

The Lion's Epistle

Serving the community of Faith Christian School

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Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Michelle Ortiz

On January 15, 1929, a man who would change America forever was born; his name was Martin Luther King, Jr. Every year on the third Monday of January, Americans look back on the his great work, and how he, along with many other civil rights activists, revolutionized America. This holiday reminds us to commemorate his legacy.

In the early and mid-20th century, the United States of America was a very different country than what it is today. Most stores, buses, restaurants, schools, and bathrooms were separated based on race, making segregation common, especially in the South. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born to Martin Luther King, Sr. and Alberta Williams in Atlanta, Georgia. While growing up, MLK, Jr. was heavily influenced by his father, a preacher at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Growing up in the South, King Jr. was no stranger to prejudice. In 1944, at age 15, he spent a summer in Connecticut, which marked his first look at race relations outside of the South. During his stay, he wrote this in a letter to his parents, "Negroes and whites go [to] the same church... never [thought] that a person of my race could eat anywhere."

As he continued his education and at the urging of his father, he decided to enter the ministry. MLK, Jr. then began to attend the Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania where he studied theology for the next three years. He also was introduced to the philosophy of Mohandas Gandhi, which advocated peaceful protests and nonviolent solutions to problems. King would eventually become pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a crowd during a civil rights march in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963. (Original black and white negative by Rowland Scherman. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration).

After Rosa Parks was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger, King was approached by a small civil rights activist group. He soon found himself the appointed leader of the newly founded Montgomery Improvement Association, in which he would lead various boycotts and peaceful demonstrations to encourage civil rights.

From 1960 to 1965, King gained the attention of various media outlets, which he n America today. Though not given an official holiday right away, in 1968, a US representative from Michigan, John Conyers, proposed a King holiday bill. It attracted the attention of political groups such as the Congressional Black Caucus, who included it in their reform agenda. Finally, on November 3, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the legislation officially making the third Monday of January Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

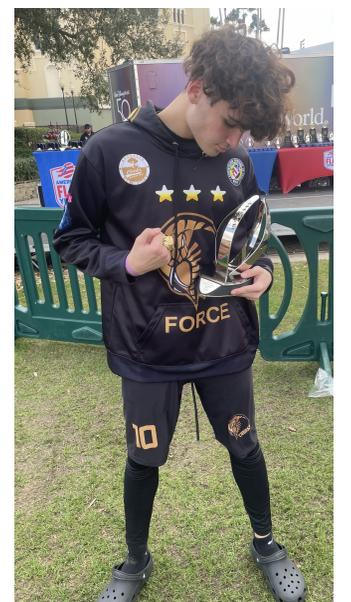
FCS Students Shine



Senior Kilee Goss recently took first place in the Early Childhood Education division of the district level Skills USA event. Kilee will move on to the state competition to be held April 12 - 14, Using the book, *If You Give a Dog a Donut*, Kilee designed an academic lesson plan and delivered it before a panel of judges in order to secure her victory. FCS will be cheering her on to victory when she goes to the state competition.

Sweeter than a Super Bowl win is a victory for Noah Grauso and the flag football team, the Pocono Cobras. In January, they went to Orlando, Florida to participate in the televised national level Flag Football Championship.

After a series of losses on the first day of competition, the Cobras rallied on day two to win their playoff game and then the championship. The staff of *The Lion's Epistle* wishes to congratulate Noah and his fellow team members on their success!



Special thanks to our sponsors for this edition: Mr. & Mrs. David Kusiak and Mr. & Mrs. Laird Thomas!

Interested in sponsoring *The Lion's Epistle*? Contact thomask@fcslions.org for more information on how you can support journalism at Faith Christian School.

Girls' Varsity Volleyball Returns to FCS

by Megan Erwin

Something exciting is happening during the spring semester of 2023 at Faith Christian School! For the first time since 2017, FCS will be having a Faith Christian School Girls' Varsity Volleyball Team for 8th through 12th grade girls. This past fall, freshmen Daniella Fortuna and Falon Greenzweig expressed a desire to have a volleyball team this school year. Faith Christian School's Athletic Director, Mrs. Mary Ellen Borrell, told them to find a coach. The girls suggested this job to none other than the high school English teacher, Mrs. Kathi Thomas.

After some consideration, Mrs. Thomas agreed to coach the team and a meeting was held in her room on January 12th, attended by interested students. There were ten girls at this meeting, excluding some who were absent or helping with class fundraisers. Based on this turnout, it was clear there would indeed be enough people to hold a team this year. Looking ahead, practices begin Tuesday, February 28th and will run from 2:30 - 4:15 pm, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in the school gym. Home games will be played at the Forks Township Community Center.

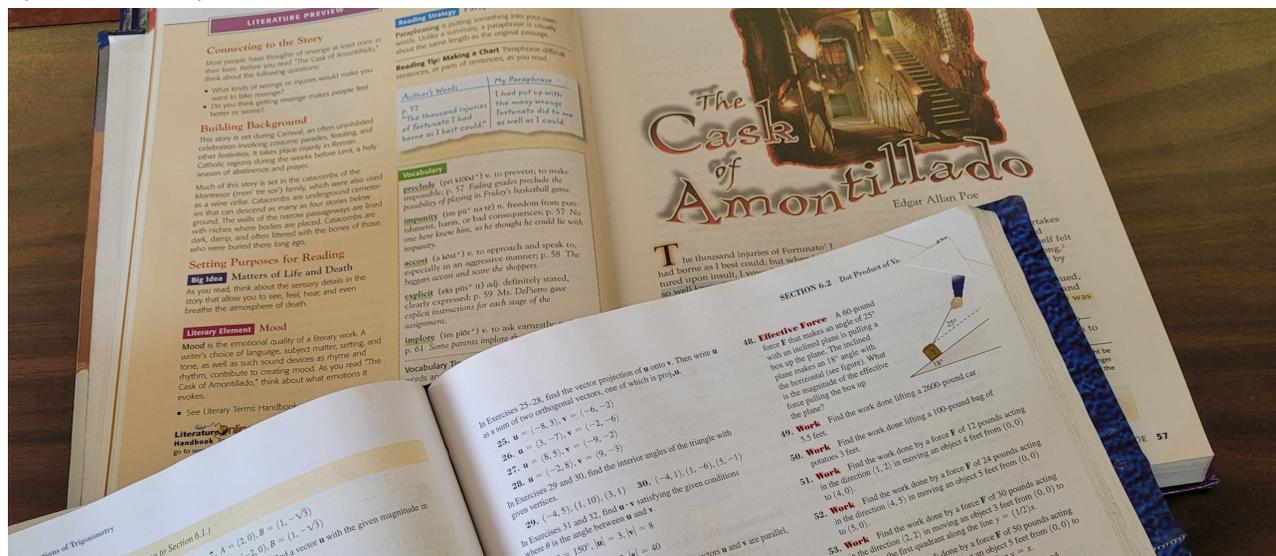
This is an excellent opportunity for all those involved, and any girl in grades 8 - 12 still on the fence about playing volleyball should be encouraged to take part. Everyone should keep the girls in their thoughts and prayers, praying that they have a very successful season.



Stock photo by Raja Tilikian. Used with permission.

Education in America in Jeopardy?

By Connor Roddy and Kathleen Thomas



On March 11, 2020, a pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization, resulting in almost a year and a half of lockdowns, increasing anxiety over sickness, and, as many experienced, virtual schooling and online meetings. The large impact of COVID-19 can be most evidently seen in the education of young students. There was much speculation in 2021 about the repercussions of online schooling, and 2022 assessment data shows the grim results. Based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), students in the United States are academically struggling.

According to the *The Nation's Report Card* press release on Oct 24, 2022, "A majority of states saw scores decline for fourth- and eighth-graders in mathematics and reading between 2019 and 2022." In 2019, average math scores for grade 4 were at 241, and in 2022, grade 4 students scored an average 236 points. A 5 point difference is a big cause for concern. The same has also been seen in the area of reading comprehension skills. Average reading test scores for 4th grade dropped by 3 points. Schools across the nation showed similar declines in 8th grade mathematics and reading scores. No states showed increased test results in either reading or mathematics when scores were compared.

Faith Christian School is feeling some of the impact. School principal, Mrs. Leeann Long stated, "We still met our learning targets," but she echoed concerns that align with NAEP score studies. "Kids hit the hardest were emerging readers," those children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. Entrance testing

of students transferring into FCS also indicated signs of difficulty. Kids transferring in tend to struggle the most with math.

Two FCS students, Hill Wilson, who has attended FCS since kindergarten, and Shaela Maldonado, a recent transfer student, discussed their academic experiences prior to, during and after the pandemic. According to Hill, the pandemic impacted most his math grades. Both students said that there was little to no class interaction during the pandemic. Learning, for many, was quite difficult under lockdown circumstances. "It was very hard to understand what was taught," Shaela acknowledged when asked about her own personal experience.

Connection within the school community is a key part of learning, and that was sacrificed during the pandemic. This could be one of many factors that contributed to declining test scores. Other factors, which are known to have exacerbated already challenging learning conditions included a lack of technology available to students for online learning, less direct instruction time, and a lack of professional development for teachers thrust into virtual teaching with little to no experience.

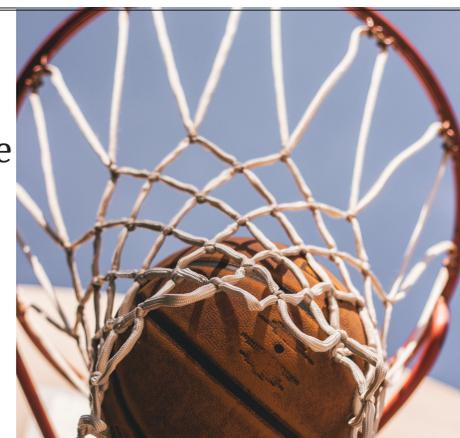
The solution to the problem is multi-faceted. According to Commissioner Peggy G. Carr of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, "It's clear we all need to come together—policymakers and community leaders at every level—as partners in helping our educators, children, and families succeed."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, February 20th:
Presidents' Day - School will be CLOSED!

Thursday, March 2nd:
Parent/Teacher Conferences
11:00 AM dismissal for students

3 V 3 Basketball Tournament
Friday, March 10th @ 5:30 PM -
Students may sign up to participate
during homeroom - \$3/player.
Spectators are welcome!
Admission is \$1/person or
\$5/family.
Come out and join the fun!



The Horror of the Holocaust: Honoring the Victims

By Stephen Williams

"The missionaries of Christianity had said in effect: You have no right to live among us as Jews. The secular rulers who followed had proclaimed: You have no right to live among us. The German Nazis at last decreed: "You have no right to live." - Raul Hilberg

Hitler and the Nazis were ruthless and brutal anti-Semites who wrongly accused and claimed that German Jews had betrayed Germany during World War I, contributing to its defeat. This prejudice would soon become the main reason why World War II started. Anti-Semitism is quite literally defined as, "the hatred of Jews." As World War II began, the hatred and criticism expressed only became worse. Prior to WWI, in 1933, the first concentration camp, Dachau, was declared active and began to hold thousands of Jews. From that point on, more concentration camps were established and more Jews were tortured and persecuted.

WWII ended when Germany and Japan finally surrendered and signed the Paris Peace Treaties, but the suffering of the Jews, the ones who suffered day and night for years in the concentration camps all around Europe wasn't yet over. Between 1944 and 1945, Jews and political leaders in concentration camps were liberated, and the last concentration camp, Stutthof, was shut down on May 9, 1945.

It is to honor the memories of those who suffered and died under the Nazi regime that International Holocaust Remembrance Day was established. On January 27th, the date in 1945 in which the prisoners of the Auschwitz camp were liberated, people take time each year to honor and remember the six million Jewish victims and millions of other minority and disabled victims of Nazism by holding educational programs about the Holocaust in an effort to help prevent future genocides.

Here are some suggestions for learning more about this international tragedy:

1. **Visit historical landmarks**, which bear witness to the Holocaust. These sites include camps, memorials, and museums where visitors are able to interactively experience pieces of the victims' stories.
2. **Explore the web.** Many websites are filled with information about the Holocaust and some even give virtual tours of museums and historical sites for those who cannot travel.
3. **Read a book.** *The Diary of Anne Frank* is a first hand account of one girl's experiences during the Holocaust, and there are other notable Jewish authors, such as Elie Wiesel, who have also documented their stories.



The faces of the victims are shown on display at the Memorial at Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, Israel. December 2018.

Photograph by Eelco Bohtlingk, used with permission.

Meadow Moritz Knows How to Spell S-U-C-C-E-S-S

By Michelle Ortiz

S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G B-E-E: what does that spell? Spelling Bee! January 9th saw the annual spelling bee here at Faith Christian School, featuring 14 contestants from grades 2-8. Competitors included second graders Ian Dudinyak and Anderson Little, Mallayah DeRojas and Natalie Marek from third grade, Mason Bernard and Alex Kresge from fourth grade, Faith Light and Abigail Shipman from fifth grade, sixth graders Meadow Moritz and Leah Roometua, Jaymz Huertas and Jayla Lane from grade seven, and Lucas Gonzalez and Caleb Stender from eighth grade. Leading the event, working as both the announcer and judge, was Principal Leann Long assisted by two additional judges, high school English teacher Mrs. Kathleen Thomas and fourth grade teacher Mrs. Kathy Kusiak.

The spelling bee lasted a total of twenty-six rounds, with an extra practice round at the at the



start. Each of our fourteen contestants made it past the practice round with ease, but steadily the number of spellers slowly dwindled. By round 19, only three contestants remained: Leah, Meadow, and Mason. Each of them was faced with difficult words to spell, but Meadow Moritz won first prize, spelling the champion word "seminary." She will advance to the ACSI Divisional Spelling Bee to be held later this school year.

The image on the left shows the contestants, receiving instructions from Mrs. Long, during the prep-round. Below, FCS Spelling Bee winner Meadow Moritz (left) is congratulated by Mrs. Long (to the right).





National Honor Society Inducts New Members

The Faith Christian School chapter of the National Honor Society welcomed its newest inductees on January 31, 2023. Membership in National Honor Society is based on a student's ability to represent well the four pillars of the organization: scholarship, service, leadership and character. This year's inductees (pictured from left to right) are sophomores Joeraan Williams and Joseph Blair, along with juniors Michelle Ortiz and Connor Roddy. Students at Faith must first meet academic criteria to be considered, and then must provide evidence of each of the other required areas through a rigorous application process. Congratulations to this year's inductees and all of the NHS members, who serve as role models in the school and community. The FCS chapter regularly participates in sponsoring service projects and school events.

Photo courtesy of Mrs. April Martin, NHS Advisor

Give a Cheer, Spirit Week is Here!

by Megan Erwin

Faith Christian School will be having its annual Spirit Week this February, from Monday the 13th to Friday the 17th! During this week, school students will be dressing up for five different theme days to raise school spirit and gain points for their class in this school wide competition. The class that has the most points at the end of the week from the percent of their class that participated in the theme days will win a prize. Along with the theme days, there will be a few other activities and fundraisers for the students to enjoy.

On Monday, February 13, the theme was Matching Monday. Students dressed up with a partner or in groups to match one another.

On Tuesday, February 14, the theme will be Tacky Tourist Day. Students will dress as if they are tourists visiting another country or place; hats, binoculars, cargo shorts, Hawaiian or print shirts, or other touristy clothes will be allowed and should be used. However, no swimsuits or immodest clothing will be allowed, and shorts cannot be above the knee.

On Wednesday, February 15, the theme will be Wacky Wednesday. Students should wear

crazy clothes and hair. These clothes should be modest and without writing, but they do not have to match.

On Thursday, February 16, the theme will be Semi-formal Thursday. Students should dress to impress, wearing formal attire. Dress code rules will still apply on this day.

On Friday, February 17, the theme will be Class Color Day. Each class will be given a specific class color to wear that day. Kindergarten and 12th grade students will wear blue, 1st and 11th grade students will wear white, 2nd and 10th grade students will wear black, 3rd and 9th grade students will wear red, 4th and 8th grade students will wear orange, 5th and 7th grade students will wear green, and 6th grade students will wear purple. Students will also be allowed to wear dress code jeans and sweatpants on this day. All Faith Christian School students and faculty should be very excited for this week, as it will raise school spirit and be a very enjoyable and fun week for all those involved.

SPREAD the WORD!

Faith Christian School

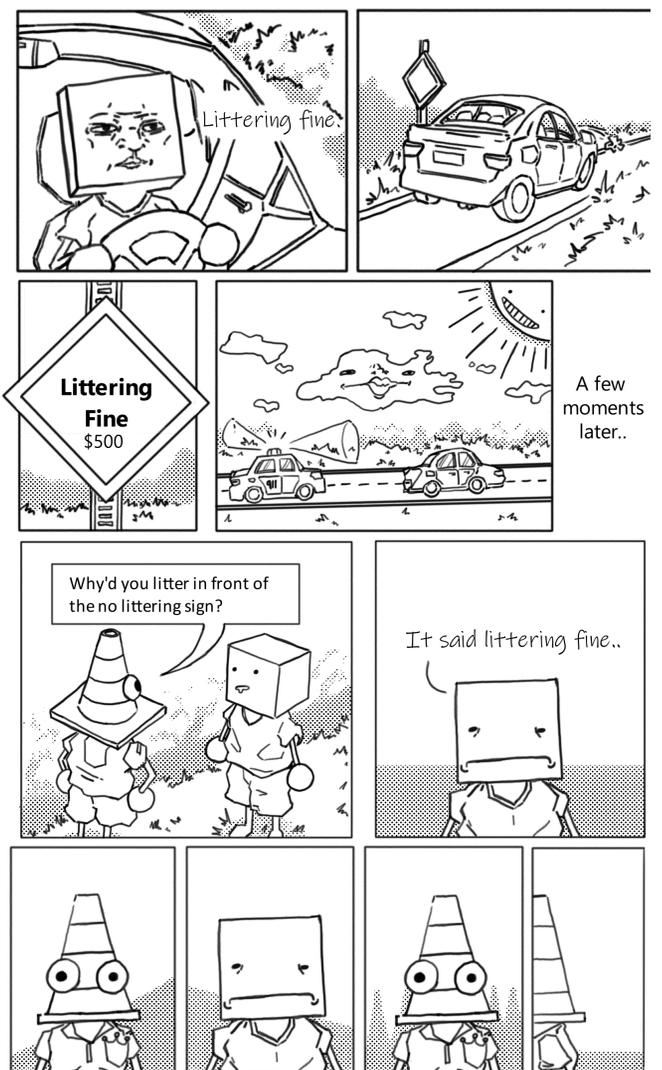
Open House - February 23rd

7:00 - 8:30 PM

A GREAT place to GROW!



BLOCKHEAD by Connor Roddy



Don't miss out on your chance to wear authentic FCS apparel! Visit fcslions.org and click the school apparel link to buy your gear!

