

# William's Words of the Week



June 22, 2022

by William Groot, Principal

Courts are places where disputes are brought, arguments are heard, and judgements are made. They exist to help the proper and just running of society. Schools are places of learning that use instruction, practice, interaction, collaboration, presentation, and conversation. See these in action in the photo of the Grade 12 Law class' mock trial in the Presentation Centre. I watched it from the bleachers (a.k.a. the production booth).



TDChristian's parents, guardians, and community members, have been able to view learning for service in the light of God's Word from their places in the bleachers. Some have come on to the floor, helping with the learning. Their contributions have been significant.

Many others, maybe you, have supported by praying (like the Prayer Group that met weekly), giving, encouraging and/or volunteering. Thank you very, very much!

So, what is the verdict on 2021-22?

We began the year with a Covid Plan that included wearing masks, constant sanitization, and designated bus seats. We end with mostly smiling faces, greater interactions, and the ability to gather in large groups.

Last week's final assembly attended by the entire school body lasted over three hours. It was amazing! We look forward graduation where we will meet with a host of witnesses to celebrate the Class of 2022. We have learned much about each other, about perseverance, and about God's faithfulness in uncertain times. To borrow from the famous hymn, God provides "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow."

TDChristian students continue to show their interest in and adeptness at learning. Our recent Presentations Day was a testament to their ability to learn well and to share it. The final evaluations of yesterday and tomorrow will prove again the prowess of many. From them, we will craft report cards that will convey the depth of their learning – as well as provide grades and an assessment of learning skills.

To conclude, it has been a challenging year but one that points to a better and more hopeful tomorrow. I leave you with the words provided at the start of the year, "serve well daily." On behalf of TDChristian, I wish you a blessed, active, and restful summer. God be with you 'til we meet again! WG

June 9, 2022

The first Presentations Day since 2019, celebrated yesterday, was a welcome reminder of the importance of having visitors see and hear students sharing their work. Students, guests, and teachers were wonderfully engaged in learning. Below are comments from some of yesterday's attendees.

"Enjoyed hearing each students' perspectives on life. Looks like you have some future leaders and speakers!"

"Students were well prepared. Presentations were interactive & enjoyable. Very positive attitude!"

"Students presented very personal presentations. Enjoyed like watching a TED talk."

"Really great to see students engaged in critical thought and develop the skills to debate... different perspectives."

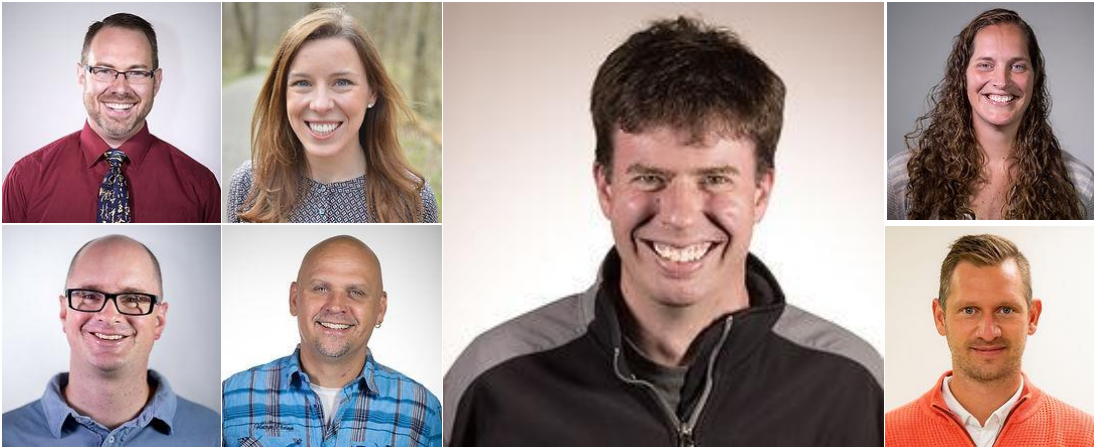
As part of Presentations Day, for the second day in a row, Kindergarten students participated in the Physics Block's "Robotics Day." On Monday, 19 students from King Christian School learned about robotics with and from Grade 12 Physics students. Yesterday, twelve SKers from Timothy Christian School in Rexdale came. The atmosphere was electric; the energy of the students palpable. In 2023-24, we expect students who attended the first Kindergarten Robotics Day seven years ago to begin their TDChristian journeys.



Finally, last week's Music and Drama Night was a smashing success! Over 210 people attended and enjoyed the music portion which highlighted Ascension, Concert Band, Concert Choir, Jazz Band, and soloists. The student production of "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" was performed in the Presentation Centre to 168 patrons. Thanks to those who donated over \$1,355 to the Music Program and over \$1,600 (a seat and a half) to Kristina's Wish. Being in person was a wonderful reminder of why God created people for gathering.

We look forward to ending the school year well. The Screen Shot of June 22 will be the final one for 2021-22.





*Engaging* students in learning is central to education at TDCH.

Learning is stimulated and nurtured in our inviting and up-to-date physical and virtual learning spaces, especially those built as part of Project 20/20.

However, it flourishes through the student-teacher relationship. TDChristian teachers are engaged in, passionate about and dedicated to their craft. They assist students in sharing their findings in significant and relevant ways, often through projects that emphasize skills such as creativity, collaboration, initiative, adaptability, information analysis, entrepreneurship, and effective oral and written communication. Our desire is that students become wisely discerning, to think and learn about how to conduct themselves and how to serve effectively in an ever-changing world.

Today, we celebrate seven teachers in particular. Each of them has been shortlisted for the Teacher Excellence Awards (formerly the John Rozema Awards – see [www.teacherexcellenceaward.com](http://www.teacherexcellenceaward.com)) and three of them, the top row of David Robinson (2016), Anneke Gretton (2017 – while at Chatham Christian School), and Rachael Weening (2019), won their categories. This year, after a two-year suspension of the awards, TDChristian is pleased to announce that Ben Freeman (large photo) will be flown to Winnipeg in September as one of the finalists for the 2022 Award for Grades 9 to 12.

We are thankful for the passion, the diligence, and expertise of our teaching staff. They are dedicated to working with students in service to God and our students.

May 11, 2022



Clear vision is essential to know where one is going. The same is true for schools. As part of the Strategic Plan, the team wrote the vision statement below. Listed after it are ways that we, at TDChristian, relate to people and how we fit in the world. I bring attention to it, today, especially as it helps guide us forward as a school.

*TDChristian is a community of learners who serve God and others through authentic and relevant Christ-centred education.*

For God's glory, we will be a school:

- #1. where each student feels known and cared for as they learn more about God's world and one's place in it.
- #2. where staff members, who care deeply for our students, model and inspire lifelong learning and a growing love for Jesus.
- #3. where parents and guardians willingly and actively support Christ-centred education.

#4. where supporters and alumni can feel deeply connected and contribute to the school and its mission.

#5. which is an integral part of and joyfully serves local and global communities.

Last week, we celebrated an in-person Grandparents Day! We were blessed by the presence of people who have experienced years and years of life, love their grandchildren, and care deeply about their learning.

We look forward to meeting prospective families and celebrating with current students and families at tomorrow's Spring Open House and Notice Book Launch. Members of this and the next generation of TDChristian students will gather. It is exciting!

The new TDChristian magazine, PWA, has been mailed to our families and supporters. Enjoy it! We see in it, as we see daily at school, examples of passion, wonder, and awe that inspire us to continue the important work of learning for service in the light of God's Word.

Yes, there are also difficulties – days when learning, teaching and leading are challenging, even daunting; when obstacles like diesel prices and learning disabilities loom large. But, each day also presents new opportunities. With God's guidance and with purpose we move forward knowing that learning is the aim; it is our primary focus. When we do so together, we are guaranteed to experience success and growth, as individuals and as a community.

*Today's photo is one of the team that livestreamed the Grandparents Day Assembly from the Presentation Centre. You can find the video of the assembly on our YouTube channel, TDCHWoodbridge.*

April 27, 2022

The tenth and final edition of **NOTICE** is now available at TDChristian. It is *“The people of TDChristian High School making and doing.”* Ultimately, it is a celebration of students’ learning – mostly during the 2020-21 school year; it’s a collection of work that for many different reasons, teachers *noticed*. Read the foreword below to learn more about its theme.

Attendees at the Membership Meeting on Thursday night (tomorrow) can see them. Copies can be purchased for \$20 then or in the office from Marg starting on Friday. Half price for anyone whose (or child’s) work is in it.

As retiring Project Director and Photographer, Phil Vriend, urges, *“Notice the beauty of the people and the goodness of God’s grace.”* That’s what I saw and experienced when I read all 72 pages – cover to cover.



## Foreword

When I received my first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, I felt an immediate sense of hope, much more than I had expected. When I got my second, the feeling wasn’t quite elation, but it was something just as good. The background stress of the last year seemed to fade away, and a sense of relief flooded into my awareness.

It wasn’t even that I was consciously that anxious. I’m relatively fit, healthy, and productive. But that second dose wasn’t just about me; it was about all of us. I think I felt some sort of collective hope-relief-inspiration-optimism that comes when one can say not just “I’m going to be okay,” but “We’re all going to be okay.”

Of course, “okay” is a bit vague because there are so many questions yet to be answered, and life is never easy. But in this mid-June moment, it feels as if we were all going to breathe a little easier.

Thus, inspired somewhat by the possible shedding of our masks and the musing of Luke Sawczak’s devotional writing on the next page, the theme of this tenth anniversary of *Notice* is “breathe.”

We’ve organized the book into a pattern of pausing (amidst this long Covid run) to stop and reflect, to catch our breath, to notice what is behind us, to notice what inspires us and lifts us up, to notice what we make and do and think (about our society and ourselves) — and, finally, to breathe in bravely as we go forward.

So whenever you’re reading this — sometime in a busy and engaging 2021–22 school year — I hope you’ve been able to shed your mask and breathe easily. And while you take each breath, also take the time to *Notice* the beauty of the people and the goodness of God’s grace.

—PHIL VRIEND





The advent of three club periods per week was a direct result of the *Belonging and Flourishing* theme found in TDChristian's Strategic Plan. Our first iteration of clubs came in semester one; a survey by Grade 12 Data Management students indicated that a great majority of students really enjoyed them.

This semester's *Service Club*, which runs weekly on Thursdays, has begun. The eight students in the club, along with staff members Ms. Jacob, Mr. Terpstra, and Ms. Roorda are taking to heart our school's focus of *Learning for service in the light of God's Word*; they are encouraging our community to *serve daily* (this year's theme) by participating in a constantly-running food drive.

The club has placed five cardboard barrels in the main office and is asking students and community members to *regularly* drop off food items in support of the Vaughan Food Bank.



Earlier this week, the club went to the Food Bank to help sort and organize. They are excited about this new partnership and encourage you to bring food every week. Make it part of your grocery shopping. Shop and drop. Together, we will make a difference!

#### TWO NOTES:

1. At our last assembly, former teacher Jessica Teh shared a meaningful and thoughtful devotional on Easter. It can be found at <https://youtu.be/Xo83tEgnvK0>. We encourage you to view it. May you and your family experience God's blessings as you remember Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and celebrate his resurrection.
2. We are very excited to announce a live *Music and Drama Night* on June 2. At 7 p.m. in the Commons Room, the Band, Jazz Band, Ascension, and other musicians will perform. After a short intermission, the audience will move to the Presentation Centre for *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, a one-act play directed by Mia VanLeeuwen, our fifth-year Drama teaching assistant. Stay tuned for more details!



At TDChristian, we endeavour to enfold students in our school community, engage them in learning, and empower them to serve God and others by, in, and through what they have learned.

Alice Vanderkooy, pictured here with 2017 graduate, Greg Hoornweg, believed strongly in learning that involved rich experiences, such as Quebec Trips for French classes (she organized 27 of them during her time as a teacher and guidance counsellor from 1987 to 2017) and significant projects (such as the Canadian board

shown in which students shared their cultural backgrounds as part of Grade 9 French). Everyone is an important piece of the puzzle. We fit together. Ms. Vanderkooy believed that and practiced it.

Alice went to be with her faithful Lord and Saviour on the morning of March 17, after a brave, 3+ year fight with cancer. Many of us, at TDChristian, will miss her. Former students and parents sent or posted over 16 pages of memories and words to share with her family. If you still wish to write something, send it to [info@tdchristian.ca](mailto:info@tdchristian.ca). We will pass it on for you.

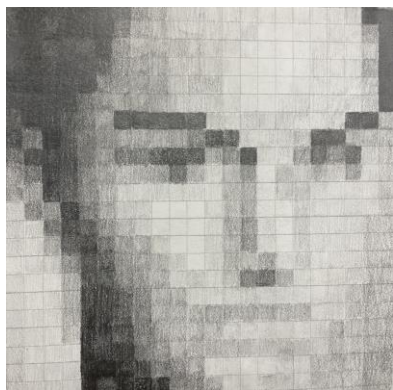
Today, I share with you two beautiful gifts that Ms. Vanderkooy has provided TDChristian.

The first is a video recorded in June 2021 for TDChristian's Relay for Life event. It can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWWgKY\\_WaAY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWWgKY_WaAY). In five-and-a-half minutes she shares a genuine and honest account of her cancer journey and her future hope. Viewing it will give you a window into who she was.

The second gift is a fund we announce today after her death, at her request. In March 2021, she initiated the **Project Fund for Deserving TDChristian Initiatives**. It promotes the rich and deep learning Ms. Vanderkooy adopted, supported, and practiced with her students. Twice a year, teachers will make written proposals for the use of a portion of the funds for an initiative that enhances students' learning through experiences or projects.

Her hope, as noted in the actual description, is that others may contribute to this fund so that rich and deep learning may continue to be supported at TDChristian. To learn more and/or to contribute to this fund in memory of Alice, visit [www.tdchristian.ca/alice](http://www.tdchristian.ca/alice).

Finally, the Celebration of Life service held for Ms. Vanderkooy, is found at [www.fellowshiptobicoke.com/podcasts/worship/2022-03-25-celebration-of-life-service-for-alice-vanderkooy-march-28-2022](http://www.fellowshiptobicoke.com/podcasts/worship/2022-03-25-celebration-of-life-service-for-alice-vanderkooy-march-28-2022).



Now is about the time that the Art and STEM hallway comes alive. The first projects are pinned on the display boards or placed on the display tables. I am captivated by the work students have done and appreciative of their learning as they practice techniques and hone their talents.

The pixel portrait (left) is an assignment in which students practice seeing and sketching the range of tones they see in a subject. Each

square has a different tone. It is when one steps back from the drawing that the different tones on the face are best viewed and the artist's prowess comes to the fore.

In the ensuing assignment, as demonstrated in the vase (right), students take what they have learned about tone and apply it to a new subject. They focus on tonal range to develop contrast. A key and challenging part of the task is to use an eraser as much as the charcoal to emphasize the subject's form. Adding and taking away repeatedly until the project is complete in the eyes of the artist.



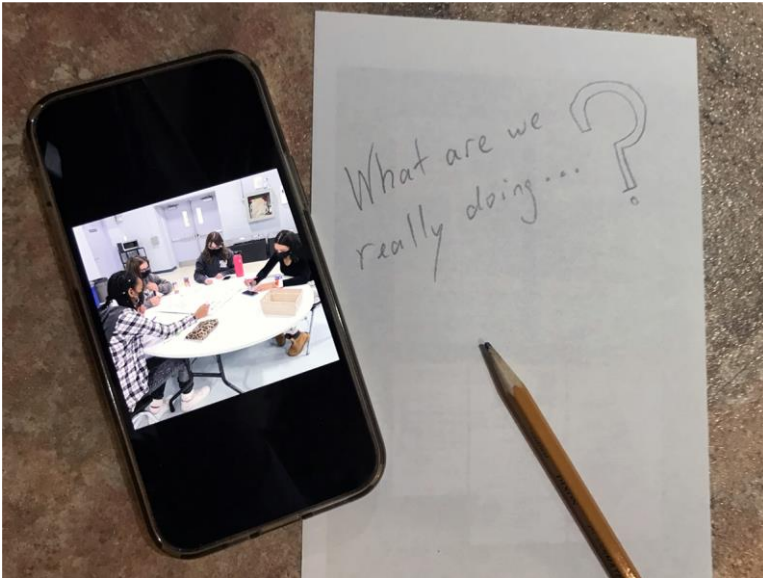
The next two steps will be for students to make a white paper hat and then make a charcoal self-portrait of themselves wearing it. Why a paper hat? If they can capture the tones and textures accurately in a white hat, the drawn hat actually looks like real paper. They will have shown what they have learned with respect to tone, contrast, and form.

And then, the final questions: How and why do artists create self-portraits? What about selfies? What are the similarities and differences? How does each allow us to see or show ourselves? These are important queries for teenagers to discuss, ponder, and debate. It is in thinking about what we do and by expressing it that we learn about ourselves, others, and our relationships to God, neighbours, and self.

At TDChristian, this depth of learning, whether smooth or uneven, straightforward or painstaking, is what we desire for our students (and ourselves)!

*With thanks to Mr. Matt Brown, our Art Teacher, who helped me understand the pedagogy behind the art and to Julia and Iwinosa, art students whose portrait and vase are shown.*





In a world filled with more questions than answers, “*What are we really doing?*” is one that we constantly face at TDChristian. Given the pandemic’s real and yet unknown effects, it is one we must tackle daily.

Our readymade answer is “Learning for service in the light of God’s Word.” What are ways that we are presently enacting that?

The *Thursday Speaker Series* has reminded us, as educators and parents or guardians, of the importance of having **necessary but sometimes awkward conversations with teenagers**. These include ones about human sexuality and the affects of sin and our culture’s view of it, sexting,

and pornography including how to deal with each of them. We have been challenged to think and talk about our digital footprint and our online behaviour. Tomorrow, for the final session, the topic is *Gaming*.

At our Grade 9, 10, and 11 Roundtables (as seen in the photo), students were challenged to be **thoughtful reflectors** – to be engaged in looking at their individual learning journeys and their grade’s. They listened to each other, practising empathy, and identifying possible directions. Then, they were presented with options to consider for the future: course selections for 2022-23. The main message shared in the devotions came from first seven verses of Psalm 37 which includes, “Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.”

Finally, yesterday’s assembly (available for viewing on our YouTube channel, TDCHWoodbridge) had as a main focus *Black History*. It featured a video of many of TDChristian’s Black students sharing their thoughts and some of their experiences at school. The Grade 11 students who worked diligently in crafting it were able to provide us with helpful and relevant information and reflections. What we do with it moving forward will show us, and others, who we are. **After all, history is all of our stories**. We are tasked with continually listening to and learning from each other within the context of God’s love story in Jesus Christ.

In short, by being deliberate in our actions intentionally listening to **everybody’s** stories, by serving God and others for the furtherance of God’s Kingdom in **all people**, and by being committed to **loving others** as God loves us, we will be able to combat things that plague us including the pandemic, pornography, unhealthy use of social media, racism, and more.

TDChristian is a place of learning disciplines such as English, Math, Science, Social Science, Humanities, French, Physical Education, Technology, and the Arts, but it also about **learning to be together and learning from each other** as we seek to serve God and others.



This winter, we have experienced widely-changing temperatures and a mix of snowless and snowy days. Countless conversations begin with the weather because it affects our lives. The thrill that students have when they wake up and find out that a day has been declared a “snow day” is the same today as it was the very first time in the 1960s.

How we deal with and battle snow and ice, on the other hand, has markedly changed. Guess where the heated part of the sidewalk stops? Walkways that are heated from underneath eliminate the need for snow removal and increase safety.

It’s how we view learning at TDChristian; what is below counts! On sunny, warm days, the sidewalks don’t need hot water to flow through the pipes. But when the snow comes, it gushes through to keep the walkways clear and safe. In the same way, we work diligently and intentionally to help students to be ready to deal with the harsh elements of our culture.

How? Teachers challenge students with difficult questions open and caring environments. They engage them in learning that prepares them for life today, and tomorrow, in all disciplines.

On Tuesday, February 1, Dr. Syd Hielema, who has been deeply involved in Christian education at various levels since 1976, spent the morning with the TDChristian staff to help us develop effective ways to share God’s Word as part of daily devotions with first period classes – to help construct effective “pipes under students’ sidewalks.”

Education is TDChristian’s primary task. However, we will only be truly successful when we realize that our firm foundation – the network of pipes that supports us – is God. Throughout the second half of 2021-22, in all of our learning, let us intentionally seek serve our Lord, each other, and our neighbours daily.





As we hit the midway point of the 2021-22 school year, I am reminded of how quickly time passes. The expression, “Long days but short years,” is indeed an apt one today!

The bookending photos highlight two often competing ways that humans communicate: virtually and in-person. How and when are they in conflict? In what ways, can each be used well? How can they be integrated?

For many people, these questions have complex answers. The present reality is that we have needed both especially for learning during a worldwide pandemic. Our students and staff have done very well. But it’s been challenging!



Today’s teenagers, our students, are navigating ways to balance their virtual and in-person connections; how to determine how much time they should spend on each and still be effective learners. How can families and TDChristian help them?

London Christian High is hosting a *Thursday Night Speakers Series* featuring professors from Dordt University throughout February (see the ad later in *Screen Shot*). Four other Christian high schools including TDChristian are contributing funds so that their families (yes, yours and your friends’ families, too) can listen and learn for a time before discussing with their children these four important topics:

Feb. 3 (7:30 p.m.): A Biblical framework for human sexuality and where/how sin enters in.

Feb. 10 (7:30 p.m.): Understanding your digital footprint and appropriate online behavior.

Feb. 17 (7:30 p.m.): The prevalence and pervasiveness of pornography and sexting.

Feb. 24 (7:30 p.m.): The world of gaming, its beauty and potential pitfalls.

*Register online: [londonchristianhigh.ca/Thursday-night-speaker-series](https://londonchristianhigh.ca/Thursday-night-speaker-series)*

God promises to be with us. He is our surety. Being diligent, deliberate, thoughtful, and intentional, one day at a time, are key elements in leading a faithful life. Vulnerability, trust, and collaboration in community allows us to keep moving forward as we learn for service in the light of God’s Word.

We are thankful for our supportive community in which we can bear each other’s burdens and hurts and celebrate our successes and salvation in Jesus Christ. My prayer for the *Thursday Night Speaker Series* and second semester is that we continue to learn while following God’s leading and guiding.

*Perspective* is an important word at TDChristian.

One of ten principles in our Identity Statement is: *The Bible is God's Word and serves as the "spectacles" through which we view reality.* How we see and experience the world and then share it with others reveals who we are and for whom we live.

Another important tenet found in it is: *"Creation is the other "book" in which God shows us who he is.* We see God's finger-prints all over creation; its fundamental goodness shines through in spite of sin. The visible universe is like a beautiful book in which all creatures are like letters making us ponder the love, wisdom, and power of the invisible God."



What's particularly striking about the above painting (now hanging at the end of our newest hallway) is how the artist, Roland Jonker, masterfully combines *perspective* and *creation*. I love how the entire landscape is so wonderfully brushed. How colours are used to reveal a rich and textured perspective of creation is stunning. The placements of the reds, browns, and especially the greens, add to the majesty of the work.

How does this painting relate to where we are, as a school, now? It is a matter of perspective. What *colours* our view of learning at TDChristian? How do we strive to be in the *green*? These are crucial questions. Central to any answer is for us to strive to do our tasks well, daily, wherever we are: at home and online or at school and in-person. The pandemic continues to impact us. In spite of it, how we work together, in community for the benefit of our students will help define the end of this semester.

We, at TDChristian, are committed to supporting our students in their learning, first, but also in their lives as they navigate the final weeks of first semester. God's promise is sure; he is always with us.

*Roland, deceased in 2021, was the architect for TDCH expansions from 1988 to 2010. His wife, Coby, deceased in 2019, was a former teacher and guidance counselor at TDChristian. We are grateful for the painting donated by their son, David Jonker ('89) and daughter-in-law, Heather Kuipers.*

*To read more this school year's previous posts, scroll past the ensuing note on the Return to School on Jan. 17.*



## The Return to In-Person Learning Beginning on Monday, January 17, 2022

As noted earlier this week, the province is allowing schools to return to in-person learning again. While we have not yet received official communications, that is our intention and focus.

Thank you to those who responded to the survey sent on Monday, *Feedback for Moving Forward*. A synopsis of it can be found by scrolling further. We will keep in mind the survey feedback as we put together a plan for returning on Monday.

What we gathered from looking at the survey results and the many comments and suggestions shared, working together as we have – families, students, and staff – will continue to be important. We will need to extend grace to one another as many people have consistently done throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

We go forward with God's strength, in faith, taking steps carefully and intentionally keeping in mind the importance of helping students learn for service in the light of God's Word.

Below is a synopsis of the survey results, question by question:

1. In total, we had 167 responses, all domestic families: 52% return.
2. Ratings in %: order is Excellent, Good, Okay, Poor, N/A
  - a. Communication from the school: 66% 31% 4% 0% 0%
  - b. Communications from teachers: 39% 53% 6% 1% 1%
  - c. Amount of work per class: 22% 58% 17% 2% 1%
  - d. Support of classroom teachers: 44% 46% 8% 1% 1%
  - e. Support of Learning Commons or Guidance 23% 21% 4% 0% 53%
  - f. Current online schedule 44% 46% 10% 0% 1%
3. The first four days of Virtual Learning have been: 8% Fantastic, 8% Better than regular school, 28% Same as regular school, 47% Not as good as regular school
4. Given the situation, how important is returning to in-person schooling beginning next week on Jan. 17? 29% Essential, 42% Preferable, 11% Doesn't matter, 13% Not important, 1% Not Applicable
5. Check box(es) which represent(s) your current thoughts. (Extra checks mean the total won't be 100%). 54% TDChristian should return to in-person learning on Jan. 17, if the government permits it, 26% TDChristian should complete first semester online (Jan. 17 to 27) 22% Support the decisions made by the Principal and VPs regarding online and in-person learning 6% Other suggestions
6. Feedback comparing current online learning to the in-person learning prior to the Christmas break; the amount: Is much less, Is somewhat less, Is the same, Is somewhat more, Is much more, N/A
  - a. In-person social interaction for my child(ren) 64% 23% 10% 1% 2% 0%
  - b. Social media and/or phone/computer social interaction 2% 4% 32% 34% 26% 3%
  - c. Teacher-student interaction 23% 44% 26% 2% 2% 2%
  - d. Time my child(ren) are inside or at home 3% 0% 9% 16% 72% 1%
  - e. Screen time 0% 1% 14% 26% 57% 1%
7. Level of confidence with TDChristian's ability to deal each of the following during in-person schooling. Scale is: Very confident, Confident, Wait and see, Concerned, Very Concerned, N/A
  - a. Busing contacts 35% 35% 15% 8% 2% 4%
  - b. Lunch time and break contacts 32% 36% 20% 8% 4% 1%
  - c. Masking protocols 43% 38% 7% 10% 1% 1%
  - d. Screening and attendance protocols 41% 37% 10% 10% 1% 1%
  - e. Learning for my child if s/he has to stay home 19% 39% 22% 13% 7% 1%
  - f. Teacher access if child or teacher is absent 17% 43% 20% 14% 6% 0%
8. Use of email, [feedback@tdchristian.ca](mailto:feedback@tdchristian.ca): 86% no, 14% yes

Thank you to the 70 people (42%) who left comments. They are appreciated.



Advent means the coming of something notable, sometimes even special. For Christians, Advent consists of the time prior to the celebration of Christ's coming at Christmas and includes the four preceding Sundays.

This is the last Screen Shot of 2021. As we look forward to Christmas and the New Year, I wish to highlight the significance of an "orange" to someone's Christmas and then connect it to learning at TDChristian.

My mother was the youngest of seven children. She lived in the Netherlands during World War II. Like many other Europeans, she had very little during those difficult years. For example, people used potato sacks or leftover curtains to sew clothes. When it came to Christmas, she did not expect much.

However, one Christmas, her gift was an orange. Years later, while recounting the story, her eyes still lit up at the thought of getting and holding it, before finally peeling and eating it, one juicy section at a time.

I challenge each of us to use the same approach until the Christmas break. Instead of counting down days, let's savour each one for the learning opportunities it brings. Take time to enjoy times of independent work, collaborating, and of striving to improve our work, sharing ideas and iterating solutions. Enjoy today for its possibilities.

As for the bigger picture, let us remember the reason for the season: Jesus Christ was born fully human, fully God so that we who believe may have eternal life through Him. Read again the amazing words of John 3:16.

We, at TDChristian, wish you God's love and peace, His goodness and guidance now and into 2022!

P.S. Go to <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/7873163/orange-in-christmas-stockings/> if you wish to learn more about oranges at Christmas.



I kind of like shoes. Not expensive ones; just ones that are comfortable, practical, and, when possible, have character. I got a great pair at the Fire Hall Thrift for \$7 but my favorite pair are green Adidas Gazelles that originally came out in the 90s. I received a retro pair as a gift.

Shoes often tell you something about the people wearing them. Today, I highlight three important “shoe expressions.”

“Put yourself in somebody else’s shoes” is one that reminds us of the importance of empathy. How do others think and feel when I interact with them? In particularly difficult circumstances involving many people, putting ourselves in everybody else’s shoes is especially hard. How can we make the best decisions in such instances?



The optimal functioning of a community such as TDChristian requires empathy but when there is conflict, tough decisions also need to be made. That’s why conversations in which we listen and share are essential. It is even more important that we involve prayer. We are all broken sinners who need God’s forgiveness and love. But, in our places and roles, we are also called to act... which brings me to the second shoe expression.

“Put the shoe on the other foot” tasks us to look at both sides of a situation. Often, that means putting ourselves in two completely new circumstances and comparing them. Honest dialogue and looking at both sides of a situation are often challenging but necessary during decision making.

TDChristian’s focus is “learning for service in the light of God’s Word.” Therefore, along with the traditional curriculum, we want students to develop and practice soft skills such *empathy* and *dialoguing*.

Finally, “If the shoe fits, wear it.” As a Principal, I must and I will to the best of my ability seeking to serve God and others at TDChristian. May we all be given the strength and discernment to wear our “shoes” well.

P.S. Lost something? Check the lost and found. The “cool” shoe is there with many other items.

November 9, 2021

My father turned 87 today. He remembers when, as a family man in his 20s, there was a movement to open a high school that would serve the students of Christian families from Toronto and its surrounding areas. It began in the 1950s. Toronto District Christian High School opened in 1963; God used many people, like my parents, in their communities to help make it a reality. They did so by serving daily.

TDChristian is a wonderful story of God's faithfulness from one generation to the next. My dad experienced it firsthand when he and my mom sent me to the school in 1974. He is hopeful for a few more in-person Grandparents' Days because his two youngest grandchildren currently attend the school.

More importantly, and amazingly, God still uses people today from just as many geographical places and many more backgrounds and churches. In community, Christian learning and education can and does flourish at TDChristian. We are called to be active participants in this endeavour.

We are far from perfect, we fail at times, but we know God is moving in this place. We see it in the work, learning, and growth of our students. I want to thank YOU today for being part of the TDChristian community. You are here now. I pray that how we serve daily may impact future generations, as those in the past have.

On Thursday, November 25 at 7 p.m., we invite members, parents, guardians, and supporters to our Fall Membership Zoom Meeting. Learn about the school's finances and the annual budget, listen to the Admin Team share about Strategic Plan initiatives, and celebrate the service of five staff members. The agenda and how to register for it will be mailed tomorrow to all members and TDChristian families.

The movement is alive and well! Tell others about it.



October 26, 2021

I never anticipated that my world would be so filled with electronic messaging. It's mind blowing!

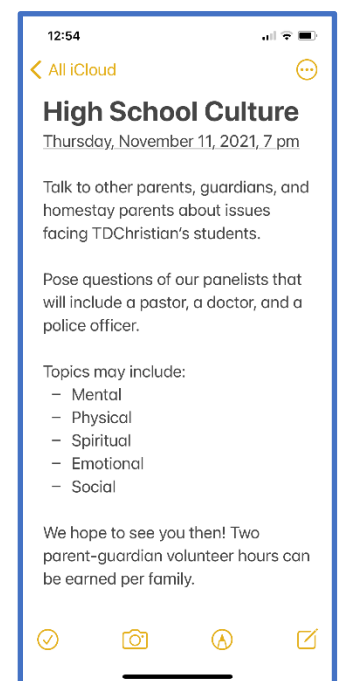
Pros include quick and reliable access to many people – near and far, archived messages, and helpful threads; loss of face time, fewer deeper conversations, and too many connections are possible cons.

In what ways are we, at TDChristian, able to take advantage of the pros and avoid the cons?

Our Strategic Plan includes "Intentional Growth." We need to determine the best ways to communicate about TDChristian internally and externally. Ways include Screen Shot (with updates on the Splash! Page), tdchristian.ca, @TDChristian, Edsby Messages, Facebook, and Instagram.

More importantly, live events such as our evening on 'High School Culture' (now on Nov. 11 at 7 p.m.) and Zoom events such as our Fall Membership Meeting are ways to connect for TDChristian families.

Continuing reading to know more about what's going on at TDChristian as we focus on learning for service in the light of God's Word.



October 13, 2021

Starting every other Wednesday, in September 1994, students got a piece of coloured paper as they exited the school. It was called "The Fridge Door" because our desire was for families to read it and stick it on their fridges to keep track of important happenings at TDChristian.

A number of years later, with the rise of electronic communications and to save paper waste, we began using PDFs.

Today, we lay "The Fridge Door" to rest. In its place is "Screen Shot", a new way to communicate clearly to you.

Feedback is welcome (email [groot@tdchristian.ca](mailto:groot@tdchristian.ca)) because we want to serve you well as we learn for service in the light of God's Word.

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