

LIONHEART

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF INTERMOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

EQUIP • INSPIRE • THRIVE



SPRING 2023



LETTER FROM GABE

By Gabe Pethtel, head of school



As I reflect on this school year, I am reminded of the scripture in Revelation 4:11, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” ICS was founded over 40 years ago to glorify God by providing a distinctly Christian school to partner with families to educate students throughout the Salt Lake City area. Our administrative team and school board are working hard to build a new strategic vision for the future of ICS. We are confident that our mission must remain consistent to serve as a Christ-centered learning community that equips and inspires students to thrive in God’s world. To achieve our mission, and build a faithful new vision, ICS remains committed to hiring and training teachers and staff who are born again Christians, and whose degrees and qualifications are aligned to provide excellent instruction to our students. Please join me in thanking God for blessing ICS with outstanding teachers and staff who partner with parents to build a learning community that honors Him.

In this edition of our “Lionheart” newsletter, you will find articles that highlight the commitment to joy and wonder in learning that ICS provides to our students. Pay attention to the illustrated graphics throughout pinpointing stories that reflect our Teaching for Transformation Throughlines (read “Storyboarding TtT” for a definition of “Throughline”). To that end, we are so thankful for your continued prayers and gracious support to provide our ICS Annual Fund with over \$450,000 this year! Your prayers and gifts help us to sustain and grow one of our most precious assets, our Christian teachers and staff. As we seek to build our future vision through increased programming, facilities, courses, and curriculum, we also desire to encourage our teachers and staff by raising their salaries and benefits and providing them with top level professional development. These things allow them to help achieve their goals as educators while providing our students with the very best Christ-centered learning community possible.

ABOUT ICS’S LIONHEART

The *Lionheart* is a publication of Intermountain Christian School. The purpose of the *Lionheart* is to keep you up to date on everything that is happening in our school and to unify our greater school community.

Please contact ICS Marketing and Admissions office if you would like to update your contact information or if you know of someone who would like to receive the *Lionheart*.

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MIGHTY MATHEMATICIANS

By Paula Potter, third grade teacher

Math, the subject everybody loves to hate! Fortunately for me that couldn’t be further from the truth. I love teaching math! It allows me a small glimpse into the mind of God and how He created all things to hold together in the world of numbers. Colossians 1:16-17 states, “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth... all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” So whether you love math or not, God created it and I count it joy to help my students uncover some of the mystery of His creation.

This year the ICS elementary team has the privilege of implementing a brand new math curriculum that has a balanced approach of skills practice, inquiry, problem solving, and conceptual understanding. My Math by McGraw-Hill has proven to be solid in helping our students feel successful in approaching math with confidence instead of defeat. To quote Ms. Frazee,

“I HAVE ENJOYED TEACHING A CURRICULUM THAT IS CHALLENGING AND MEANINGFUL. AS A TEACHER, IT IS SUCH A JOY TO SEE STUDENTS HAVE LIGHT BULB MOMENTS. IT HAS ALSO HELPED MY STUDENTS GAIN CONFIDENCE AND REALLY ENJOY MATH.”

Another valuable feature of our new math curriculum is that it allows time for reflection and self exploration with the concepts so that students understand the why instead of just the how we work with numbers. It is amazing to see how God’s children work through and solve the same problem in various ways and still come up with the same answer. This is just another beautiful reflection of how our Creator designed our minds to think differently.

Included in recognizing that not all students are the same, we love that My Math has programs to both support those who struggle as well as challenge students who are a bit more advanced. The games and manipulatives that come with the program are fun and useful.

Still on the fence about whether or not you like math? I encourage you to step into one of the elementary classrooms to watch and listen. There is joy in discovering all of the amazing ways numbers work together, and we can’t wait to see how our students impact God’s world with this knowledge!



Pictured: John Edmunds (5th)



MISSION
Intermountain Christian School is a Christ-centered learning community that exists to equip and inspire students to thrive in God’s world.

CORE VALUES
EQUIP. INSPIRE. THRIVE.



A DEEPER MEANING TO MUSIC

By Shanna Hafemann, music, ensemble, and bells teacher

When a family is considering the study of music, their priorities typically include discipline, making memories and self expression. Although these principles are important in their own right, my prayer as a teacher is that my students use music as a life skill; one they can use in order to unravel their emotions, nurture healthy relationships, and explore their faith.

Music tour is ICS' long-standing tradition of combining music performance with Christ-centered service to under reached communities. Over the past two years we have sought to do this with the disabled community in the Salt Lake area. This community is uniquely overlooked due to a deficiency in awareness, accommodations and understanding of these individual's unique struggles. This year, ICS students were able to minister to this community through the practice of music therapy.

Music therapy can take on many different forms: from activities that work to improve a person's gait with a musical beat to listening to a song that alters a person's mood. At two different schools we sang familiar songs, showed picture books, used colorful instruments and did some basic movements to the music. We used music as the tool to reach this special population in our community. I pray that God will continue to provide opportunities for our relationships with these communities to deepen.

During the second half of music tour I asked students to experiment with their own form of music therapy: song writing. Through various activities and sessions we progressed through the daunting task of writing a song. The result was sacred. Imagine a group of teenagers poetically conveying a personal experience, allowing not only themselves but their peers a moment to feel seen, heard and known. That is my deep hope for my students: that they would embody the love of Christ by offering a piece of themselves to serve one another.

Pictured: (Bottom left) Jane Rudd (7th) and Mrs. Hafemann lead worship in ICS's Wednesday chapel. (Bottom right) Kasey Hoar (11th) and Rebecca Wanner (11th) rehearse in Bells with classmates.



STORYBOARDING TFT

By Denise Buckley, director of curriculum and instruction

Learning can be measured in as many ways as there are students. Educators use visual tools like charts and graphs to measure learning; they also use hands-on tools like STEM projects and science experiments. *Teaching for Transformation (Tft)* promotes a unique way of measuring learning that our teachers are experimenting with this year: the Storyboard.

Walk into any of our classrooms and you will see a bulletin board that has been transformed into something new. Incorporating the teacher's Deep Hope and student learning, a Tft Storyboard tracks how students have progressed through the school year – academically and spiritually. Student work and reflections mark how they have grown in their subject knowledge as well as their Biblical understanding.

Each Storyboard is unique. Some teachers post their Learning Targets and student work that demonstrates how those targets were achieved. Other teachers post connections to their Deep Hope and ask students to use post-it notes to reflect on how those concepts are seen in day to day learning.

Others ask students to draw what they are learning and how that connects to God's Great Story. Still others take the Tft Throughlines and ask students to find ways that these "habits of living" are evident in and around them.

We welcome you to come visit our classrooms and take a look at our Tft Storyboards. Read our teachers' Deep Hopes and enjoy the way student learning is measured through these transforming boards. Take in and celebrate with us all that our students are learning!

TFT VOCABULARY:

Deep Hope: a statement of purpose and calling

Throughlines: discipleship habits and practices that form the learners and transform God's world around them

Storyboard: a map of the learning journey students are making within God's story

Learning Targets: focus learning and empower the learner





LUSK LEADS

By Sara Hobbs, director of marketing and communications

The game of basketball has always been special to ICS Varsity Girl's Basketball Head Coach Shannon Lusk. She has loved the sport throughout her life, starting with playing pickup with her dad. Basketball was their connection, their love language. As she got older, her love for the game only grew, whether through competitive play with AAU, high school and college, or coaching her two daughters Gillian (7th grade at ICS) and Kendrick (9th grade at ICS). She appreciates that basketball teaches both mental and physical toughness, as well as working together and connecting as a team.

“BASKETBALL TAUGHT ME MENTAL TOUGHNESS AND GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND REALIZE GOALS—ALL SKILLS THAT TRANSLATED TO OTHER AREAS OF MY LIFE OUTSIDE OF BASKETBALL.”

Coach Lusk joined the ICS coaching staff in fall 2022. When approached about coaching, she prayed and God told her yes - take the job! In this role, her overall goal is to build a successful girl's basketball program at ICS, from middle to high school. But, Coach Lusk has more than just one goal: she hopes the players improve as athletes, teammates, and leaders with strong Christian character; develop fundamentals; grow in mental and physical toughness; leave the program stronger than when they began; and last but not least, WIN as many games as possible. Of course, her biggest dream is to win state one day.

Coach Lusk's coaching philosophy is inspired by Psalm 118:24 - "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." She wants her players to understand the blessing of a day; be aware of their God-given talent and abilities and use them to glorify God; and be thankful and happy that they're capable and healthy to play the game. She strives to teach the Lady Lions to focus on what they can control - their effort and attitude - and give 100 percent, 100 percent of the time. Coach Lusk says, "Every girl can give 100 percent effort regardless of skill level. This permeates into being a good teammate and friend and building others up." She expects players to give her all they've got, all the time.

This season, Coach Lusk has enjoyed getting to know the team, as well as coaching with her Assistant Coach Amber Furze (ICS alumna, class of 1990). Coach Furze's talent, godly leadership, support, and positive attitude has been a gift to the team. Coach Lusk admits she feels blessed to have this opportunity to be this team's coach. They have been working so hard this season, and she is beyond proud of them. As the Lady Lions continue to grow under Coach Lusk's leadership, the ICS community is excited to cheer them on. Go, Lions!

Pictured: (Above) Coach Lusk. (Left) ICS Varsity Girl's Basketball Team 2023



IN THEIR WORDS...

We know why our parents value a Christian education at ICS, but what about our students? We asked a handful of our high schoolers to finish this sentence in their own words, "I am grateful for my Christian education at Intermountain Christian School because..." Here's what they had to say.

I am grateful for my Christian education at ICS because of the general Christ-centered education but also the personal education you receive from very loving people at this school. - Will Schumacher (11th)



I am grateful for my Christian education at ICS because it has allowed me to see what I learn through the lens of a faith-based perspective. It has allowed me to make close connections with my peers in a way that I would have not been able to outside of a faith community. Ultimately, it has strengthened my faith and equipped me to work hard in my years to come. I wouldn't have wanted to go to any other school! - Evie Harter (11th)

I am grateful for my Christian education at ICS because in the state we live in, it can be hard to find Christians to be encouraged by. It's nice to be in a school where you're surrounded by like-minded people and encouraged by them weekly. - Aiden Pickett (11th)



I am grateful for my Christian education at ICS because it keeps God as a constant in my life. Everything is tied back to Him, and we see His order, beauty, and creativity in all we do. My Christian education has allowed me to appreciate the world through the lens of seeing everything as God's creation, and has affected me in all I do. - Ellie Menning (10th)



I am grateful for my Christian education at ICS because I get to be surrounded by other Christians on a daily basis. They encourage me to be more like Christ! - David Reist (9th)



I am grateful for my Christian education at ICS because I have been taught to look for God's hand in all things. I love that not only do we look at God's character in Bible class but also in science, English, art, history, music, and sports. - Natalie Russell (12th)



BEARING FRUIT

By Pamela Smith, dean of student life

Welcome spring! I am so glad that warmer weather is on the horizon. I can hardly wait to see how God's Fruit of the Spirit blossoms this spring.

At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, I shared my deepest hope that our ICS community would exude the Fruit of the Spirit, and we are doing just that. In my office, I have a wall full of pictures showing how our school community has demonstrated the Fruit of the Spirit (see picture below). It has been such a blessing to see Galatians 5:22 put into action. I can hardly wait to see **faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control** exuded as we conclude the school year.

As I reflect on this past year's memories demonstrating the Fruit of the Spirit, I would like to share a few with you.

In November 2022, I noticed two students talking to each other in the hall. Their camaraderie and smiling faces made me curious, so I asked what was happening. One of them had just given the other a pair of sneakers to play in for the upcoming basketball season. What a way to demonstrate **kindness**! A student was aware of a need and decided to meet it.

Another memory is our All School Christmas Chapel. It was a beautiful display of God's **love, peace, patience, and joy**. We were led in worship songs, and middle and high schoolers sang beautifully. Mr. Pethtel spoke about Christmas and **patience**. The icing on the cake was our preK nativity skit. They were amazing. It was a blessing to witness the celebration of Christ's birth school-wide.

The next memory is of our faculty and staff Christmas party at the Pickett family home and the **love** they showed us by opening up their home. We had a wonderful meal, sang songs, played games, and Mrs. Sophia Lee even played the piano. It was such a **joyful** occasion.

The last memory I will share took place in February, which was all about **goodness**. To see our high school students display **goodness** in their service to our school warmed my heart. They engaged with our elementary students during lunch and recess and cleaned the cafeteria, gym, and other places around the school. Thanks, high schoolers.

I look forward to how the Fruit of the Spirit will continue to unfold in our community the rest of this school year.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

By Jennifer Adema, director of admissions

Matthew Visnovsky graduated from ICS in 2009. He was an ICS Lion from 1st grade through senior year and says his time here defined his youth. Many of his strongest friendships today are ones he formed during his time at ICS and they shape who he is now. He says that ICS' focus on memorizing Bible verses and daily devotionals helped reinforce his faith and establish good habits.

Matt places a high value on the education he received while at ICS. He credits our emphasis on biblical truths with helping to lay the foundations and equip him in his faith. He also learned principles for defending his faith in high school and continued to grow and develop these skills in college and beyond. During high school, Matt played baseball and soccer, noting that the unique athletics opportunities at ICS not only encouraged physical fitness, but camaraderie between classmates. Matt credits his time in student council as growing him the most—teaching him leadership, perseverance, and valuable organizational skills that were central for attaining his degree in mechanical engineering and navigating life's challenges.

His career path has brought him back to Lion Lane in a way he wouldn't have imagined when he was serving the student body as President during his senior year. From ICS, Matt went on to earn a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Utah, working for a few years as a product development engineer for a local medical device company. He helped design surgical instruments, orthopedic knee implants, and led the development of an automated machine used to conduct implant quality inspections from concept through build and FDA documentation. He says he really enjoyed the combination of engineering and creativity that the position entailed but found himself particularly drawn to the programming and tech portions of the job. This led him to work at WebGuy Internet where he does contract IT, web development and consulting, and one of his IT clients is ICS! Matt works about 20 hours a month at ICS maintaining the wi-fi network, updating the servers, and helping with overall tech and IT needs. When asked how walking into ICS is different now than when he was a student, he answers,

“I FEEL A SENSE OF NOSTALGIA BUT NOW ALSO A SENSE OF PRIDE IN GETTING TO CONTRIBUTE IN A SMALL WAY TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF ICS STUDENTS.”

When Matt isn't working, he enjoys spending time with his wife Lindsay and their two daughters, Penelope (2) and Madeline (1 month). Matt says he hopes one day Penny and Maddy can have Ms. Potter as their teacher too! (Matt was in Ms. Potter's 4th grade class.) Matt and Lindsay met at the end of 2016 at The Rock Church and were married just a year later. Currently, they attend Risen Life Church where Matt also applies his love of technology to running sound for worship service. He invites all who are reading this to find him on his personal website (which is still a work in progress): www.visnovsky.us or on GitHub: [www.github.com/mattv8](https://github.com/mattv8).

Pictured: (Left) Matt's senior year at ICS. (Right) Matt and his wife, Lindsay, and daughters Madeline (newborn) and Penelope (2).



Mrs. Smith's Fruit of the Spirit Wall





FLEX-ING IN SCIENCE

By Jennifer Adema, admissions director

As part of the implementation of Teaching for Transformation, (TfT), ICS teachers are required to complete a Formational Learning Experience (FLEX). FLEX connect students to do real work with real people who have a real problem. The hope is that students will integrate God’s story (Creation, the Fall, Redemption and Restoration) into real life experiences through their FLEX.

This year, Amy Florell challenged her Anatomy and Physiology class to do a FLEX that involved a research based assignment based on the shrinking of the Great Salt Lake. There was an emphasis on health effects, connecting it to the curriculum of the class. Students found that the dry lake bed is exposing toxins in our air, such as arsenic, along with other environmental concerns. The FLEX required the 11 students to break into groups. Each group carried a percentage of the research, and were tasked with watching videos, reading news articles and using various other media. The class held a Zoom call with Dr. Kevin Perry who is the head of the atmospheric science department at the University of Utah. Dr. Perry is highly regarded as the global expert on this issue.

The culmination of the project was a public presentation at the Holladay Library to an audience of approximately 60 people. The students shared their findings, certainly working to increase awareness about the shrinking Great Salt Lake. Each student presented in some way proving to some that public speaking is scary, but achievable!

Florell was most surprised at how hard the FLEX was for some of her students. She thought that gathering information and completing research would be the hardest part, but time proved that learning to trust was most difficult for her class. There was a lot of risk involved with this FLEX, and of course students want to be assured and have control over their success. Students learned to trust their peers, that the work would be accomplished. Florell’s class also learned to trust in her discernment, that they were indeed capable of accomplishing this grand project! Florell admits that this was a lot of work. But, there was great motivation to complete the work and do it well, because everyone wanted to be successful and knowledgeable during the presentation. At the end of the experience, the class felt accomplished both collectively and as individuals.

When looking forward to future FLEX, Florell anticipates the excitement of watching all the students feel accomplished for very different reasons. This project drew a broad range of skills out of her classroom, giving them opportunities to develop their strengths. These FLEX work to tie student’s faith into their actual work. This specificity serves as a valuable addition to regular curriculum.

Pictured: (Top left) The Anatomy and Physiology class presents to the community at the Holladay Library. (Top right) Students and Mrs. Florell relieved and encouraged after the presentation.



A WORTHY INVESTMENT

By Jennifer Adema, admissions director

The Bastones moved into Salt Lake City in the spring of 2021. Their daughter, Avery, would be starting kindergarten that fall, and it was important to them that they find a school for her that would fit their needs and desires. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bastone experienced a faith based learning community as students and desired that for their own family as well. As adults, they recognized the value of the lifelong friendships formed, the loving community and the faith-based teaching at their Christian schools.

With some research, the Bastone family found ICS and came for a tour. Immediately felt the warmth and hospitality of our staff. ICS fully aligned with what they were looking for, and they didn’t need to look any further for kindergarten options.

During Avery’s kindergarten and first grade years, her parents recognized huge strides both socially and academically. She constantly tells her family how much she loves her school, which solidifies their decision to have her in a safe, fun, and caring environment. Avery’s little brother Lucas will be attending preK at ICS this fall. He shows the same excitement and enthusiasm for the school!

The Bastone family appreciates the uniqueness of 14 grades on one campus. There is value in exposure to the upper grades; whether it’s intentional engagement in the classroom, attending theater productions, or cheering on a high school sports team. Avery gets excited about these events and looks forward to when she’s able to participate in these fun programs herself.

Mr. and Mrs. Bastone benefit from ICS as well! They credit the school with providing opportunities for relationships and community. Being new to Salt Lake City, the friendships formed through ICS have helped them establish roots.

To those considering a Christ-centered education through ICS, Mrs. Bastone would say to take the leap! It’s worth it seeing your child truly equipped, inspired, and thriving in God’s world. She believes this is a firm foundation for her kids which will continue to grow as they grow.

Pictured: The Bastone family pictured at Solitude Mountain Resort.



“ [AT ICS] HER PARENTS RECOGNIZED HUGE STRIDES BOTH SOCIALLY AND ACADEMICALLY. SHE CONSTANTLY TELLS HER FAMILY HOW MUCH SHE LOVES HER SCHOOL, WHICH SOLIDIFIES THEIR DECISION TO HAVE HER IN A SAFE, FUN, AND CARING ENVIRONMENT. ”



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