeding and cleaning windows. Although these tasks may seem small and mundane, a well-maintained campus supports our clients' healing."

- WEDGEWOOD CHRISTIAN SERVICES

Alumni Reflection | Reckless Abandon

Rev. Steve Elzinga, Class of 1974



"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines."

1 Corinthians 12:4 & 11

IT WAS A MOMENT THAT CHANGED MY LIFE, and I felt utterly unprepared for it. I had no business standing at that podium, but there I was.

The feeder schools of South Christian had gathered in an auditorium for a speech contest, and one of the categories was "Write your own speech on a topic of your choice and deliver it dramatically in front of your soon-to-be classmates." By some twist of providence—which seemed unfair at the time—I was chosen to compete in this category.

Public speaking was not my gift. In fact, reading aloud was a challenge for me; doing so in front of an audience was impossible.

The day before the contest, my English teacher made me read my speech in front of my class at Moline Christian School. It was a total disaster.

That night, alone in my room and dreading the next day, I realized I was on the verge of making a complete fool of myself. I prayed, but not for success. I knew that would be too much to ask for. I was going to fail, and I accepted that. Instead, I prayed for the courage to face my fears, the courage to embrace my impending failure with grace.

And so, there I was, standing at the podium, teetering on the edge of something terrifying. What did I do? I jumped. I let go of my fear and read my speech with total, reckless abandon—unconcerned about success or what anyone thought of me.

And you know what? I won. All the evidence of my life leading up to that moment suggested I was not gifted with words. Yet, there I stood, holding the winner's trophy, which I still have tucked away in a box in my basement.

1 Corinthians 12 reminds us that each of us is given a gift by God. Everyone has something special to offer. But here's the thing: you only receive that gift when it's given to you. Who's to say how, what, or when God bestows His gifts? I discovered my gift of words not until I let myself go and stepped out in faith, embracing the possibility of God's plan for my life. In that moment, He chose to give me a gift—a gift that has shaped my long journey in pastoral ministry. I uncovered it because I had the freedom to try.

Young people often have no idea what, how, or when God will gift them. That's why we challenge them. We push them. We create opportunities for them to explore who they are and who they could become. We provide a safe space—a sanctuary of freedom—where students can take risks.

That's what South Christian was for me: a place of freedom to try. A place of God's magnificent grace that allows us to embrace every opportunity with reckless abandon.

About the Author: Rev. Steve Elzinga is a retired pastor having served in Canada and the United States. He is married to his wife, Marie, and they have four married sons and seven grandchildren.

in memoriam

1950s

Eleanor (Kreuzer, '57) Tamminga passed away August 10, 2024.

Mary Ann (Oosterhouse, '59) DeBack passed away August 13, 2024.

Benjamin Douma ('59) passed away April 29, 2023.

Mary (Stroo, '59) Huizinga passed away November 24, 2024.

1960s

Hope (VanderHoek, '61) Veltman passed away September 7, 2024.

Sue (VanderVliet, '61) VanderKam passed away October 4, 2024.

Diane (Reiffer '65) Chrisman passed away July 9, 2024.

Jean (Pluger '66) Brink passed away August 15, 2024.

Thomas Lutke '69 passed away September 19, 2024.

1970s

Mary Jane (Jackson, '70) Matyas passed away March 23, 2024.

William Wiersma ('70) passed away October 7, 2024.

1980s

Larry Kuperus ('82) passed away August 10, 2024.

Brett Guikema ('84) passed away July 3, 2024.

Gayle (Wustman, '85) VanGoor passed away September 1, 2024.

John Oetman ('88) passed away October 3, 2024.

Jeffrey Remtema ('89) passed away September 26, 2024.

2000s

Kyle VerHoef ('09) passed away September 14, 2024.

Randall Warners ('14) passed away October 29, 2024.

SCHS CLASS REUNIONS



CLASS OF 1956

The first graduating class at SCHS had their 68th year reunion.

My classmates have a special bond, partly because of our small class size and partly because we did so many exciting and influential things together. After all, we selected the name Sailors, the colors navy and white and the *South Winds* among many other things.

Pardon me if it sounds like I am bragging! I am!!
- Marie (Van Putten, '56) Faber

CLASS OF 1975

Saturday, 9.13.25 - late afternoon

Douglas Walker Park

Contact : David Lanting (dlanting57@gmail.com)


Ron Wierenga (ronwierenga1016@gmail.com)

Stay Connected

Visit our Alumni page at www.schs.org/alumni/ or contact Kerri Holbrook at kholbrook@schs.org.

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The magnificence of God was beautifully portrayed through the character of Aslan, the Great Lion and King of Narnia, in the production of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. For more details, see page 10.

Photo: Jordan Bolt,
Class of '25