

Weekly Eagle News – Middle School

Hello Middle School Community,

“Not just a choir, but a worship experience” is how the Calvin University Gospel Choir describes themselves. Thursday, our middle school students were blessed with the opportunity to participate in a beautiful picture of God’s kingdom with “every nation, tribe, people and language” singing, clapping, and dancing in worship. The song “Revelation 19:1” is still echoing in my head and I will always remember the scenes of our students jumping with joy to the song “Days of Elijah” at the conclusion of chapel.

I found special significance in that last song because, thanks to Mr. Jeff Mercer, “Days of Elijah” has been a chapel favorite at Redlands Christian for nearly 20 years. What a testament to God’s faithfulness that many of our middle and upper school students, who sang and danced to that song back on the old wooden bleachers in the Church Street gym, had another opportunity to celebrate God through that song last week. (By the way, be sure to check out @aca_rcs or @calvingospelchoir on social media for clips of last week’s worship experience.)

One of my goals for middle school students is to develop a wholistic approach to worship. Mr. Mercer continues to do a phenomenal job mentoring middle school students in leading worship at our chapels. The fact that we have 6th, 7th, and 8th graders up front singing and playing instruments is an amazing gift and blessing to our community. However, as amazing as these experiences are, it is also important to remember that worship is not only reserved for chapels and special assemblies. Every area of life provides an opportunity to worship and glorify God.

This can be challenging for all of us because it is so easy to compartmentalize our faith. We often focus on following Jesus and worshipping God for an hour on Sundays at church, or for our students during chapel, life groups, or Bible class. I am so grateful for so many students who are worshipping and glorifying God daily through their hard work in class, their respect for teachers, their artistic, musical, and athletic abilities, and through their kindness and care for their classmates.

Unfortunately, not all students are consistently living worshipful and God-glorifying lives and I have been disappointed by a rise in poor decisions and behaviors I have seen over the last few weeks. During chapel on Wednesday, I challenged all our middle school students to reflect on their individual role and responsibility in shaping the culture of our school. I explained to them that I do not expect perfection from anyone, but I do have high expectations and will hold students accountable as needed.

One way you can partner with our faculty and staff in this area is to have regular conversations with your student about whether they are having a positive or negative impact in the classroom and on our middle school culture. Are they leading others in a positive direction? Are they surrounded by friends who encourage good decisions and good behavior? If your student is struggling with how to navigate any challenging situation, I would love to connect and partner with you to help them through it.

News and notes:

- Friday was the end of the third quarter. Report cards will be emailed out on Friday, March 15. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your student’s classwork, please reach out to the teacher first. If no resolution can be reached, then feel free to reach out to the office.
- March 16-23 is the 8th Grade Trip to Washington DC, Gettysburg, Philadelphia, and New York City. Please be in prayer for health and safe travel for our group. We have 141 8th graders, parents, and faculty on the trip. Mr. Van Soelen will be the point person, with assistance from Mrs. Yost, Ms. Mendoza, Mrs. Rogstad, Mr. DeJong, and Mr. Villanueva.
- With almost all the 8th graders off campus, next week (March 18-22) provides the 6th and 7th graders the opportunity to have a modified class schedule with more time to work on and prepare 6th grade country reports and 7th grade Christian history projects. Keep an eye out for communication from your student’s history teacher for more details.

- Please continue to be in prayer for 8th Grader David Stan. Thankfully David was approved to receive the experimental chemotherapy drug. This does mean he will be in Houston for an extended period, which obviously presents housing challenges. Please pray fervently for David and his family and if you feel so led, you can support them financially [here](#).

Key Dates:

- March 16 – 23: 8th Grade Washington DC Trip
- March 25 – April 1: Spring Break/Easter Monday
- April 12: Friendship Games (minimum day for LS/MS only, MS dismissal 12 PM)
- April 12: Middle School Spring Dance 6-9 PM
- April 26: Forum Festival (7th-8th Band, Choir, MS Jazz Band)
- May 22: 8th Grade Promotion – 3 PM at the University of Redlands Chapel

Have a fantastic week,

Matt Wiers
MS Principal