



VOX  
*Veritatis*

THE VOICE OF VERITAS



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*Veritas Christian Academy received several commendations and recognitions during the 2021–2022 school year.*

Collectively, the Logic School students earned recognition for VCA as a "Top 10 School in the Nation" among those taking the CLT 8 benchmark learning test. Rhetoric students **Jordan McDowell**, **Bobby LaMond**, **Alaina Meyer**, **Hannah Stage**, and **Gracie Coe** earned certificates and medals awarded to the highest performers on The National Latin Exam.

Finally, The National Paideia Center awarded special commendation to all Veritas Christian Academy students, faculty, and administration for their role in making VCA a nationally-certified Paideia Seminar school!

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Through literary, theological, and historical analysis, Rhetoric students see and understand the threads and themes that run throughout the canon of sacred Scripture.

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# KINGDOM *Acts*

## OUR STORY IS NOT YET DONE BEING TOLD

*Dr. Robert Woods, Headmaster*

It is so true that our lives are very much like a story. Individually and collectively, we have a beginning, middle and end to our stories. Our lives are rich with journeys to mountains and through valleys. We have friends, allies, families, and foes. In Kingdom terms, we are called to love our neighbors, our enemies, and, rather readily and easily, our friends and families.

What we often do not know and understand is the meaning of our stories when we are right in the thick of it. A central Kingdom element, if we are followers of Christ is that we trust Jesus, as the author and perfecter of our faith. Our stories are filled with all sorts of twists and turns, highs and lows, trials and tribulations.

Few describe the ways that our lives are stories better than J. R. R. Tolkien in *The Two Towers* where we read the exchange between Sam and Frodo about the story that they have been called into and are living.

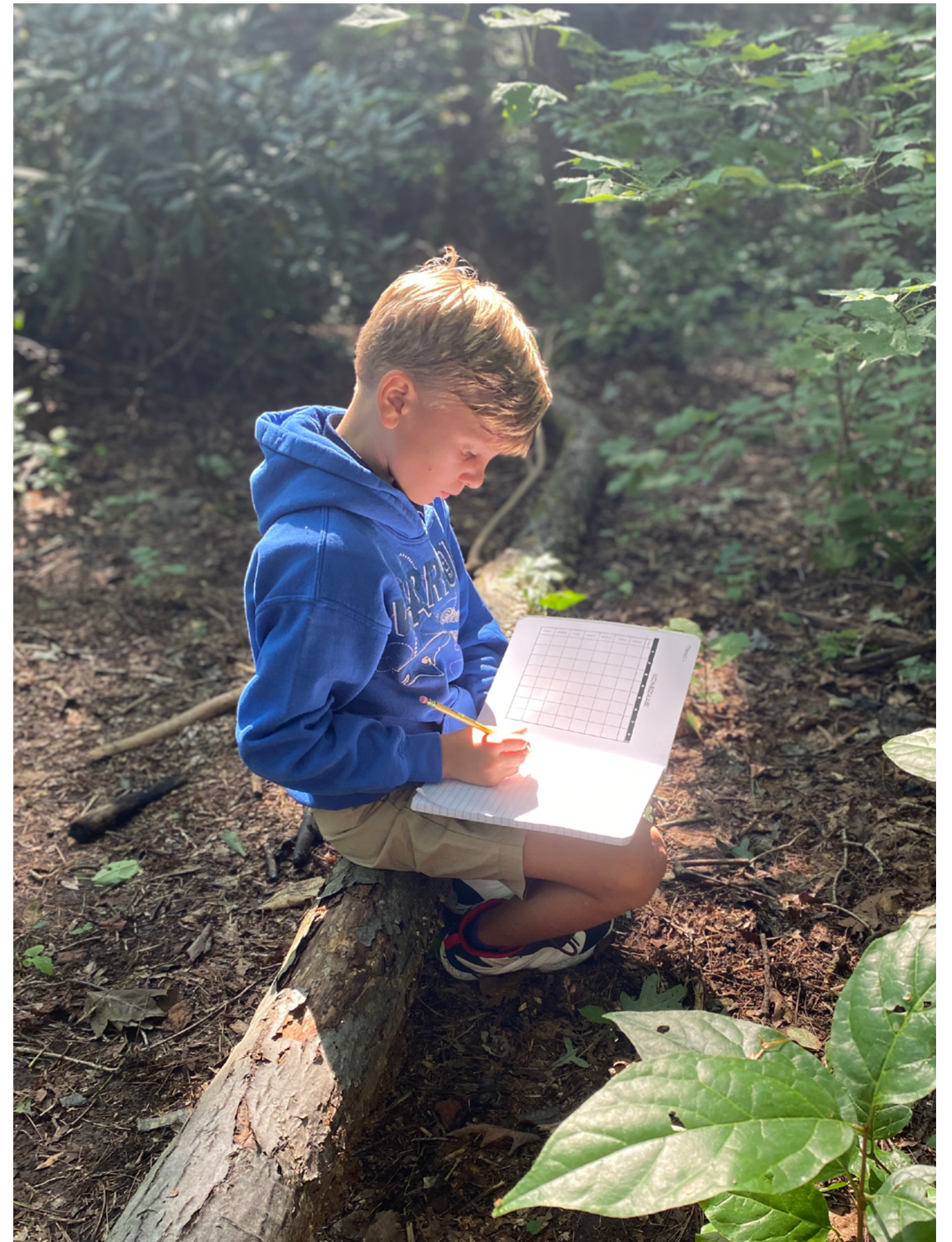
“Yes, that’s so,” said Sam. “And we shouldn’t be here at all, if we’d known more about it before we started. But I suppose it’s often that way. The brave things in the old tales and songs, Mr. Frodo: adventures, as I used to call them. I used to think

that they were things the wonderful folk of the stories went out and looked for, because they wanted them, because they were exciting and life was a bit dull, a kind of a sport, as you might say. But that’s not the way of it with the tales that really mattered, or the ones that stay in the mind. Folk seem to have been just landed in them, usually – their paths were laid that way, as you put it. But I expect they had lots of chances, like us, of turning back, only they didn’t. And if they had, we shouldn’t know, because they’d have been forgotten. We hear about those who just went on – and not all to a good end, mind you; at least not to what folk inside a story and not outside it call a good end. You know, coming home, and finding things all right, though not quite the same – like old Mr. Bilbo. But those aren’t always the best tales to hear, though they may be the best tales to get landed in! I wonder what sort of a tale we’ve fallen into?”

“I wonder,” said Frodo. “But I don’t know. And that’s the way of a real tale. Take any one that you’re fond of. You may know, or guess, what kind of a tale it is, happy-ending or sad-ending, but the people in it don’t know. And you don’t want them to.”

It has been noted that when children utter the words “tell me a story,” it is, in part, a call for order. Ordered stories do impose a kind of order, even if for a moment in our occasionally disordered existence. Above all, we should seek the ways of God in every detail of our stories, individually and collectively.

At Veritas, it is evident that God is exalted. We desire that God is the author and perfecter of our school. As we have in previous years, may we continue to firmly place our story within His story. We hope you enjoy this year’s VOX as you see some highlights of the past year and our hopes for the future. 🙏







## FROM THE BOARD

*Anthony Craver*

Stories are powerful! This fact was driven home to me a few days ago. I was watching a “reaction video.” It was a video of several people watching the latest installment of the Star Wars saga. In this video, young Luke Skywalker appeared just in time to rescue baby Grogu. (Bear with me if you don’t care for Star Wars). I could hardly believe the reaction that I saw. Mature, brawny, bearded men were bawling like babies at the sight of their favorite Jedi, returning to the screen in heroic fashion. It occurred to me while watching that in this cynical generation, stories still hold great power. They, in fact, shape our culture.

For years, aspiring screenwriters paid thousands of dollars to sit and learn for just a few days from Robert McKee. McKee is regarded by many to be the godfather of screenwriting. His book entitled *Story* is considered by many in Hollywood to be the Bible of the industry. McKee says that, “Story isn’t a flight from reality, but a vehicle that carries us on our search for reality; our

best effort to make sense out of the anarchy of existence.”

Stories are also powerful in the battles we face. One of my favorite Bible verses is found in Revelation 12:11: “And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die,” (NLT).

This verse tells us that one of the most powerful weapons at our disposal, a weapon that will help defeat Satan, our greatest enemy, is the power of our own testimony: The power of our own story. When we reflect on God’s goodness to us and retell the stories of His faithfulness, we are empowered to overcome. Stories indeed change lives.

At Veritas, we believe the most powerful story ever told is the story of Jesus Christ. We teach and train our students to follow His example as they develop their minds and prepare to live their lives in His service. So many of our students have gone out to create great stories of their own. As we look forward to another year in our Veritas family, I wonder what great stories are ahead in the lives of these precious students? What stories will their lives tell as they are impacted by the greatest story ever told? 🙏



FOR THE LOVE OF   
*Story*  
Martha Reed  
Grammar School Principal

Thinking back over your life and education, consider something that sticks with you years later. Is it a stirring lecture? A riveting textbook chapter? Chances are what really sticks with you is, in one way or another, a story. A great book. A haunting movie. A conversation over dinner with good friends who shared their life story. Story both stirs us and sticks with us.

Because we are made in the image of our story-telling God, telling stories is one of the most human things we do. This is quickly obvious when talking with our youngest students! Ask a three year old a question and what do you get? Not a one word answer! Rather, you get a long story full of detail and expression.

Educators call formalized storytelling “narration,” and in the Classical Christian classroom, narration most often involves reading

a classic text and giving students the opportunity to recall details of the text in both written and spoken telling. A strong narrative contains as many details of the story as possible, even capturing the style and cadence of the author. This approach stands in sharp contrast to the modern approach of summary which distills the story to the briefest account possible.

Last year’s Grammar School faculty development focused on the implementation of narration as a standard tool in our classrooms. We studied Jason Barney’s book *A Classical Guide to Narration*, which unpacks Charlotte Mason’s approach to rich literature through narration and applies it to the Classical Christian school classroom. Barney advocates for narration for three main reasons. First, it is a natural way to engage the interest of children. Children love to hear and to tell stories. Narration also

supports self-learning because the student must digest what they hear and reproduce it in an orderly fashion, therefore becoming more active in the learning process. And finally, Barney points out that modern research has revealed that a narrative approach to learning boosts comprehension and retention of information. It also leads to stronger writing skills because students are internalizing the writing of great authors and, as they do so, begin to emulate great style in their own writing.

At VCA, we have deep respect for the souls of our students and for the way in which they are created. Using story to foster learning and engagement is just one of the ways that we strive to engage our students in light of their Creator as He weaves their story into His story! 🙌







## JOY COMES IN THE MORNING

As the Scriptures declare, “Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” This is a grand truth from God’s Word that we have all experienced. God’s steadfast love endures forever and is always renewed for His people. The past few years have been occasions for weeping, but also occasions for seeing God’s sustaining goodness. On Friday April, 22, 2022, Veritas had a most joyous celebration with the largest Grandparents’ Day gathering in the history of Veritas!

Sometimes busy can just be just hectic, frantic activity adding up to more frustration than benefit. Sometimes it is the particular activity, and sometimes it is the people involved in the activity. Other times, being immersed in a highly engaging activity is wonderful. This also often depends on the event and the people working together. When the right people engage in special events with the right dispositions, we move from busy to celebratory.

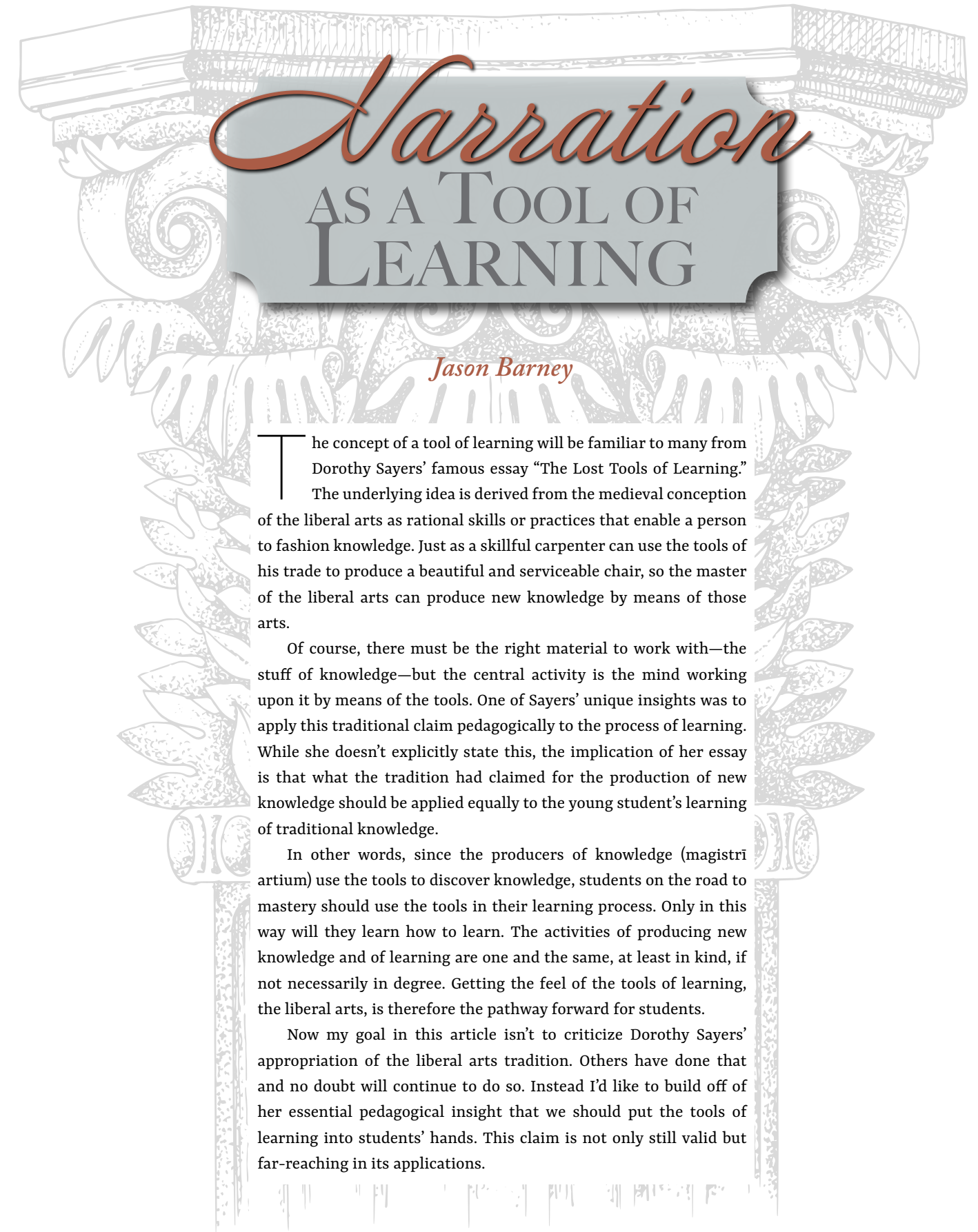
On Grandparents’ Day, we had over 300 of our favorite folks on campus. For weeks prior to this special day, I heard the giddy excitement in the voices of little Warriors describing with great anticipation the presence of their grandparents. In the midst of the singing and chanting of all that had been memorized, there



was sustained applause and a steady flow of smiles. Add to this the ever present hugs and kisses, and you will see why this is a day so loved by so many.

I am grateful to everyone who participated at every level to make Grandparents’ Day such a blessing to so many. It took countless people, many unnamed and behind the scenes, working tirelessly for many, many days. Our Father who sees in secret will reward according to His infinite mercies.

What a terrific time to be serving at Veritas. May our Lord be pleased with our continued efforts to offer a Classical Christ-centered education that brings Him glory and honor and is a blessing to all engaged in this one-of-a-kind teaching and learning. 🙏



The concept of a tool of learning will be familiar to many from Dorothy Sayers’ famous essay “The Lost Tools of Learning.” The underlying idea is derived from the medieval conception of the liberal arts as rational skills or practices that enable a person to fashion knowledge. Just as a skillful carpenter can use the tools of his trade to produce a beautiful and serviceable chair, so the master of the liberal arts can produce new knowledge by means of those arts.

Of course, there must be the right material to work with—the stuff of knowledge—but the central activity is the mind working upon it by means of the tools. One of Sayers’ unique insights was to apply this traditional claim pedagogically to the process of learning. While she doesn’t explicitly state this, the implication of her essay is that what the tradition had claimed for the production of new knowledge should be applied equally to the young student’s learning of traditional knowledge.

In other words, since the producers of knowledge (*magistri artium*) use the tools to discover knowledge, students on the road to mastery should use the tools in their learning process. Only in this way will they learn how to learn. The activities of producing new knowledge and of learning are one and the same, at least in kind, if not necessarily in degree. Getting the feel of the tools of learning, the liberal arts, is therefore the pathway forward for students.

Now my goal in this article isn’t to criticize Dorothy Sayers’ appropriation of the liberal arts tradition. Others have done that and no doubt will continue to do so. Instead I’d like to build off of her essential pedagogical insight that we should put the tools of learning into students’ hands. This claim is not only still valid but far-reaching in its applications.



And so, without in any way questioning the validity of the traditional seven liberal arts, I'd like to propose a novel addition to the sacrosanct tools: Charlotte Mason's practice of narration. ...

First, let me venture a definition of narration. Narration requires two steps:

- The exposure of students to rich content, whether of story, poem, painting or theorem.
- The requirement of students to tell back that content in a connected format.

Narration has an essential simplicity and elegance to it. We might say that it mirrors the act of learning itself at its most basic level. There must be content to be learned and an act of the mind in assimilating that content.

### Narration as a Natural Tool of Learning

My main contention for the practice of narration is that it is a natural educational tool, in the sense that it fits the nature of a human being best. As Charlotte Mason said, "Children narrate by nature." In saying this, she was reflect-



ing the Aristotelian tradition, adopted by the Judeo-Christian West, that human nature has some fixed qualities that make some educational practices better or worse.

So, for instance, human beings naturally have a capacity for reasoning, and so training them in principles of logic and right reason fits their nature. In the same way human beings can sing and dance, wrestle and run, and these skills can be honed and trained in an ideal manner according to the nature of our human capabilities. When that nature is correctly understood and practices are optimally suited to it, training can produce the opera singer who fills the theater hall with his voice, or the ballet dancer leaping and spinning with grace, balance, and poise, as well as the professional wrestler or four-minute miler.

In the same way, narration is in a human being's nature and only requires the right training to bring it to maturity. But perhaps my analogies have led us astray, because people do not all dance or sing, wrestle or run with any regularity these days. But Charlotte Mason claims that narration is more like our first example (reasoning), since it is native to every child's mind:

Narrating is an art, like poetry-making or painting, because it is there, in every child's mind, waiting to be discovered, and is not the result of any process of disciplinary education. A creative fiat calls it forth. "Let him narrate"; and the child narrates, fluently, copiously, in ordered sequence, with fit and graphic details, with a just choice of words, without verbosity or tautology, so soon as he can speak with ease. (Vol. 1 Home Education, ch. 9 "The Art of Narrating")

We might quibble with Mason here by pointing out that writing poetry and painting are hardly the normal attainments of every child. But she is not claiming that training or any "disciplinary process" are unnecessary for attaining



these arts, just that the art is there in the mind of the child before training in the art ever comes along to bring it to fruition. Narrating is natural to human beings, just like poetry writing or painting, singing, dancing, or running. It is a natural endowment of God, one of the most basic and fundamental tools of the mind itself. Narration is part and parcel of human nature.

### Narration and the Image of God

In fact, when Charlotte Mason refers to the "creative fiat" that calls forth narration, she is alluding to the creation story of Genesis, when God says, "Let there be light!" ("Fiat lux" in the Latin Vulgate). In the back of her mind, then, is probably the Christian doctrine of the image of God, a fact

*"Narrating is an*



*... in every child's mind, waiting to be discovered ..."*

that no doubt underlies the capacity of human beings to narrate. We reflect the image of our story-telling God.

Of course, under this is the power of language itself. By his powerful Word, God spoke the universe into existence, and by that same Word he orders and sustains it. Human beings made in his image have the capacity for language by nature. And therefore narration, conceived most generally as telling what they have heard, is imitative of God's creative nature.

This is what Charlotte Mason means by claiming that narration is natural. And she goes on to note how normal children will narrate expertly without instruction, telling a story well, "with fit and graphic details," and so on. If we understand that the ability to narrate is natural, then we can begin to imagine how it could be put to use for the purposes of education. Charlotte Mason puts it this way:

This amazing gift with which normal children are born is allowed to lie fallow in their education. Bobbie will come home with a heroic narrative of a fight he has seen between "Duke" and a dog in the street. It is wonderful! He has seen everything, and he tells everything with splendid vigour in the true epic vein; but so ingrained is our contempt for children that we see nothing in this but Bobbie's foolish childish way! Whereas here, if we have eyes to see and grace to build, is the ground-plan of his education. (Home Education, ch. 9)

When we truly understand the power of narration to bear fruit in the mind of a child, it is like a field ready to be harvested. Simply sow the seed and the student will readily grow in knowledge and ability, as surely as proper sun and rain lead to harvest. In essence, Charlotte Mason is here

claiming, a generation before Dorothy Sayers, that narration is, in some sense, the lost tool of learning in a way that is foundational to all the other liberal arts.

Perhaps we've never thought of the excitement and eagerness of a young child's storytelling in this way before. There is something about the activity of narrating itself that rouses and engages the interest of the storyteller just as much as the listener. The inciting action is necessary, but, once their interest is enlivened, the story almost tells itself in the child's imagination.

Stories are the mind's bread and butter. They are the foundation of everything more complex and elaborate in the intellectual life.

One of Charlotte Mason's most convicting appeals throughout her works is this concern that we not despise or have contempt for little children—a thought which she draws from Jesus' warning in the Gospels: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones" (Matt. 18:10, ESV).

Her point here is that we modern adults may be tempted to undervalue such a telling as "childish" when in fact we have hit upon one of the most powerful tools for sustaining the child's interest and engagement with his own education.

As Charlotte Mason concludes in this same passage, "Let us take the goods the gods provide." In other words, given that narration engages children's minds and hearts in the acquisition of knowledge in this way, let us make the best use of it we can. We might as well build our educational practices on the foundation of how children actually are in their nature, as opposed to how we might imagine them to be in our modernist preference for abstraction or analytical dissection. ☞

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## A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE LIFE OF LOGIC SCHOOL

*Sheri Sullivan, Logic School  
Principal*

No doubt, you are aware that Veritas was certified this past year as a National Paideia Seminar School. What exactly does that mean for your Logic School child and how does that affect the education they receive here? As a Classical Christian School, we naturally want our students to see Christ ruling over every thought and event of their lives. We want them to think for themselves, not just be told what to think. We want them to discover the True, the Good, and the Beautiful on their own because genuine learning is the activity of their own actively engaged minds. That's where Seminar Learning is introduced!

Imagine a group of students in a round robin discussion about whether their relationship with God should be like that of Moses or the terrified Israelites. Imagine Logic School students discussing the freedom from having such an honest relationship with God that

they should be able to speak to and even question Him face-to-face like Moses. Imagine the Beauty gleaned from such a discussion when they excitedly come to recognize that that's exactly the kind of relationship God desires to have with each one of them!

Imagine the same scenario as students discussed the miraculous ways that God blessed Corrie ten Boom and her family in *The Hiding Place*. The students were often emotional and forever changed as they saw Christ in action and wrote the following thoughtful responses to the post-seminar prompt, "Why did Corrie & Betsie faithfully pray for those that were so cruel to them?"

God talks about loving our enemies in the Bible. He says to keep our friends close and our enemies closer. Betsie prayed for the man who beat her because she wanted him to know God like she did. —David Rose

I think it was the same reason God said when he was about to die on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." —Jana Jenkins



Betsie felt bad for them because they had been taught things about the Jews that were not true. She believed praying for them was the right thing to do instead of holding grudges or retaliating. —Alexis Ralston

These are just a couple of examples (from dozens) that showcase the tremendous benefits of Seminar Learning. A teacher's lecture could not have conveyed as deeply what these students gnawed on and eventually digested as they came to their own conclusions. Our students are regularly presented with these tools of learning designed to prompt deeper thinking and develop habits and writing skills that will last a lifetime. It isn't always easy to get Logic students to think deeply or push themselves out of their comfort zones, but these classic strategies do



work; these students "got it!" And every time we see it happen - well, it's a beautiful thing indeed! Plans are underway for you to observe and even take part in your own seminar experience soon. You will be impressed! 🙏

## BUILDING a FOUNDATION

### *Practicing the Common Arts*

Carpentry Club is an after school program that gives students the opportunity to gain experience with basic woodworking tools and skills. The heart of the program is a joy in seeing how wood can be shaped and manipulated, and the challenge of making something that improves the world around us. The club started in December and continued through the end of May. It is staffed by Chris Schlender and his friend Keith Smoyer.



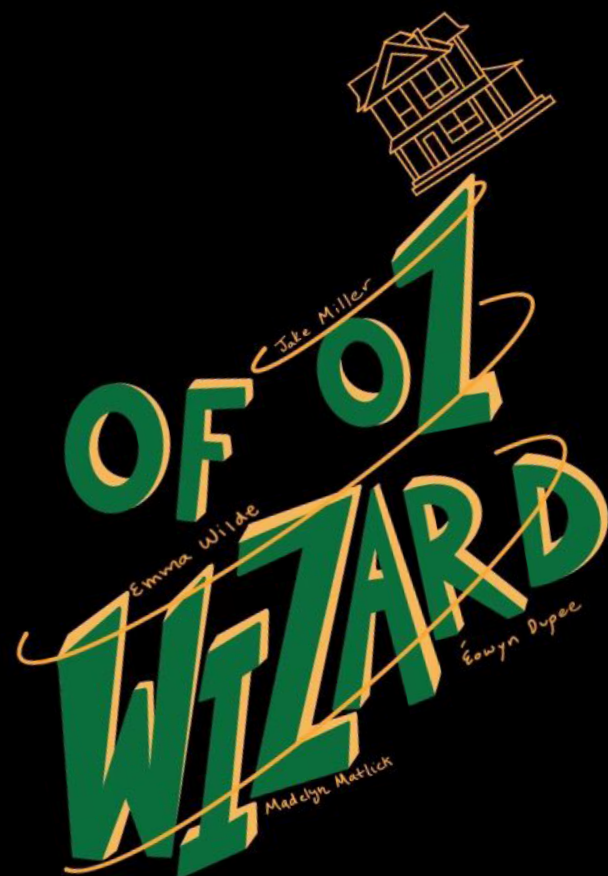
Over the year, students have been able to produce personal projects including a tool box, a candy dispenser, and a trivet (a matrix of wood to place hot pots on instead of pot holders.) The club also devises and produces items for use around campus. This year club members made a free standing bench for the outdoor classroom and an enclosure for a garbage can near the outdoor lunch tables.

It was exciting to have WLOS come to a club meeting and interview the students at the end of April. The piece was part of the "Never Stop Learning" segment of the nightly news program. Indeed, the club members and leaders never stop learning about woodworking skills, gaining new insight and ability each time they meet. The club is planned to be offered again next school year.



# PLAYBILL

THEATRE VERITAS



**LAST FALL**, Theatre Veritas got to perform the beloved C.S. Lewis classic *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (adapted for the stage by Joseph Robinette). This production was meaningful to all as we dove full heartedly into this beautifully symbolic story. Although Lewis states that this book was not an allegory, and was never intended to mirror the Passion, its powerful symbolism moved our hearts to look deeper in ourselves. We had numerous discussions in class, and in rehearsals, of the parallels between the Truth and this fictional world. The scene where Aslan gives his life for Narnia was really difficult to rehearse. It was one of the hardest scenes for director and student alike to tackle. Our final scene, when Aslan defeats the White Witch, was victorious for all—as a production and its success, but also as a reminder of the promise we have to look forward to one day. This production was powerful.

With a huge cast and crew of 34, our students did a remarkable job bringing Narnia to life! We were blessed with an on-point cast of kids who gave professional level performances. Our four Pevensie children, “Edmund” played by **TUCKER RIKARD** (8th grade), “Lucy” played by **TESSA WACK** (8th grade), “Peter” played by **VINCENT BABCOCK** (junior), and “Susan” played by **MADDIE MATLICK** (senior), gave heartwarming performances that drew the audience in, as if they were on the journey with them, **SEAN CRATON** (freshman) gave an outstanding performance as “Aslan.” **EMMA WILDE** (senior) gave a chilly, yet regal performance as “Jadis” the White Witch. **MARY GARCIA COE** (junior) gave an awe-inspiring job as the endearing, troubled Mr. Tumnus, and **GEORGIA EVANS**, demanded full attention from audience members with her steely, incredible performance as wolf “Fenris Ulf.” These performances were matched with countless other beloved and impressive actors and actresses who played the many villains and animals—some playing both—adding up to a cast of 29.

**WE WERE** so grateful to be welcomed back by Upward Christian Fellowship to utilize their stage and state of the art technology and lighting system, as well as provide a wonderful technical director to meet all our light, sound, screen, and technical needs. We were abundantly blessed by a beautiful village of volunteering parents, grandparents, faculty, and the school community to bring our production to fruition. On top of a successful run, in a Covid-19 age, we were blessed with enough students to cast all the leads with understudies in the event someone should fall ill. After opening night, two cast members fell ill and for our second and final day of performances, two of our understudies, **JULIETTE RALSTON** (6th grade) as “Unicorn” and **JASMINE PHARR** (6th grade) as “Lucy,” stepped in very smoothly, and miraculously, and filled those roles.

**THEATRE VERITAS’** 2022 spring musical was L. Frank Baum’s American Classic, *The Wizard of Oz*. This particular stage adaptation was specifically written to closely resemble the 1939 MGM film. This musical was all around charming and heartwarming. I believe all its beautiful characters, brought to life brought to life on our stage, took audiences back to their childhoods.

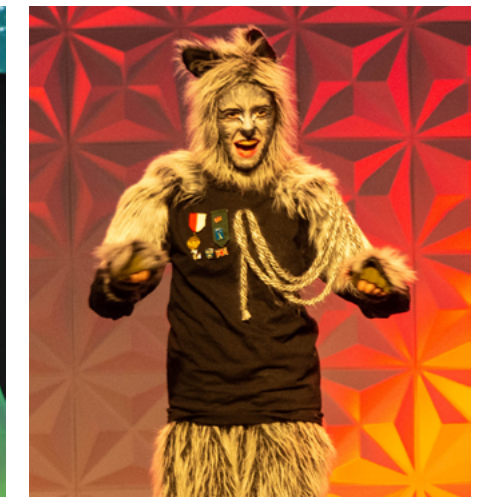
**ISABEL DE LA PENNA** (junior), as “Dorothy Gale,” captivated hearts with her gorgeous voice and spot on portrayal of Dorothy. Her own personal dog, **PENNY**, made her first debut on the stage as “Toto” and won audiences with her charm. **HANNAH STAGE** (sophomore) as “Aunt Em / Glinda” and **VINCENT BABCOCK** (junior) as “Uncle Henry / Emerald City Guard” gave fun, light-hearted performances. **MARY GARCIA COE** (junior) as “Zeke / The Cowardly Lion,” **MADDIE MATLICK** (senior) as “Hunk / Scarecrow,” and **EMMA WILDE** (senior) as “Hickory / The Tinman” gave phenomenal performances as this nostalgic, family favorite trio. I cannot put into words the chemistry Dorothy and her three new friends had on stage. **JAKE MILLER** (senior) as “Professor Marvel / The Wizard of Oz,” **ANNA CAMILLE FLEEMAN** (sophomore) as “The Wicked Witch of the West,” and **TUCKER RIKARD** (8th grade) as “The Munchkin Mayor” filled audiences with laughter and joy. There are many more wonderful characters and performances not mentioned. We had an outstanding ensemble who took on many roles—flying monkeys, apple trees, jitterbugs, haunted trees, munchkins, Ozians, and crows—no one will ever know just how many costume changes and work our amazing ensemble poured into this show. A cast of 38, a crew of 9, I am in awe of my students, each and every one of them. There are no small roles! They each had a hand in weaving together the beautiful tapestry that is this production.

**ONCE AGAIN**, our Almighty God provided a village to see us through to the finish line. He immensely blessed us with music directors **DOYLE** and **KATHLEEN BARNES**, who poured many hours and love into our students, and **SARAH DEVORE**, who gave up many afternoons and Saturdays to choreograph our show. Upward Christian Fellowship graciously hosted our production, **MATT KARST** spent many hours helping us during tech week, and God provided the village of parents, grandparents, faculty, and VCA community to bring it all together. We absolutely could not do it without His Sovereignty. God is good!

We hope you come out and support Theatre Veritas' 2022-23 season!

—CHELSEA ST. JOHN-WADE, Director







“[We] get to witness *miracles* in slow motion. We watch awkward children with untied shoes and cantankerous attitudes transform into young adults at the cusp of an ocean of opportunity.”

# To the Class of 2022

In 2016, a ruggedly handsome but very inexperienced teacher arrived at Veritas to teach high school math. The 7th-grade class is full of ambition and jokes and a keen sense of often misplaced justice. This new teacher is *very* excited about his middle school elective class, CHAMPS. Competition, History, Athletics, Math, Physics, Sports; a contrived acronym if there ever was one. I am that teacher, and these fine graduates before us were that 7th-grade class.

Roughly five thousand 7th graders signed up for CHAMPS and chaos ensued. Every week, I’d dream up some new activity and literally pray that it’d go well. Air rockets, hot air balloons (complete with a Hindenburg demonstration and a real hydrogen explosion), egg drops, Rube Goldberg Machines, and even homemade water filters demonstrating the power of wetlands. Every class involved some throwing, some shrieking, and a huge mess. Every day I’d confront the vast disparity between my vision and reality, and every day I’d seriously question my choice of profession. I nearly quit many times. This

class, as fun and memorable as it was, very nearly broke me.

Six years later, I can say I’m glad I stuck around.

Teachers get to witness miracles in slow motion. We watch awkward children with untied shoes and cantankerous attitudes transform into young adults at the cusp of an ocean of opportunity. Some days are hard, some seasons are hard, and some classes are hard. Taking the long view is the only way to retain any sense of sanity. Seeing people grow up is inspiring and exhausting and invigorating all at once.

...

I’m going to offer you some advice.

First, commit yourself to something long enough to see fruit. While the world tries to sell you on an endless string of new experiences in new places with fresh faces, be somewhere long enough to be known and to know others. Had I left after your 7th-grade year, I wouldn’t have seen who you’ve become.

I’m thankful for this moment, I think everyone in this room is thankful for this moment.

Commit to a community long enough to watch wrinkles form on the faces of those you love. Look at the person next to you and imagine meeting their grandkids for the first time, and introducing them to your own. The best relationships you’ll have in your life are forged over decades. You don’t need to explain your past to lifelong friends, because they’ve been there alongside you. Long-term friends also have the ability to tell you when you’re being a knucklehead, which we all know you might be. There is no indicator of future health more powerful than whether or not you’re in a community of lifelong friends. We are shaped by our relationships. The more of these relationships you have the more joyful you’ll be.

In crafting a lifelong community you’re going to experience friction. My grandpa Bill Buckman was a high school principal. He also proposed to my grandma

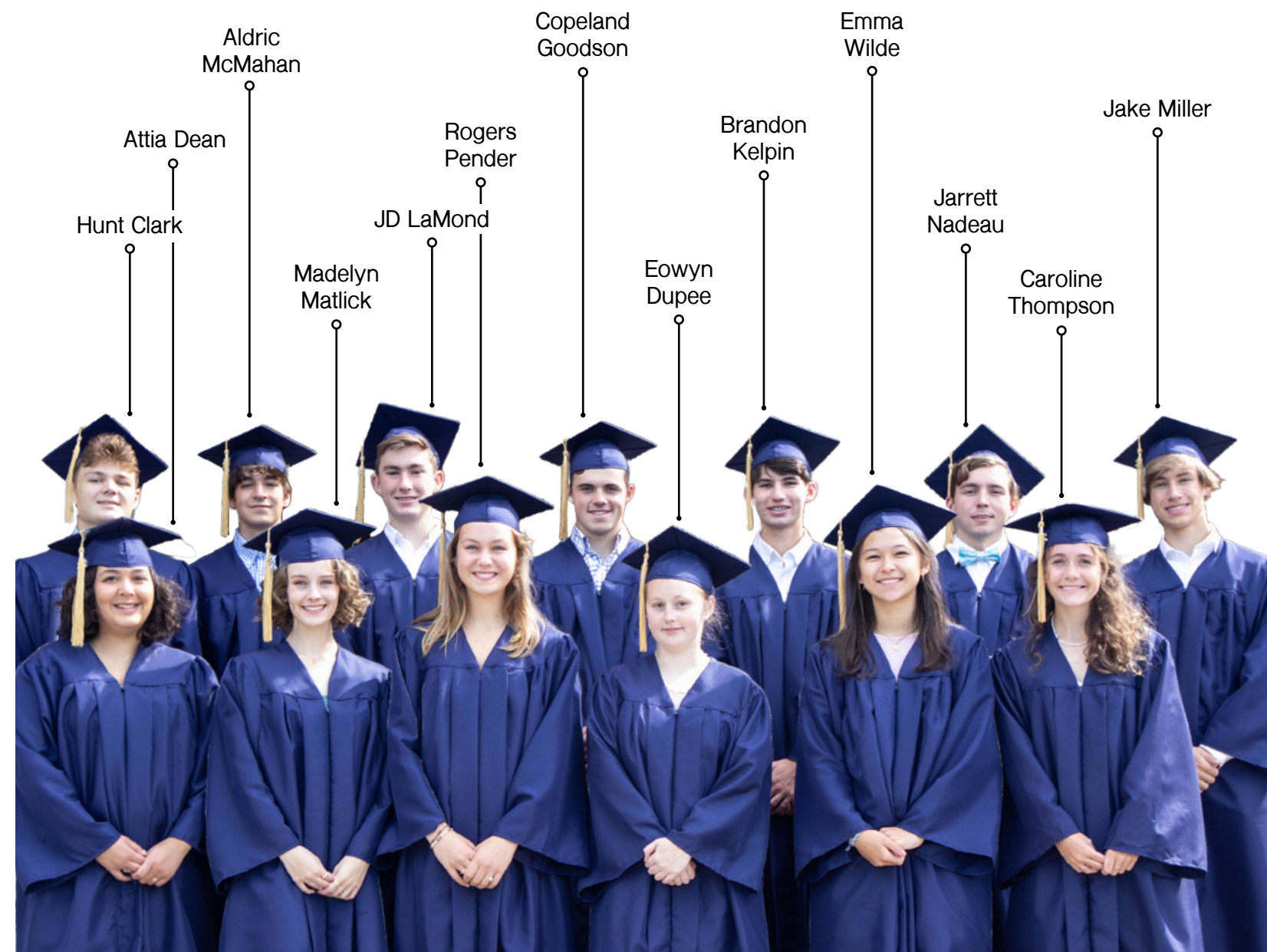
on the third date, retired absurdly young, and traveled more than anyone I’ve ever known. He made flower arrangements, gardened a lot, wore white, slip-on Vans exclusively, and often sat on his back porch overlooking the coastal mountains of California while he smoked piles of Newport Mentholated cigarettes—apparently with very few ill effects. These were different times. He and my grandma had this group of friends they called “The Mates” and they ate and drank and enjoyed each other’s company every week for at least fifty years. I tell you all this because I have tremendous affection for my Grandpa Bill. But he was also short-tempered and I’m sure there were many, many heated arguments; and yet he was able to craft this lifelong community of friends he lived his whole life alongside. If my grandpa Bill

can do it, you too can love people you disagree with.

President George Washington, when assembling his cabinet, chose to surround himself not with people who agreed with him on every point, but with the best and brightest people he could find. He sought out their opinions and asked them to debate civilly so he could make decisions to best guide our young nation. Follow in Washington’s footsteps; surround yourself with bright people, be a good listener and debate civilly, and at the end of the day, know it’s possible to love people you disagree with. God calls so many people from so many different backgrounds and cultures with so many different opinions to be the global, “big C” Church. This is no accident. I believe part of His reasoning

is to teach us to hold loosely what is temporary, and to hold tightly what is eternal. And if you really are trying to convince someone of something, first become their friend, as you’ll never convince an enemy. Like the Proverb says, “With patience, a ruler may be persuaded, and a gentle tongue will break a bone.”

Second, be well rounded; having received a classical Christian education you have been taught marvelous things. You are some of the most comprehensively educated high school graduates on the planet. You have studied a wide array of subjects and what’s more, you can make cross-discipline connections to link loosely related ideas. You have seen and understood many true, good, and beautiful things. You have learned how to learn. Don’t stop, not ever. The world has far too many wonderful details to stop learning. I learned





recently that the human body is made up of roughly 100 trillion cells (that's a 1 with 14 zeros). Each of which is dutifully performing a very specific job, the sum of which somehow make up you: A marvelous, embodied being filled with life by the breath of God. That's incredible!

We live in such a deeply interesting world that you should never really be bored. Be a polymath; study art, music, literature, history, languages, science, and everyone's favorite, math. Your expertise in one or two areas should lead you to humility. The more you know the more you realize there is to know.

Also, knowing you and how capable you are, I am confident that you will achieve amazing things. Even now you might feel the weight of performance, wondering how you'll ever measure up to the expectations on your shoulders. One goal, once slain, sprouts two more. Like Hercules' battle with the Hydra,

you may find yourself trapped in a battle of achievement. If you dwell on your early achievements they will weigh you down with pressure to keep achieving *or* your early failures will leave you feeling worthless.

In the words of Reverend Tim Keller, "the problem with self-esteem—whether it is high or low—is that every single day, we are in the courtroom." The gospel frees us from the courtroom of constantly ranking ourselves. We are defined by our relationships. At Heaven's gate, when asked why we should be let in, we're utterly sunk if we start listing anything we've done. We ought only to say, "I don't know, but Jesus said I could come." Jesus gives us the keys to the kingdom and *then* says, "Follow me." We were called before we were qualified.

So let your achievements and accolades surprise people. Be secretly amaz-

ing, and let your amazingness be a secret even to yourself. Endeavor to do amazing things while simultaneously forgetting about yourself. Anything less traps you on the hamster wheel of performance.

Philosopher and professional skateboarder Rodney Mullen says, "There's nothing better than being a beginner, and there's nothing worse than trying to guard what you own." To learn anything, or to actually change anything, or to help anybody, you need the freedom to fail, to be lame. Dwelling on the gospel makes us self-forgetful in all the right ways. Watching your videos from my desk as an observer in Espanol Tres, I think y'all are already wonderfully self-forgetful and have already found the great joy of being able to be lame. I mean that in the best possible way: Y'all are super weird, and I love it.

FINALLY, and perhaps most of all, be

joyful—you have every reason to be joyful! You are loved *and* as icing on the cake, you are tremendously capable. Emotions can feel circumstantial, like they're out of your control, and in the short term, they may be. But your mind is like a curated library. If you spend years contemplating good, true, and beautiful things, the only books in the library of your mind will be good, true, and beautiful.

The Bible is divine meditation literature; if you spend a lifetime contemplating it, your mind will literally be transformed. We like to believe we think through most of our decisions, but as acclaimed thinker Malcolm Gladwell asserts in his book *Blink*, and acclaimed graduate Madelyn Matlick asserted in her senior thesis, the majority of our decisions are made without thinking. Curating the library of your mind is vitally important to developing a character that will make good decisions that lead to joy. Having a character consistent with the decisions you make leads to living a life where your soul and mind are in harmony. ...

[I]n 2007, banjo virtuoso, Bela Fleck, did a tour around Africa playing with local artists and investigating the origins of the banjo. He titled the project "Throw down your heart." It's one of my favorite albums, and also great advice if you're seeking to live a life of meaning and beauty.

Jesus said to his disciples right before the cross

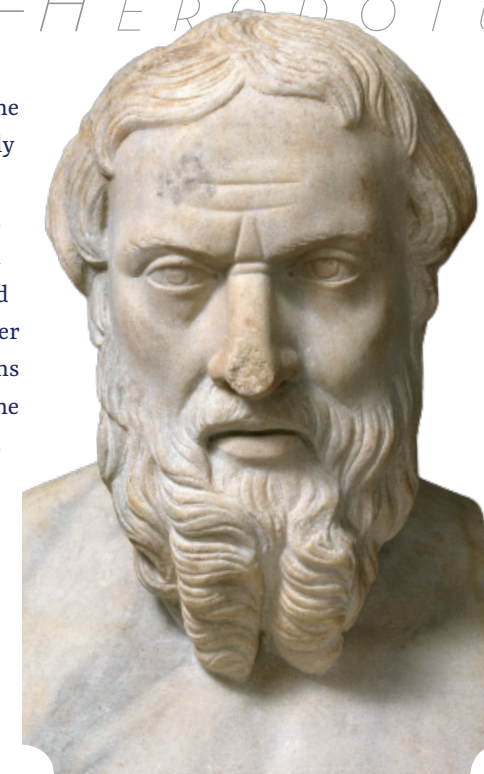
If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

Throw down your heart.

For a lot of my life I've been working under the assumption that throwing

down my heart, and taking up my cross, was all about delayed gratification. But the longer I live the more I realize the

Of all possessions  
a friend is the  
most precious.  
—HERODOTUS



take everything you love, know that you are on the cusp of a deep mystery. God provides life on the other side of loss, sacrifice, and death. These moments—as hard and heart-wrenching as they feel—are opportunities to trust God, to deepen your relationships with Him and those you're walking with.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus knew on the other side of the cross new life was waiting; and not just any new life, but life with his beloved, with you. Jesus tore the veil separating a life of temporary, meaningless striving from a life of eternal, compelling beauty. Jesus knew "the joy set before him" when he endured the cross. He knows that meaningful, beautiful life is on the other side of sacrifice, and he lovingly calls us into it. I don't know what your life will look like, or what trials you'll face, but I hope you walk humbly into a life of meaning and beauty.

Although this may feel like a hard stop after more than a decade of education, it isn't. It's a rocket launch. All the people surrounding you today have poured their lives into you, and when you blast off towards the rest of your lives know that you are from somewhere good, from a community of people that love you; and nothing can ever change that.

...

It's been said compound interest is the most powerful force in the world. When you invest money that earns profit which then gets re-invested, it creates a profit spiral. You have been invested in by teachers and parents and a broader community that loves you. We have bet the future on you. Multiply our efforts by investing in those who follow in your footsteps. Imagine if each of you positively influenced the lives of just one hundred people and those hundred do the same and so on, in just a few generations, we can change the world. —Peter Haile

Congratulations to the  
Veritas Christian Academy  
Class of 2022!





# THE LORD'S BOUNTY

*Nick Phillips, Rhetoric School Principal*

As we returned from Christmas break in January 2020, everything seemed to be going as planned in the Rhetoric School. Our seniors were eagerly anticipating their trip to Italy in March, girls were picking out their prom dresses, and the only unpleasant thing we could imagine was the usual late February/ early March doldrums before spring break. Of course, everything changed after spring break. Veritas hurriedly and successfully transitioned to online classes for the remainder of the year, prom and senior trip were canceled, and graduation was held outside in front of the school in July. "Unprecedented" became a dreaded adjective that upended our usual pattern of school life.

As we returned to school in August 2020, we were blessed to have in-person classes, but so much was still missed. Retreat, winter dance, prom, senior trip, sophomore college trip, and the fall drama production had to be canceled. Chapel was recorded and presented virtually in small groups. However, as we approached the end of the year, signs of normalcy began to return. We were able to celebrate Academic Awards as usual and our graduates enjoyed a relatively traditional ceremony, albeit with limited attendance.

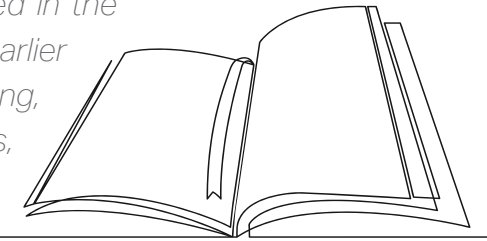
I remind us of these events as a contrast to this most recent school year. The Lord has blessed us with a return to normal school life. What we so longed for was brought back. In the words of the prophet Joel, God repaid us for the years the locusts had eaten. We began the year with retreat. Incoming freshmen and new students were eagerly sorted into their houses, and the student body bonded over three days at camp as we had in so many years past. We were able to have chapel in-person with music and corporate prayer to the glory of God. Our school enjoyed both a fall production of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and a spring performance of *The Wizard of Oz*. Our students happily attended the winter Holly Ball and



spring prom. Sophomores and juniors had the opportunity to tour colleges and learn what kind of school might be the best fit for them. And our seniors were able to travel to Greece, where they visited the places where the ancients strode and Paul taught. This was capped with a joyful graduation, complete with full public attendance and all the celebratory pomp due to our graduating class.

As a lifelong resident of the Appalachians, it's easy to let the grandeur of our region fall into the background of life, not paying attention to the beauty of a region that people travel from all over the world to visit. Comparatively, as an educator, it's easy to take the routine of a normal school year for granted. Having learned to live without that routine for over a year, I think I can speak for the entire school community that this year was one of hoped-for blessed normalcy. "What shall I return to the LORD, for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the LORD . . . I will offer you a thanksgiving sacrifice" (Psalm 116). Let us all thank God and lift our sacrifices of thanksgiving for the bounty of this year! 🙏

"BIBLICAL THEOLOGY is the interpretive perspective reflected in the way the biblical authors have presented their understanding of earlier Scripture, redemptive history, and the events they are describing, recounting, celebrating, or addressing in narratives, poems, proverbs, letters, and apocalypses." —Dr. James Hamilton



SIGHT — Victoria Weatherman, Class of 2023

Faith means to keep our sight of God. There are countless stories of faith being rewarded in the Bible, like the stories of Job and Ruth. "Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil." This quote from Proverbs 4:25-27 gives instructions on how we can be obedient and faithful to the Lord. "... you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor to the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth..." Romans 2:19 is another illustration of how having our sight on Christ manifests through our faith. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants." (Psalms 116:15) In HIS sight our faith is deemed precious. This is an example of vision used to describe God.

Sight relating to God appears as "his sight" or him being eyes. "I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame." In Job 29:15, the Lord describes himself as eyes to the blind indicating that He is the only one who can fill our needs. "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:18) Here, we see "in his sight" again. God has sight overall, and he knows we are sinful people by nature. There is no way to redemption but through him."

DARKNESS — Vincent Babcock, Class of 2023

In the Old Testament, Darkness was a primordial force that held dominion over a victimized people. In the early New Testament, Darkness was forced to hold back its influence in order to hide from obliteration at the hand of Christ. After the life of Christ in the later portion of the New Testament, Darkness was no longer forced to stand in waiting, yet it could not simply return to being the overarching primordial force it had once been due to the threat of the early church. The symbol of Darkness, similar to its physical representation, adapted the way it influenced the world. Rather than taking the form of a clearly defined enemy, it dug itself into hearts in the form of temptation and sin. Rather than posing a defined threat to Christians life, it posed an undefined threat to the Christian soul by distracting from the ideal instead of destroying it. This method would become the precursor to temptation as we know it today in the modern world. The entirety of this symbol is referred to as "Darkness," yet the term is easily interchangeable with Satan in terms of its spiritual status.

Satan had dominion over the world prior to Christ, yet he was caged by the power of Christ's influence out of fear of being overcome. Just as Darkness changed to better fit the time, so too has he. Over the course of the entirety of the Bible, Satan has slowly sharpened the knives of temptation. Their severity and purpose have stayed the same, yet their appearances and methods have evolved to best fit their victim and the era they live in. In the end, this evolution is nothing more than a panicking response to being destroyed. It was no mistake that Jesus is often referred to as the Light of the World through which no Darkness can ever hope to exploit the faithful again."

ASCENSION & DESCENSION

— Jake Miller, Class of 2022

Finally, ascension and descension are used to represent human movement. This use of descension appears in Psalm 22:19, "All the rich of the Earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him- those who cannot keep themselves alive." The human movement in the downward direction embodies an unideal image and reveals the inevitability of human death and our physical bodies becoming dust. Ascension in the context of human movement is once again used in Psalms where it says, "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?" (Psalm 24:3). The visualization of ascending the mountain of the Lord while worshiping shows our change in position while being in contact with God (good is high). This function of ascension and descension is carried into the New Testament when Jesus states in his parable of the wedding guest, "When you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the guests." (Luke 14:10). Not only does this verse portray our inherent understanding of high being desirable and low being undesirable, but it also shows the paradoxical nature of being humble and lowering oneself to ascend further. Luke 14:10 also appeals to the historical traditions of its audience to further their understanding. Finally, Paul connects the symbol of ascension and descension when he says, "Since then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." Paul ties together our new understanding of Christ, mending the relationship between good and evil, and therefore providing passage for humans to ascend (no longer just for God to descend unto us)." 🙏





The senior trip to Greece was everything I imagined it to be and more. Studying the language in school is great, but actually immersing myself in the culture was incredible. Our tour guide was fantastic, and he made sure to show us sights like Agamemnon's castle, the Olympic Games stadium, and several ancient castles. My favorite location was Agamemnon's castle in Mycenae, because I studied the *Iliad* in Greek class. Having the opportunity to visit the foundation of Western history was the perfect way to end my education at Veritas, and I

am so grateful to have that opportunity by the generosity of so many Veritas families. —Emma Wilde

•••••  
 [It] will remain one of my most memorable experiences. From the morning hikes to the late-night Greek cuisine, there was not a minute of our time there that wasn't educational and enjoyable. Being able to interact with the same stone and landscapes that thinkers thousands of years ago constructed was surreal. It was indeed a global capstone to my time at Veritas. But perhaps the most impactful part of our trip was

being able to spend an entire week with my friends and teachers. Through the charity of Veritas families, we were able to live in luxury during our time there. Treated with gorgeous local beds and breakfasts, we slept safely and comfortably. Additionally, our tour guide Adam was spectacular. His ability to recount thousands of years of history while we drove from city-state to city-state was mesmerizing. I'm incredibly grateful for the time I spent with my friends and chaperones and will never forget it. —Jake Miller







## A WALK IN THE CLOUDS AT THE WORLD'S EDGE



The word Gala has its roots in a family of words filled with the meaning of festivity and rejoicing. The last time Veritas had a live, in person, Gala was 2018. On Friday April 29th, more than two hundred members of the Veritas community celebrated so much good. We had a lot of talking, laughing, and fellowshiping to make-up. It was all so wonderful.

Spending an evening together, we celebrated God's great workings and support for the next generation of Warriors. The event also included a delicious dinner, live music from our very own band "Trivium," and a very encouraging talk from a graduate from the first class at Veritas. Our Gala provided the perfect opportunity to draw us together and unite VCA in the common goal of enhancing our school and the education of our children.

At Veritas, we are so grateful to God for all of the "behind the scenes" workers who served for months. As you can imagine, an event such as the Gala has many moving parts requiring hundreds of hours of attention. Thank you for a wonderful evening! We are also so thankful for all of you who invited friends, family and acquaintances. It was obvious by the generosity of all present that Point Lookout was filled with those who have a heart for our school's vision.

We are so appreciative of all of the event sponsors who laid such a great foundation for the entire event. It was clear that the Gala was immersed in prayers. We prayed for months that God would bless all of our efforts and that the spirit of generosity would be ever present. God was so good to Veritas. In addition to raising funds to upgrade the bathrooms, we were able to raise money that will go toward our School Within a School and tuition assistance.

We are so thankful to every single person who gave of their time, energy, and financial resources. The Gala is so much more than a fundraising event; it is a celebration of God's goodness and where He will lead us into the future. Thank you all for joining us for this most wonderful evening filled with good will and merriment. 🙏



## WARRIOR STRONG

Veritas athletics enjoyed another year of great successes on the field and court. We had great team results, as well as individual performances that merited postseason accolades. Competing to win is important and something we strive to do at Veritas, but more important is our opportunity to bear witness to the character of Christ. Our coaches and athletes did a fantastic job of pointing people to Christ through their competition, and we will continue to strive to represent the Veritas community in a Christ-like way.

### STATE CHAMPIONS

Girls' Varsity Soccer

### STATE RUNNERS-UP:

Boys' Varsity Soccer  
Girls' Varsity Cross Country  
Varsity Golf  
Boys' JV Basketball  
Girls' JV Basketball

### PLAYERS OF THE YEAR:

Jake Miller (Boys' V Soccer)  
Hannah Stage (Girls' V CC)

### ALL-STATE:

Anna Randles (Girls' Varsity Soccer)  
Caroline Thompson (Girls' Varsity Soccer)  
Emma Wilde (Girls' Varsity Soccer)  
Hannah Stage (Girls' Varsity Cross Country)  
Caroline Thompson (Girls' Varsity Cross Country)  
Kenley Nix (Girls' Varsity Cross Country)  
Sam Burns (Boys' Varsity Cross Country)  
Emma Stover (Varsity Golf)

### CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS:

Boys' Varsity Soccer  
Girls' Varsity Cross Country  
Girls' Varsity Basketball  
Varsity Golf  
Girls' JV Basketball

### UNDEFEATED SEASON:

MS Golf

### ALL-CONFERENCE:

Jake Miller (Boys' Varsity Soccer)  
Charlie Brake (Boys' Varsity Soccer)  
Brandon Kilpin (Boys' Varsity Soccer)  
Emma Wilde (Varsity Volleyball)  
Jarrett Nadeau (Boys' Varsity Cross Country)  
Hannah Stage (Girls' Varsity Cross Country)  
Caroline Thompson (Girls' Varsity Cross Country)  
Brooke Miller (Girls' Varsity Basketball)  
Kaitlyn Miller (Girls' Varsity Basketball)  
Aldric McMahan (Boys' Varsity Basketball)  
Eli Robbins (Boys' Varsity Basketball)  
Emma Stover (Varsity Golf)  
Copeland Goodson (Varsity Golf)

*Special congratulations to Aldric McMahan, who received a basketball scholarship and will continue his academic and athletic career at Montreat College.*







 Veritas Christian Academy

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