

GREAT PLAINS LUTHERAN

THE GRAINS

WINTER 2023



*President's Message
United in Praise Update
Alumni News
Gifts and Donors*





PRESIDENT DAVID MAERTZ

Be Strong and Courageous

As the Children of Israel prepared to cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land, there was a wonderful, yet nasty world waiting for them. Isn't the same thing true for our children today?

As Israel prepared to enter Canaan, the Lord warned them about the polytheism, the "many god" worship of the Canaanites. He warned them about things like sexual promiscuity and perversion. He even found it necessary to warn against child sacrifice! Taken together, the Lord repeatedly referred to these things as "detestable practices."

The Lord earnestly warned his people because these practices had the potential to eat away at the foundations of their faith and undermine their relationship with the only true God.

Sound familiar?

Don't we live in a polytheistic society? Aren't there many "gods" out there vying for our time, our attention, our loyalty? How about sexual promiscuity and perversion? Or child sacrifice? How many "detestable things" surround us?!

This is the world in which we live. And this is the world into which our children are going. This could fill us with fear. It could cause us to be discouraged – even terrified. It could paralyze us - If we had to face it on our own. But the Children of Israel didn't. And we don't.

As he said to them, the Lord says to us: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6).

That is why Christian education – and the God-Bible-Jesus focus we are blessed to provide at GPLHS – is so important.

Our children need to know that the God who led his people into the Promised Land and blessed them there, goes with them. They need to know that the Savior who defeated sin, death, and the devil – the One who won forgiveness, life, and salvation for them and for the world – promises that he will never leave them or forsake them.

He goes with them when they are happy and when they are sad. He goes with them when they are up and when they are down. He goes with them when they are confident and when they are afraid. He goes with them as they face the challenges of life in a nasty world. He goes with them through his word and promises.

Great Plains Lutheran High School is blessed to assist families in nurturing students as lifelong disciples of Christ, and through a Christ-centered education to prepare and encourage another generation to be strong and courageous in Christ.

Then they will go out into a world filled not just with nastiness, but a world filled with opportunity and blessing.



Administration

Rev. David Maertz

President

Mr. Matt Bauer

Principal

Rev. Karl Schauland

Campus Pastor

Mr. Jeff Roloff

Director of Mission Advancement

Mr. Rob Busch

Board Chairman

2022-2023 School Theme

Courageous in Christ

Our Mission

Great Plains Lutheran High School provides a Christ-centered education to assist families in nurturing students as lifelong disciples of Christ.

Teachers

Mrs. Linda Guthmiller

Mr. Mike Haugly

Mr. Gene Jaeger

Mrs. Jayne Jaeger

Mr. Sam Kleinke

Mr. Eric Martens

Miss Carina Rahn

Mr. Ryan Rosenthal

Mr. Aaron Schleusener

Mr. Michael Starr

Miss Kristin Uher

On the cover:

*Aerial winter picture of GPLHS -
Nolan Hansen, Elevated Drone Services*

United in Praise

Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.

Psalm 86:11-12

Praise the Lord!

The psalmist prayed that the Lord would give him an undivided heart that praised and glorified God's name. More than 5 years ago we began praying that, with undivided hearts, you would join us in praising God through our *United in Praise* capital campaign. And our prayers were answered!

After tallying gifts given through the month of October 2022, these are the *United in Praise* totals.

United in Praise – General \$2,637,952

United in Praise – Finishing Touches \$556,630

United in Praise - Bridging the Gap \$654,432

United in Praise – Total \$3,849,015

You might find it interesting to note that this total reaches and surpasses the highest campaign goal recommended by the awareness and readiness study conducted before we began. As you can see, we have much to be thankful for! Much for which to be *United in Praise*!

All thanks and praise to God for the generous support we have received throughout the duration of our *United in Praise* campaign!

On Saturday, November 5, the opening of our delegate and auxiliary meetings included an opportunity to unite in praising God and thanking his people for the resources and gifts, skills and safe progress that made our facility expansion possible. We are blessed to be making use of three new areas in our school building. Thank you for making this hope and plan a reality!

On Wednesday, November 2, we welcomed members of the community to campus for a Ribbon Cutting and Open House. All who attended were able to get a first-hand, up-close view of our new facilities. Many were impressed with what they saw and noted the blessings these areas will provide for our students and programs for many years to come.

Picture of the ribbon cutting

United *in* PRAISE



Mission Advancement - Opportunities



MISSION ADV. DIRECTOR
JEFF ROLOFF

As we begin a new year, we continue to have many opportunities to courageously support the GPL ministry described throughout this issue of ***The Grains***. You can support this ministry by volunteering your time, talents and treasures when you:

Take advantage of opportunities available for people located in the Watertown area by:

- Volunteering your time and energy by helping out at GSI Thrift
- Picking a day of the week to help serve lunch
- Offering your talents to help with maintenance and upkeep
- Stepping forward to cover a task at a co-curricular event
- Being considered as a host family for an international student
- Providing a place for students from a distance to spend a weekend or during a school break

Take advantage of opportunities available to anyone no matter your location by:

- Working with your church families by talking to them about GPL and by encouraging them to consider GPL for their children
- Helping people in your community know and understand what a blessing GPL is to the young people it is blessed to serve
- Taking opportunities to help GPL and prospective families connect and discuss the Ministry of GPL
- Organizing a congregational trip to GPL for others to get to see the campus
- Becoming a **Panther Partner**; which is an individual who gives regularly scheduled gifts, such as monthly, quarterly or semi-annually

Thank you for all your support of this needed and important ministry! We are so blessed to have you supporting and praying for us.

Thank You Letters

Your Gifts Are Making a Difference!

A letter of thanks from a GPL family. This letter is directed to individuals who provided funds for student financial assistance.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for considering the paths of young Christian men and women who attend Great Plains Lutheran High School. Your gift has made it possible for our daughter to receive financial aid to attend GPLHS. We would like to express our deep gratitude for the impact it makes on our family.

We chose Great Plains because we know that the teachers share our convictions. Our daughter's high school experience has been an extension of the values in our home and church. The teachers lead the students to study God's Word and apply it to their lives. God's Word is also used as a lens through which to view the world.

The opportunity for a Christian education is a wonderful blessing. Likewise, the capable staff and suitable facilities are not something to take for granted. Yet Great Plains ultimately needs students to fulfill its purpose. Your generous gift helps limit financial obstacles that may otherwise inhibit some students' attendance. We thank you for your gift and praise God for the work he is accomplishing with his Word.

Thank You Letters Continued

Another letter of thanks from a GPL family. In this case the letter is directed to a GPL association congregation that, because it does not currently have member students attending GPL, annually donates funds to support a family or families in need.

Dear Members of...

Our Savior Jesus made it clear during his ministry on earth that he especially loves and cares for children, and has given us direction through the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6: "Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

To that end, we have been blessed with the opportunity to send our children to Great Plains Lutheran High School, to further both their spiritual and earthly training to prepare them for life as young Christian adults in a world that needs our light.

A sincere Thank You to you for your gift to Great Plains to help with financial assistance. We greatly appreciate your generosity, and your devotion to the Lord's work among our children at GPLHS. It is not just a financial blessing to us, but it lifts our hearts and spirits to know that many others are taking part to help us raise up our children as disciples of Christ.

Thank you again, and may God continue to bless your ministry!

Alumni Spotlight - Kayla (Landsman) Geffre

Since graduating GPL in 2012, I have studied Health Education at South Dakota State and graduated with my Doctor of Physical Therapy from the University of Jamestown in 2021. My family and I currently live just outside of Bruce, SD and attend Our Savior Lutheran Church in Brookings.

If you attended any of the home football games this past year, you would have seen me on the sideline. One of the wonderful opportunities I had while working at Big Stone Therapies was returning to my alma mater and serving with my God-given talents by providing sports medicine to Great Plains.

I am thankful for my Christian education. My parents knew it was important to instill Christ in my life, and what better way to do that than to attend a Lutheran elementary school and high school? I attended Bethel Lutheran in Sioux Falls prior to Great Plains, and these two schools laid a wonderful foundation for the rest of my life. I gained so many valuable life lessons from living in the dorms and from managing all the extracurricular activities I could fit in my schedule. The discipline, responsibility, and time management truly allowed me to go as far as I did in my academic career. I am forever thankful for all the blessings that have stemmed from my time at Great Plains.



Alumni News

Aiden Holien - Class of 2018

After graduating GPL in 2018, I continued my education at MLC for the next 4 years, training to be a teacher. As my graduation and assignment day crept closer and closer, the more nervous, anxious, and excited my friends and I all were about where we all would be headed over the summer to start our ministries. Looking at the WELS call report that came out every Monday afternoon became a tradition for many of us.

Graduation and assignment day arrived, and I received a call to serve as a Dorm Instructor (Tutor) at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Michigan. Finding out how far I would be moving away from family was definitely a shock and an adjustment, but living in Michigan has brought forth so many blessings and experiences that I never could have imagined. God definitely knew what He was doing by assigning me here! Being a tutor is an incredible experience-- being able to see the students from a whole new perspective outside of the classroom is something I really enjoy. I can interact and build relationships with the students before, during, and after the school day, giving me a whole new look on the teaching experience-- one that I have loved from the very start. The days are long, but they are also never, ever boring.



Ben Hallauer - Class of 2002

Ben and his wife Beth welcomed a new baby this year. Henry Clark Hallauer born on March 30, 2022.



Naomi (Seidl) Johnson - Class of 2002

We had baby #6 on October 8, 2022
Marilla Mae Johnson



Alumni - We need to hear about your happenings. Email Sarah Roloff at sroloff@gplhs.org.

Glorifying God with Our Talents

Congratulations to our students for all their accomplishments in this past fall's activities season. These are the individuals who won awards in their respective fall activity.

Football

RJ Perry won the Most Valuable Player and also the Panther Award. Joseph Dahlberg was awarded the Most Valuable Lineman while Thomas Erickson won the most Valuable Offensive Player. Myles York was awarded the Most Valuable Defensive Player. Brody Scharlemann and Micah Holien were awarded the Most Improved Player. GPL senior RJ Perry was selected to the South Dakota Class 9AA All-State Football Team. RJ and junior Myles York were selected as Argus Leader Elite 45 Honorable Mention.



Oral Interp

Norah Kratz won the Most Valuable Player award while Emma Kanzenbach was awarded the Panther Award. Four Oral Interp participants went on to State. Three of our categories received Superior with Distinction (That means Perfect Scores) and the other three received Superiors. The three categories that received Superior with Distinction were Humor, Norah Kratz; Oratory, Olivia Zanto; and Duo, Norah Kratz and Haylee Cowles. The three categories that received Superiors were Storytelling, Haylee Cowles; Poetry, Olivia Zanto; Readers Theater, Haylee Cowles, Emma Kanzenbach, Norah Kratz and Olivia Zanto.



Volleyball

Esta Cameron won the Most Valuable Offensive Player Award while Grace Powers was awarded the Most Valuable Defensive Player Award. Lanaya Hayes won the Most Improved Player Award. Kyrie Roberts was awarded the Panther Award while Olivia Holmen won the Most Valuable Player Award.



Cross Country

Thad Kratz won the Male Most Valuable Player Award while Halle Bauer won the Female Most Valuable Player Award. Thad Kratz also won the Male Panther Award. Both Daria Poor and Taylor Bendix won the Female Panther Award. At the Class A State Meet, Halle Bauer came in 16th place.





**1200 Luther Lane NE
Watertown, SD 57201-8200**

Return Service Requested



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[@gplhs](https://twitter.com/gplhs)

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 15 Honor Choir sings at Our Savior's
in Brookings, SD
- Feb 10-13 Winter Break - NO SCHOOL
- Feb 16 Basketball and Cheer Parents'
Night
- March 1 Honor Society Blood Drive
8:00am - 2:00pm
- March 3-4 GPL Grade School Basketball
Tournament
- March 12 Spring Concert and Winter
Awards Ceremony
- March 15-17 Spring Break - NO SCHOOL



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