

THE BELL

SUMMER 2024

**THE ZCS BELL
RESTORED**

**A LOOK AT
NEXT YEAR'S
THEME**

**FAITH FORMATION
IN ACTION**

IGNITING OUR STUDENTS' GOD-GIVEN

POTENTIAL

@zeelandchristianschool // zcs.org



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The ZCS Bell **RESTORED**

Written By: Ben Wickstra

I have always enjoyed bells. We had one at our house as a kid to call us in from working and playing in the woods. When I attended Taylor University for college, the center of campus was a bell tower announcing the time, chapel, or important events. I even mounted one in my dorm as an unofficial mascot to promote community at meals and other events. Bells are an invitation to join in... but they are louder than I can be with my voice! The bigger, the better!

“Bells are an invitation to join in,”

At the start of the year, we take pictures of the kids by the ZCS sign. Yes, I enjoy having the ZCS sign in the picture, but I really liked the bell! When it was missing at the end of last year, I talked to Bryce Huffman (Director of Facilities at ZCS), who told me how the main bolt had rusted through, causing it to fall off.

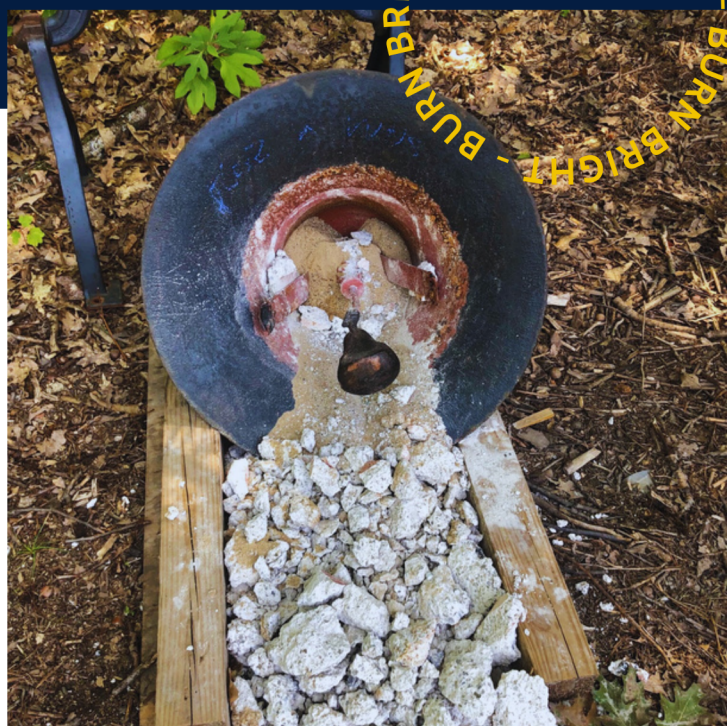
The bell had been welded to the mount years ago to keep it from swinging so it wouldn't accidentally hit anyone since it was mounted lower where students could reach it... or ring it late at night as a practical joke to the neighborhood –which apparently happened! The clapper had broken and been bent multiple times prior to that, and it was welded together to keep it functional. The bell itself was filled with sand and capped with concrete to prevent the clapper from being stolen, moved to ring the bell, or broken again.

BURN BRIGHT - BURN BRIGHT - BURN BRIGHT -

Mr. Huffman kindly allowed me to take the bell to restore it by forklifting the 400+ lb bell into my minivan. From there, we took the bell and removed the concrete and sand. The bell was professionally sandblasted, and any pitting from rust or the original casting was filled with a commercial-grade filler. A waterproof powder coating paint was applied to keep it weatherproof. The clapper was straightened and repaired, but the broken bolt was not repairable. The clapper is now separate and can be held. An eye bolt was placed to allow a removable clapper to be installed in the future so it could be rung if it was ever reinstalled.

“I was unaware of the theme but when I heard it, I called Tim and asked if he’d like it for the opening chapel. The rest is restored history!”

As for the timing of restoring the ZCS Bell aligning with this year’s theme, “Restored,” my parents taught me that coincidences are more like co-incidences. Two things working together, and maybe that is one of the many themes of ZCS... God working in the lives of students and families who are open to what God can do in and through them! I was unaware of the theme but when I heard it, I called Tim and asked if he’d like it for the opening chapel. The rest is restored history! ☺





8th Grade Graduation





Farewell, Dr. McAboy

ZCS

BURN BRIGHT
BURN BRIGHT

FAITH FORMATION IN ACTION

Rooted in the rich history of Zeeland Christian School is the mission to enable our students to respond in loving obedience to God's revealed will, to recognize the significance of serving others with their lives, and to accept their responsibility toward the world in which they live.

One way we do this is through grade-level faith formation focus areas. See how we put these into action this year!



PRESCHOOL



YOUNG FIVES

KINDERGARTEN



FIRST GRADE



SECOND GRADE



THIRD GRADE



FOURTH GRADE



FIFTH GRADE



SIXTH GRADE

EIGHTH GRADE



SEVENTH GRADE



BURN BRIGHT - BURN BRIGHT -



ZCS SCHOOL THERAPY DOG

BLAZE

In the bustling halls of Zeeland Christian School, a special member of the community Burns Bright in a unique way. Meet Blaze, a male Golden Retriever and the newest member of the Student Support Services team. His gentle presence and unwavering companionship have quickly made him a beloved figure among students and staff alike.

Originally part of the Paws with a Cause service dog program, Blaze was found to be too social to ignore people enough to be a service dog. Recognizing his potential, the trainers placed him in a school setting, knowing his social skills would make him an excellent fit as a school therapy dog. Blaze thrives in this environment, especially with students, and doesn't mind saying "Good morning" to the dogs that visit our campus in the carline... even if it's only with the raise of his eyebrow or shake of this tail. He knows he's at work and stays committed to his duties.

Recognizing his potential, the trainers placed him in a school setting, knowing his social skills would make him an excellent fit as a school therapy dog.

Having completed all his training, Blaze has been working full-time at Zeeland Christian School since the winter, making it six months now. He spends his days interacting with students in a variety of ways, bringing joy and comfort to those who need it most.

Blaze is always on duty, providing invaluable support to students who may be struggling with heightened emotions or dysregulation.

Unlike typical pets, Blaze is always on duty, providing invaluable support to students who may be struggling with heightened emotions or dysregulation. Guided by his handler, Mrs. Deters, Director of Student Support Services, Blaze works tirelessly to help students manage their emotions. Though his duties keep him busy, he finds rest in Mrs. Deters' office throughout the day to ensure he is ready to spring into action whenever his assistance is needed.

Blaze's journey to becoming a school therapy dog reflects his love for others and the importance of using our gifts and talents to serve others. 🐾



Blaze loves to...
Play outside after his work is done and run
Take naps in Mrs. Deter's office (sometimes he snores)
Try to sneak cat food for a treat

BRIGHT

BURN BRIGHT

Welcomed As We Are

When we say inclusion at Zeeland Christian, we are referring to the 34-year-long commitment to welcome, include, educate, and extend belonging to all learners.

After all these years, our desire to provide inclusive education to all children is even stronger. Why? Because we have 34 years' worth of names, faces, stories, and Holy Spirit moments to look back on and fuel us as we strive to provide belonging for each student.

At ZCS, we know we are incomplete without all types of learners. Each child deserves to leave school every day feeling loved, known, and included. Including all learners is biblical, and over the years we've learned it's primarily inexperience that causes someone to view it as an obligation rather than a joy and blessing.

God has offered us the opportunity to extend love and belonging to all of His precious children, including those who thrive in the school setting and those for whom school is difficult.

Each of you reading this is vital in keeping inclusive education a priority. In fact, our desire to support all children allows ZCS to be a place where students of all abilities and backgrounds are welcomed as they are and have the opportunity to learn about their belonging to Christ while finding their place in our community.

What a beautiful gospel-centered picture this paints. Welcomed as we are, not because we have met a standard or earned our way in. This depth of belonging can only be found in a community that knows and experiences the generous and undeserved grace and love of Jesus Christ, our Savior. ☺

Did you know?

ZCS tuition rates for all students are the same regardless of the amount of support a student might receive.

We do this to help carry the burden of families of children with varied abilities and to ensure our students with all abilities and backgrounds have the opportunity to learn, worship, and play together, enriching the educational experience for all.

With this in mind, the Mission Advancement team annually raises funds to support the ZCS Student Support Services model.

Currently, we need your help by June 30, 2024, to reach this year's goal of \$300,000.



SCAN TO GIVE NOW

Received YTD: \$54,948
Still Needed: \$245,052





save on your tuition with **TRIP**



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THROUGH PURCHASES YOU ALREADY MAKE.

**VISIT
ZCS.ORG/TRIP**

BY ABBI WRIGHT, 8TH GRADE

HOW GOD HAS RESTORED ME

“He stepped into my brokenness. Into my exhaustion, failure, sadness, and confusion, and he reminded me that all I had to do was come, that I didn't have to carry any of those things that I had been so worried about because he carried it to the cross and paid the price for me.”



When our now 8th-grade class chose "Restored" for this year's theme last spring, I was really excited about it. What an amazing gift God has given us that we get to receive and live into. The story that I'm going to tell you is a little bit about how God has restored me and how I've seen him working in my life.

Last summer, when I was at camp, we had a worship night, and I was really excited about it. It had been meaningful for me in the past, and I was looking forward to attending again. After the message, we sang the song "I Thank God." At that moment, I was overwhelmed by God's presence and just started crying. I cried so hard, not just tearing up but full-on sobbing. My friends looked at me a little funny and asked if I was okay; I probably nodded, said yeah or something, and I'm sure I looked really funny. Here I was, with the biggest smile on my face, just singing, dancing, and praising God while crying hysterically. But what my friends didn't realize was that I was crying out of joy. And in that moment, I wasn't thinking at all about what other people were thinking of me because I was so caught up in the moment, experiencing the love of God, that nothing else mattered.

You see, I had been trying so hard to live up to all these expectations without realiz-

ing it. Through how my friends, family, myself, and others saw me, I had created high expectations for myself. I was constantly trying to live up to the person that I wanted to be, who I thought I was expected to be, and it was exhausting. In that moment of worship, God showed up and overwhelmed me with a crazy sense of peace. As we sang about being at the end of the road, and then Jesus showed up, turned us around, and set us free, I could not have felt those words any more powerfully at that moment. I had been trying so hard to be perfect. In a way, I thought I could earn God's love and that I needed to live up to it, but God met me where I was. He stepped into my brokenness. Into my exhaustion, failure, sadness, and confusion, and he reminded me that all I had to do was come, that I didn't have to carry any of those things that I had been so worried about because he carried it to the cross and paid the price for me.

At that moment, I really understood what it meant to be restored. Because of his sacrifice, I am free to live in the love, forgiveness, and freedom that God has for me. I understood that I didn't have to try to earn his love anymore and that nothing I did could make him love me any more or any less. I hope all of you will experience the love and freedom in Christ that I have found. ☺





EVEN IN HARD TIMES

WRITTEN BY TIFFANY KRAKER |

At ZCS, we take special care in creating a supportive and nurturing environment for our students. One student who recently shared the impact of our school community is Savannah Bouws, an 8th grader whose time at ZCS has been both inspiring and transformative.

In the 1st grade, Savannah faced the difficulty of being diagnosed with Crohn's disease, a lifelong condition that can be particularly overwhelming for a young child. It was encouraging to hear from Savannah how the ZCS community rallied around her. "The friends and relationships with teachers I had helped me know that I would be okay," Savannah shared with us. Our teachers, understanding her situation, provided an environment where she felt safe, supported, and loved.

"The friends and relationships with teachers I had helped me know that I would be okay,

Beyond the emotional and social support, ZCS has played a crucial role in Savannah's spiritual growth. Our commitment to devotions, Bible classes, and integrating faith into everyday conversations has deeply influenced her. Savannah reflected, "I learned to trust God even in hard times and that God loves me." This spiritual guidance has been pivotal in helping her develop a strong foundation of faith.

Savannah's story highlights how a supportive, faith-filled environment can profoundly shape a student's life, providing them with the tools and confidence to face any future challenges. ☺

"I learned to trust God even in hard times and that God loves me.

A group of children in a pond, some standing on the shore and others in the water, holding nets and shovels, engaged in an outdoor activity. The background shows a grassy area and a fence.

Outdoor **LEARNING, WORSHIP, & PLAY**

What's New

Earlier this year, we were thrilled to announce that we will be expanding our outdoor education offerings to include a Young Fives afternoon add-on at the ZCS main campus.

We believe that continuing to strengthen our outdoor education offerings will support our students, specifically our youngest learners at our Creation Ridge campus, as they make the move from preschool to elementary.

We are excited about this next step forward and what it means for all our students. The ZCS Young Fives Nature-based afternoon add-on starts this fall!

History

In 2017, ZCS began gathering information on the benefits of kids having more time in nature. We found that extended time outdoors led to more creative play, health benefits, higher student engagement, and the opportunity to explore God's creation in an educational setting. With this knowledge, ZCS decided that we wanted all our students to engage in more outdoor learning, worship, and play.

Since this time, we've taken small steps to provide more intentional outdoor time, such as adding tools and objects that allow preschoolers to play more creatively outdoors and increasing recess for our elementary and middle school. We have also taken big steps to support outdoor learning, such as opening Creation Ridge, the ZCS outdoor preschool. Most recently, we've piloted Nature-rich classes in Young Fives and Kindergarten.

While the progression of incorporating more outdoor time for our students has ebbed and flowed, we are pleased with the foundation that has been built and the quality of outdoor education we provide. As with all of our programs at ZCS, it's vital for us to provide a well-balanced educational experience for our students. Therefore, in a sense, we have spent the years since opening Creation Ridge exploring what would work well for our community.

NATURE-RICH WITH MRS. BOSCH



"What a fun adventure it has been - taking the kindergarten and Y5's children outside for nature-rich learning, worship, and play!

I am amazed, yet not surprised, at how much our school theme, Restored, and theme verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17, has come up this year in our learning! Metaphors for life abound in creation!

As we have studied caterpillars turning into butterflies, deer shedding their antlers, tad-

-poles transforming into frogs, the life cycle of a pumpkin, how God prepares insects, pinecones, and all of creation for each season - He too gives us exactly what we need, and He never changes! He is faithful and good. These nature-rich experiences help connect children more and more to their Creator and give a powerful picture of who He is.

I am looking forward to next year with great anticipation. Over the summer, a new playscape will be created for our students. This new Nature-rich playscape has been a collaborative effort, and I am so grateful for all who have been involved in preparing this sacred space for learning, worship, and play!



I can't wait to spend even more time outside with His children! It brings me great joy to continue to use children's natural curiosity; their sense of wonder and awe to lead to a deeper understanding of God's characteristics - and who He is as our Creator!

I deeply hope that we will find His fingerprints dwelling in all of creation and together we will worship Him by proclaiming, 'Wow, God!'" 🙏



ZCS ALUMNI VISIT

GOLD NOTE

Subscribe to the Gold Note:

Zeeland Christian School's quarterly newsletter for donors, past parents, grandparents, and alumni. Stay connected with community stories, alumni achievements, and campus updates.



Have a story to share?

We love hearing about alumni and ZCS family updates and achievements. Please forward these announcements to: Dana Geurink '05, ZCS Donor & Alumni Specialist, dgeurink@zcs.org.

ZCS Legacy Event
November 7th, 2024 | 6:00pm
SAVE THE DATE!

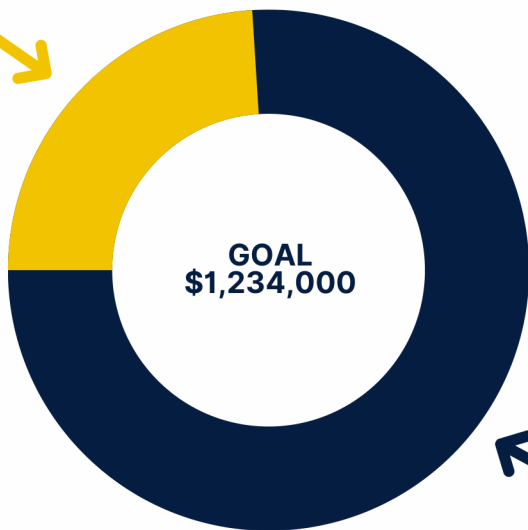
FUNDRAISING PROGRESS

24%

We still need your help

As we approach our fiscal year end on June 30, if you want that kind of high-quality learning environment for your child, grandchild, or community, please consider a gift today. You can write a check and return it in the envelope attached to the center of The Bell or give securely online at zcs.org/give.

**STILL NEEDED
\$325,342**



Fundraised

At ZCS, we believe a high-quality Christian learning environment consists, first and foremost, of relational and skilled teachers who love kids and are passionate about the kingdom of God. It also includes students with various abilities, a diverse blend of languages, nationalities, and socio-economic levels, and a burning desire to learn more daily! The Annual Fund helps make that possible through Tuition Assistance, The Tim Bosch Fund (Support Services), and our General Operating Fund. The collective need for the 2023-24 school year is just over \$1.2mil.

76%

**TOTAL RAISED
\$908,658**





2024-25 THEME

**MY HELP COMES FROM
THE LORD, THE MAKER
OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.
HE WILL NOT LET
YOUR FOOT SLIP —
HE WHO WATCHES
OVER YOU WILL NOT
SLUMBER.**

PSALM 121:2-3

STAND FIRM



A Note From Our Interim Head of School

TOM DeJONGE

Dear Zeeland Christian School Families and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I greet you as Zeeland Christian School's Interim Head of School for the 2024-2025 school year! As you are aware, I will finish my time as Grand Rapids Christian Schools' Superintendent on June 30, 2024, a position I have held since 2004. Being asked to serve ZCS students, staff, and parents in this capacity is an honor and opportunity for which I am very grateful. ZCS has a long history of excellence that has been faithfully supported by generations of families who understand the importance of providing their children with an outstanding educational experience rooted in Christ. What a privilege it is to partner with you as an extension of your family to accomplish that purpose.



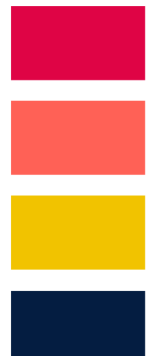
Closing another year of school and kicking off the summer season is an exciting time indeed. Thank you for entrusting your children to the loving care of ZCS teachers and staff this past school year. Throughout the first few weeks in June, I am scheduled to meet in 1-1 meetings with each member of the ZCS leadership team (hats off to Tracy Nelesen for scheduling those meetings!). I am looking forward to meeting with each of them personally to learn more about ZCS' strengths, priorities, opportunities for growth, and what has made ZCS the wonderful Christian school it has always been.

I firmly believe that Christian education is as important today as it has ever been and that, as Christian educators and staff, we are called to continue the tradition of Christ-centered excellence for our children. ZCS students are blessed with a variety of talents, learning styles, hopes, and dreams. It is my prayer that they will find many different ways to use their hearts, minds, and strength for God's glory today and throughout their lives.

Our faith theme for the coming year, chosen by our upcoming eighth-grade class, is Stand Firm. Psalm 121:2-3, found below, is the scripture from which this theme is taken. **Join me and our staff in praying that our children's faith is deep and that they may Stand Firm in the knowledge that God will always be with them to strengthen them and hold them up.**

Personally and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, may you and your family experience God's richest blessings throughout the summer season. And may your children burn bright as they anticipate another year of learning and responding to God's call on their lives.

Tom DeJonge
Interim Head of School





STANDING STONE SOCIETY

Est. 2019

Members of the
Standing Stone
Society include
Zeeland Christian
School in their will
or estate plan.

Interested in becoming a
Standing Stone Society member?
Contact Peter Jenkins at pjenkins@zcs.org.

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 ENGELSMAN GREENHOUSE
 ERICA BOERMAN
 ETS WEST MICHIGAN
 EVERGREEN SPRINKLING, INC.
 EXCEL TURF AND PEST LLC
 EXCELLAWN & LANDSCAPE
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 FARMERS CO-OP
 FREDERIK MEIJER GARDENS & SCULPTURE PARK
 GEBBEN'S EXCAVATING LLC
 GENTEX CORPORATION
 GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM
 GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM
 GRASSMID GREENHOUSE
 HEASLEY SEEDS LLC
 HILL ROAD PROPERTIES LLC
 HOEKSTRA ELECTRICAL SERVICES
 HOEKSTRA PLUMBING
 HOLLAND CHRISTIAN

HOLLAND MOTOR HOMES
 HOLLAND SPECIAL DELIVERY
 HOME PORT SUPPLY CO
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 INTERIORS BY CASEY
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 JEFF DORNBOS
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 KIEKOVER, SCHOLMA & SHUMAKER
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 KIM BAUMANN
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 MICHIGAN SPORTS ACADEMIES
 MINOR SUPPLY
 MORREN BROS AGRI SERVICE
 NAGELKIRK COOKIE BALLS
 NELI'S DUTCH VILLAGE
 OK TIRE STORES
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 OVERISEL LUMBER
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 WASTE MANAGEMENT
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 WOODEN SHOE RESTAURANT
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IN MEMORY OF

IN MEMORY OF DONNA HELDER

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