



THE LION'S EPISTLE

ISSUE 6, JANUARY 2024 EDITION

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars and keep track of these upcoming school events!

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day - January 15th
- 3rd Quarter Begins - January 19th
- Lego Club - January 17th
- Bake Sale - January 29th and 30th
- 100th Day of School - January 31st
- Jersey Day - February 9th
- Super Bowl - February 11th
- Spirit Week - February 12th - 16th
- Spirit Day - February 17th
- Lego Club - February 21st

B-A-M-B-O-O-Z-L-E-D

By Stephen Williams

On January 28, the annual Faith Christian School Spelling Bee occurred during the school day. The Spelling Bee started at 10:00 and was watched by all the elementary, middle school, and high school students. The students and staff were extremely excited and ready to watch the event. The competition was similar; the match-up was intense, and each contestant studied and memorized for hours to remember each word they were given. The competitors this year spanned from 2nd grade to 8th grade. The students who participated were Alanna Wells (2), Adam Miklovich (2), Anderson Little (3), Kaden Beresk (3), Georgie Lago (4), Lily Sapienza (4), Mason Bernard (5), Alex Kresge (5), Abby Shipman (6), Jaevaon Williams (6), Meadow Moritz (7), Josiah Ortiz (7), Akyla Thomas (8), and Aliah Laurent (8). The competition was tough, but there was only one winner. The top 5 contestants of the Spelling Bee were Aliah Laurent, coming in 5th place, Akyla Thomas coming in 4th place, Mason Bernard coming in 3rd place, Josiah Ortiz coming 2nd place, and finally, the 1st place winner having 12 words spelled correctly in a row, Jaevaon Williams! The final word that gave Jaevaon the win was "bamboozled." Jaevaon now has the opportunity to go to the Spelling Bee regionals and then to state! Congratulations to every contestant who participated in the Spelling Bee, and good luck to Jaevaon in moving forward to higher spelling levels!



FOOD DRIVE RESULTS

By Hope Light

Over the holiday season, the National Honor Society asked each class to contribute to a food and clothing drive. The NHS saw wonderful participation from the student body, and by the end of the drive, the amount of donations far exceeded expectations! The donations benefitted food pantries and clothes closets run by a few of the churches represented by the students and faculty of FCS. The proceeds from the bake sale conducted by the NHS earlier in the year are also being used for the bake sale. A portion of those funds will be used for the ice cream party promised to the class with the greatest participation. The remaining funds—over two hundred dollars—will be given to the food pantries benefitted by the drive. As for the winning class and the runners-up: The senior class placed first by far, bringing in well over twenty large boxes and bags of clothes, food, and hygiene items. The eighth graders came in next, lining the front of their classroom with bags of donations. Sixth grade came in close after eighth grade. Congratulations to the senior class, and a huge thank you to everyone who participated!



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YEARS OF RESOLUTIONS

By Connor Roddy

Every new year, after the celebrations have passed and everybody has gone home, many people prepare to make a New Year resolution - a goal set by a person to be reached by the end of the year. The problem, however, is that many of these New Year's resolutions go unfulfilled, or aren't even started in the first place! Only 38.5% of US adults set New Year's resolutions each year, while 9% fulfill their goals. Worse yet is that 23% quit within the first week. So then why were New Year's resolutions even created if they aren't brought out, and where did they come from in the first place?

While brief, the history of New Year's resolutions spans over a long time. In fact, it is believed that these resolutions were first celebrated by the Babylonians over 4,000 years ago! Not only this, but they were the first to celebrate the new year too. The Babylonians would celebrate around March, rather than January, and crown a new king, or honor the current one, during Akitu, a 12-day festival. Their resolutions were often promises to their gods which, upon being fulfilled, would put them in higher regard to their idols. This practice was adapted later by the Romans in 46 B.C., with Rome becoming the first nation to celebrate New Year on January 1st. The Roman's celebration was to dedicate promises to the two-faced god, Janus, who was the basis for the name of the month of January. Romans continued to recognize January as the new year and eventually, after Rome's inevitable downfall, Christians much later refashioned the tradition to their own religious views. In 1740, a Covenant Renewal Service was held on New Year's Day thanks to John Wesley, an English man who happened to be the founder of Methodism. Their celebrations, honoring God, often came with many hymns, singing, and scripture readings.

Such traditions are still carried out today, especially by various small congregations. Others nowadays use New Year's resolutions for other purposes, like focusing on hitting the gym or learning new hobbies. New Year's resolutions are not only important presently, but also historically. Whatever a person's reason for having a resolution is, however, the most important thing is to fulfill them!



NEW YEAR'S WORD SEARCH

Use the word bank below to search for each hidden holiday word!

P	N	G	E	O	B	E	G	I	N	V	N	E
A	N	R	R	A	G	Y	I	O	V	U	E	P
R	P	U	C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	E	R
T	L	M	Y	E	S	C	O	T	U	A	R	E
Y	F	I	R	E	W	O	R	K	S	N	A	D
U	R	D	N	O	D	N	L	U	S	T	E	I
M	A	N	K	C	D	F	E	U	T	I	R	C
E	R	I	C	H	Y	E	S	G	T	C	A	T
T	E	G	B	A	Y	T	D	O	Y	I	H	I
A	L	H	E	N	I	T	L	E	L	P	O	O
R	H	T	U	G	T	I	H	I	C	A	O	N
O	S	O	P	E	O	E	L	R	N	T	B	U
Y	N	O	I	T	C	E	L	E	T	E	U	O

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| WORD BANK | Resolution | Party | Anticipate |
| Fireworks | Prediction | Confetti | Change |
| Midnight | Election | Celebrate | Begin |

CELEBRATING MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

By Hope Light

Every third Monday in January, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated across the United States. The holiday was made official by President Ronald Reagan in November of 1983 and has been celebrated by millions of Americans ever since. Dr. King was at the forefront of the civil rights movement between 1955 and 1988. During this time, he fought for equal rights for all Americans, regardless of skin color. Though he held many beliefs not in line with biblical Christianity, Dr. King drew valuable ideas on love and equality from God's word. Scripture is full of concepts such as the inherent value of all people created in God's image, the importance of humble love for the Christian, and the equality of all under God—Jews, Gentiles, men, women, slaves, the free, and, as applied in the work of Dr. King, Caucasian and African Americans. These ideas, along with many others, inspired and further motivated Dr. King's work and advocacy. Among the ideas central to his work was that of nonviolent resistance. Dr. King, along with other civil rights activists, devoted themselves to disrupting the status quo of racism and segregation without using violence. They used protests, sit-ins, and other forms of civil disobedience to resist injustice in accordance with Scripture and conscience, but without harming others.

Unfortunately, on April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. He had traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to support striking sanitation workers and to speak with Southern Christian leaders. While standing on a balcony at his hotel, he was shot and killed. Three days later, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a day of mourning to be observed across the nation. Businesses and schools were closed, and events were postponed. Despite his untimely death, Dr. King has had a massive impact on America as we know it. During and after his life, laws were passed and attitudes were changed to decrease discrimination and promote justice. As students enjoy a day off from school this Monday, let's remember the deeper meaning of the holiday and appreciate how Dr. King and his fellow civil rights activists have influenced lives today.

NEW ELECTIVES

By Hope Light

With the first semester drawing to an end, many middle and high school students will see some changes in their classes. A few electives are ending for the second semester, and new classes will begin. Even students who didn't previously sign up could have new electives to look forward to if they complete an add/drop form to join an elective by the second week of the semester. Some new classes starting include Personal Finance with Mr. Dugan for juniors and seniors and Advanced Technology with Miss Dempsey, also for juniors and seniors. Students may also join electives that have been happening throughout the year.

Sixth through twelfth graders may join chorus or band with Mrs. Simpson to expand their musical skills.

Ninth through twelfth grades may join Contemporary Crafts or Art Portfolio to showcase and refine their artistic talent. Another high school elective, Yearbook with Miss Dempsey, allows students to take part in creating a physical representation of the events and memories of the year. High schoolers who join Praise Team with Mrs. Simpson will be able to lead the student body in worship during chapels. A more versatile high school elective is Teacher/Office Assistant, which can be done with any elementary teacher or the office during any available period. This is a great opportunity for older students to assist school leadership and guide younger students.

Juniors and seniors may join Newspaper Journalism with Miss Dempsey and take part in creating these publications! They may also join Fine Arts with Mrs. Martin to explore new areas of art each quarter. If you're interested in these classes, feel free to ask your teachers for more information and fill out an add/drop form to take part in these activities!



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BASKETBALL UPDATES

By Connor Roddy

The FCS basketball teams have been playing hard, pushing into 2024 with just as much energy. The high school team has had its ups and downs but it seems they have a breakthrough on January 11th, beating Nutley 59-42. Coach Christian has been working hard to train his team, giving them time to practice four days almost every week to be fit and ready to overcome their opponents, and now it's showing! Since the last edition, the high school team has also played up against Harmony, American, and Veritas. On the 18th of December, 2023, the high school team played up against Trinity. They were off to a rocky start but eventually picked up the pace and were closing in. Although FCS lost 41-49 in a close game, the high school team's players played excellently either way. On the 19th the high school team played against Harmony in another tough game and Veritas for their first game of 2024 on the 8th of January. The middle school teams, both boys and girls, have had a busy schedule as well with the start of 2024. Since the new year, they have played Trinity and Bergen, with the girls' middle school team also having played an additional game against Arrow. On January 19th, both of the middle school teams should also have an exciting game against Bergen, so it is encouraged for everybody to come and support these hard working teams! As always, continue to support our growing middle school teams and the hard-working high school team as they go through their season.



THOUGHTS FROM THE SENIORS

By Gloria James

The Newspaper Staff recently had the opportunity to interview the senior class about how they feel about their upcoming graduation and what they're looking forward to. Many of them said they were nervous about leaving FCS and will miss the friends they've made here. However, they are excited about the future and looking forward to various things. Here's a look at how some are feeling about the significant changes. One of the seniors, Serena, says she's "overall excited, but will miss everyone and hopes to stay connected. She also looks forward to going to the gym at college." Another senior, Stephen, says he "feels good but is trying to get ready for the new changes, such as getting used to working and having more responsibilities." He's excited about playing basketball in college. Being able to put their faith into practice and seeing how God will use them is something many seniors look forward to as well. Megan is "nervous to leave FCS behind because she's been here for so long, but excited to do new things and to see what God has in store for me." Laura felt similarly, saying, "I'm conflicted for sure, I think I'm excited to see what the Lord has in store for me, not only future-wise, but in growth." Completing high school isn't easy and can come with many challenges. After graduating, most people feel a sense of accomplishment. As a member of the newspaper staff and a senior myself, this is true. Shaela, another one of our seniors, "feels accomplished and excited to do new things on her own. She also looks forward to meeting new people and driving to new places." For the most part, despite being nervous, the seniors are looking forward to life after high school.



WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THIS ISSUE'S SPONSOR: THE SPINKS FAMILY

2024 PREDICTIONS

By Gloria James

With the new year starting, many people make new year's resolutions and wonder what will happen in the future. Even though we can never really know what's going to happen, there are some things we can predict may happen in 2024. One of the things to look out for is the weather. Will 2024 surpass 2023 as the hottest year on record? Yes, it probably will. According to the Financial Times, "This past year had some extreme heat, making it one of the hottest in 174 years of climate records, once the numbers are calculated. Many scientists, however, predict 2024 to be even warmer due to the 2023 heat being supported by the naturally occurring El Nino climate pattern." Another interesting topic is pop stars. Some wonder if female pop stars will out-earn the men in concert tours. "This probably won't be overall, but artists such as Taylor Swift's Eras tour became the first to exceed \$1 billion in revenues—surpassing Elton John's previous all-time record of \$939 million—and continues next year. Beyonce's Renaissance tour was this year's number two, earning \$580 million. X (formerly known as Twitter) may possibly go bankrupt. The Financial Times also tells us, "Elon Musk frequently uses warnings of bankruptcy to motivate; he did at Tesla and SpaceX." After an emotional outburst against X's advertisers, he may be reckless to think he can go through bankruptcy and still end up on top. Elon Musk fighting for X control through bankruptcy would be an interesting sequel after the drama-filled Twitter accusations. Some other news is that, along with the weather and pop culture predictions, there's also some sports predictions for 2024. One of them is that the Olympics will rebound or have higher viewership as compared to previous years. According to Richard Deitsch from The Athletic, "The Beijing Olympics in February 2022 were the least-watched Games in prime time on NBC ever, averaging 10.7 million viewers per night on television, with that number including all other viewing platforms. Tokyo, in the summer of 2021, was the previous lowest average, with 15.1 million TV viewers in prime time." The Olympics will be held in Paris this year, so this may make viewership higher despite the six-hour time zone difference. The Olympics aren't the only thing potentially getting higher viewership this year. Women's college volleyball continues to grow in viewership interest." Although we can't know everything that's gonna happen in 2024, these are some interesting predictions that just may come to pass.

ELECTION YEAR AGAIN

By Michelle Ortiz

2020 was a year full of many changes economically, socially, and even politically. Four years ago, Joe Biden was elected the 46th President of the United States of America. Since then America has evolved as a nation and now prepares to change again. 2024 marks the latest elections to come to the nation, leading to the major political parties preparing for it. Both parties have chosen their respective candidates; the Republican party declaring several candidates and the democratic party selecting current President Joe Biden. The Republican party has declared candidates that have become popular as of late, including Governor Ron DeSantis and, of course, the former President, Donald Trump. On part of the Democratic party, they have mostly pushed the campaign of Joe Biden. Though Biden has been met with little to no competition within the Democratic party, there is one declared candidate that has the following to challenge him. Current representative and now candidate for the 2024 election, Dean Phillips, presents himself as the "younger Biden" of sorts. Both him and Biden share many beliefs, but Phillips sets himself up as someone who is both younger and more fit for the presidency. In the months leading to this election, we will see these politicians compete in primaries to get on the final ballot. Although the Republican party has much more diversity and sheer size for who is running, they face one major issue. The popularity of Trump is not a surprise to most people. With Trump running for President again, many speculate that he may make it to the ballot by his supporters alone. Biden's second term may also pose an issue to any contenders in the Democratic party. With two very popular candidates on both party ends, many predict that there will be little contest in the running. However, these are only predictions. Looking further into the year, dozens of primaries are scheduled nationwide. Though most have yet to take place, voters still have a chance to make a difference. One major factor in this election would be the most recent generation of young voters. With new young voters coming of age, it is up to their votes to elect a new leader. Voters can check party campaign sites, social media, or mail to learn more about each of the candidates in the running. With this it is up to you to choose who would best lead the nation for the next four years. This year's decisions will last into 2028 and beyond.

MIDYEAR MELANCHOLIA

By Megan Erwin

High school can be very challenging for a multitude of reasons. Students face the pressures of everyday life while also trying to keep up with assignments and studying. They have deadlines to meet and important dates to mark while also trying to balance life outside of school. Though the environment and teaching at FCS are God-centered, the students still face many common struggles of the average high school student, especially around certain times of the year. Some of these struggles include stress, anxiety, and burnout.

Two FCS students from each high school class were asked a series of questions to determine how motivated they were around this time of the school year. When asked to name their least favorite part of the school year, half of the interviewees answered with midterms/finals. Semester 1 finals, or midterms as called by many students, can be a very difficult time during the school year. They come at a time when the students have just come back from break, and there are many long months ahead of them with little breaks in sight. Winter can also be a time when students experience more anxiety and mental health struggles due to dreary days with little sunlight or time spent outside. Both semester 1 and 2 finals also come at a time when honors students must turn in their final projects, adding to the to-do list. Other students' answers to this question were more general. Some disliked school work, especially presentations, which can be nerve-racking for students who dislike public speaking. Another student's answer included the feeling of exhaustion and finding it difficult to stay awake at times during chapel, and even in class.

The students were then asked to rate their motivation for school on a scale of 1-10. The answers to this question were mostly encouraging. 5 out of 8 students answered between 7 and 10, while the other three answered 4, 6, and 6.85. One student included in their answer that sometimes it depends on the subject. Their motivation to do well is higher in harder classes when more effort is needed. Other subjects come naturally. The students were then asked to estimate how many hours a week they spent studying and doing school work outside of school. The majority answered between 7 and 14, about 1 to 2 hours each day. All of the students answered with at least 5 hours a week.

The next question asked was "How important are your midterm grades to you?" The majority answered that they are pretty important. After all, they have a large impact on your regular grade. Doing well on them is an important part of ending the semester well. The other students' answers varied. One student said that the subject affected their motivation for midterms. Math and science are often the more challenging subjects, thus requiring more preparation for these exams. If science does not go well, this student said they would be very disappointed, but math could go either way. Another student's answer was overall neutral; if they do well, they will be happy. If not, this student will not take it too seriously.

Students were then asked if they felt the least motivated during the winter months. Surprisingly, the majority said no. Some of the times when students felt the least motivated included the beginning of the school year, right before winter break, or the end of the school year. One student believed that many may feel unmotivated during the winter months, but they felt more motivated by the large amount of work. Sometimes, having more work to do can make students more motivated, because they must remain focused and put in effort to keep their grades up. Some students answered "yes", this is the time of the school year when they experience the least motivation. One reason was the lack of long breaks. There are many months ahead now that Christmas break is over, and students may sometimes feel like there is no end in sight. Another student felt a general lack of motivation towards school but is more motivated in other areas of life.

The final question posed to these students was "What is one thing that you think would make you more motivated?" This question received a variety of answers. Some were unsure how to answer and passed on the question. Other answers included more sleep, intentionality in decisions, more field trips, and study lists for exams. Study lists make studying much easier for students, which creates higher chances for better grades and student success on exams. Another student answered that if school did not come as naturally, maybe they would be more motivated to work hard. Some students do not have to try as hard to do well in certain subjects, or school in general. One student joked that if they were paid to go to school, they would be more motivated.

Finally, a large number of high school students were asked to describe how they felt about school with one word. Some answers were positive, including "good", "fine", "content", and "community", but many felt differently. Some of the less encouraging words included "stressful", "burnout", "overwhelmed", "pressure", "intense", "sad", "boring", "depression", "prison", "pointless", "ew", and "repetitive". Still, some other answers were more neutral, including "conflicted", "tomfoolery", "exhilarating", "interesting", and "complicated". One student used the word "purgatory", describing the school as a "state of blah". There are some good aspects and some bad aspects.

So what does all of this mean? For starters, it is clear that a majority of students have experienced the stress, burnout, and exhaustion that comes with the school year. Many experience these feelings in an increased amount during the winter months. However, many would agree that there are a large amount of blessings that come from school. As one student speculated, many people want school to be over, but school isn't terrible. It allows socialization, and learning can often provide feelings of satisfaction. It also helps in determining a career path. This same student added that without the help of friends, school would be much worse. Community in school makes it more bearable. This student believes that other students should be allowed to help each other with work. Sometimes working together can make things more clear. So, even though many dislike certain aspects of the school year, such as exams, school work, and stress, there are many aspects to be grateful for and appreciative of.

