



GENEVA ACADEMY

Distinctive Classical Christian Learning

Geneva Journal

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Message from the Headmaster:

2014/2015: Looking Back & Looking Forward (January 7th Chapel Message)

Our passage this morning is Deuteronomy 8:2-11. Moses is talking to the children of Israel, who have spent 40 years wandering in the desert. They are about to cross over into the Promised Land, and Moses is speaking to the people as they stand on the line between the past and future. It is a good passage to read as we have just crossed from 2014 to 2015. How many of you were awake on New Year's Eve when that happened? Did you count down the seconds?

We start in the middle of what Moses was saying. Verses 2-4 read, *"And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years."*

Remembering is important! In our culture, we consider anything two years old to be ancient history! We are always looking to what is new, what is the latest app, what's coming up. But God wants His people to remember. Here we are instructed to particularly remember God's leading. How has God led you this last year? Last summer? We are to remember His working on our character. What lessons did He teach us? How has he brought our own shortcomings to our attention?

We are to remember that He lets us get hungry, and then He satisfies that hunger. Even from a literal sense, how many of you children went to bed hungry last year? I'm sure most of you had three good meals a day, every day.

That's over 1,000 meals! Do you remember? That's God's goodness to us. God did not let the Israelites' clothes and shoes wear out in the desert, where they would not have been able to replace them. Did you have to go barefoot in the cold last year? Did you have clothes? I'm sure many of you have dressers stuffed with clothes, and closets. Are you grateful?

Verse 5 says, *"You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you."* I love my son George over there...I would do anything for him. He knows that I will also keep him from straying off the right path. God loves us as His children, and cares for us. We need to remember this!

Next we have a "therefore" in verse 6. It's the big turning point, from looking back to looking forward. *"Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him."* These are the things we are to do as we enter into this year, a year of blessing and promise:

1. We are to keep His commandments. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." This is how we show our obedience and gratitude.
2. We are to walk in His ways. We can keep God's commandments, but not really be walking in His ways. You might not steal from your classmate, but are you selfish? Are you kind? We need to walk in His ways.
3. We need to fear Him. Respect our Lord and Creator.

Let's apply this lesson in prayer now, as we think back to last year. Was there a lesson you were taught? What physical needs were met? Pray about that. Which commandment do you need to keep better? Pray about that. If nothing comes to mind, pray that God would bring to mind what you need to work on! Finally, express your gratitude to Him. We should be thankful people. Let's pray... •

In Pursuit of a Passionate Father

Several years ago, my wife and I had the opportunity to leave a flourishing ministry in order to pursue one of our dreams, to plant a church from scratch. So we moved to a new town, bought a fixer upper and began the two year prenatal stage of birthing a new church. Our first child, a daughter, was born into our busy "We-can't-slow-down-because-we-are-pursuing-our-dream," all-consuming craziness. She didn't slow us down. The church plant was the first necessary step in a sequence of other amazing goals we had lined up. We were going to leave a mark on the world. So a baby was not going to detract us. In fact, we put her in the stroller and used her cuteness as eye candy when we went door to door. Then one day during the second pregnancy, a miscarriage came. The doctor told us there was no more heartbeat to be heard. Our baby had died, and it hit us harder than we thought something like that could. Around 2am the baby left her mother's warm safety. I picked her up, named her and put her in a jewelry box. We walked out to the backyard under the stars and buried her beneath the pistachio tree.

After a few days, we were back at pursuing our dream call. We had conferences to attend, tens of thousands of dollars to raise, and people to nurture to Christ. Annette became pregnant again and soon afterwards my father moved in so we could take care of him as he battled cancer. Our schedules were intense, there was no margin and we didn't need one. Several months into the pregnancy, we received a call from the doctor. They had set up an appointment for us to meet with a geneticist, something was wrong with the baby. We were told that there was a high likelihood that the baby was going to have major birth defects, one of which was Down's Syndrome. She informed us that it would be a strain on our marriage, our finances, our goals and unfair to the other kids in the family if we gave birth to a baby like this. We were told to move quickly, before we ran out of choices. We prayed over him, he was ours, our gift from God. We prayed that he would be healed.

In the meantime, my father was getting weaker and we put him on hospice. After a couple of days he died in our converted nursery which had become his room. We buried him that Wednesday. We didn't have time to grieve or process the loss, Sunday was the public launch day for the church. Giant billboards, 13,000 newspaper inserts, and 40,000 mailings had been purchased. We couldn't stop for this. Other people, less passionate about God than us, would have stopped for something like this, but we were not like them. We were called to a mission and we were not going to let up. With the launch of the church came an even more intense time of busyness. A few months later the baby was born and we named him Elijah. Either the doctor was wrong or God healed him in the womb! Two more sons joined us over the next four years, but they weren't going to slow us down either. They weren't going to be used as an excuse like other families who were not fully dedicated to the Lord.

Pursuing our call was taking its toll on us as a family. Even though we had this intricate 12 page single space size-8 font to do list/timeline plan for raising that church up from scratch, we did not have much of one when it came to raising the kids. What little plans we had were mostly that we were not going to do it wrong like so many parents we had seen. The rest we just made up as we went along. The fourth child, the one we were not planning to have, was God's gracious straw on the camel's back. **We couldn't do it all.** God broke us here, at this point.

Parenting is not something we do when we have time between the important things like emails, Facebook posts and ministry. Parenting is not what takes place when Master Chef is interrupted. Parenting is discipleship and the home is a discipleship center, complete with dorms and a dining hall. Only we call those the bedrooms and the dinner table. The fourth child made us realize that after we spent our best hours on others, we gave the leftovers of our energy to our own kids. Parenthood was upon us in full force and we were

neglecting our primary disciples. People come in and out of church fellowships, and in and out of our lives. Yet my children were not meant to be merely in and out of my life. But this kind of spiritual negligence is not just limited to ministry. We can have the same lack of direct discipleship with our kids as we pursue the dominant cultural gospel called, "The American Dream." In our passionate pursuit of it, we have less left over to spend discipling the ones God has given us.

I don't want my kids to see their father's passion for others and other things to be in competition with his passion for the Lord and the ones he has been given to train up. I want them to know that Dad was their primary spiritual trainer, supplemented by Mom, and then the folks at church. We still dream of doing "great" things for God, if that is what he wants us to do. But my ministry priority for the next 40 years is to leave

my mark on a girl, three boys, and their children – to disciple them in the ways of Jesus. •



- Pastor **Samuel Sarkissian** of **Green Community Church**, located at 3777 Carnes Road, Roseburg, OR 97471
(541) 679-7761

Note from Geneva Academy Board

In about 6 weeks, we will be having our 3rd Annual Geneva Academy Dinner Auction. We are busy having meetings to prepare for this event, but we need items to be donated for the auction. All families were handed a packet at the Christmas Soiree that have information about the event and how to solicit donations. All donated items can be given to Nikki Yun, Lesa Ray, or myself. Class Baskets will be coordinated by Iryna Boehland. If you have any questions, please contact me. **Please remember that this is an important fundraiser for the school as the amount collected for tuition is not enough to fund all the needs of the school.** Six weeks is not very long, so first **pray**, and then please start collecting donations. God has blessed us greatly in the past, and I am looking forward to how he will continue to in the future.

- **Brad Kitchens**, Geneva Board Chair, father of 2 Geneva students

New Connection at Geneva:



School created a very useful way of checking your child progress, class activities, homework, useful information and dates. Please go to **www.renweb.com** and register - on the top right hand side of the screen you will find logins. A pull down menu will pop up, choose **ParentsWeb login**, choose create **a new ParentsWeb account**, district code is **GN-OR**. You must use the email you provided the school, so the system will recognize you. Once you log in to ParentsWeb you will be able to see announcements, calendar items, current and previous newsletters, school forms, a family directory, and homework and grades for Grades 5-12 that are in the system.

The system is new to everyone, so please be patient with teachers as they work on putting in homework and grades.

We are blessed and thankful to have many wonderful teachers at Geneva Academy. Mrs. Aleanna Sorensen of Second Grade graciously shares with us her informal Bio.

I have been tasked to write an informal autobiography about myself. First off, my name is Aleanna LeAnn Rachelle Ritchey Sorensen.

I was born to Daniel and DeAnna Ritchey during the month of July in my hometown of Roseburg, Oregon. I am the middle child of three. I have moved more times than most vacation in their lives, but only around the United States. I teach Second Grade here at Geneva Academy.

I often find myself thinking back to my own second grade year of school. During that year, I lived in a small town in Maryland just outside of Frederick. I had a great interest in ice-skating and classical music.

When my students need a little bit of encouragement, I often find myself telling stories about mistakes I had made or things I had overcome during my childhood. I would like to briefly share with you one of those stories.

I was an eager little girl who on occasion enjoyed helping my family. One afternoon I decided I was going to help out my parents by doing the dishes. (Before I get too far into my story, allow me tell you a little bit to set the stage. My father and mother had just spent a great deal of effort finishing our basement. One afternoon turned into quite a learning experience for my parents and me.) Okay, back to me filling the kitchen floor with bubbles and water... Oh, I meant to say "filling the sink!" I remember this day, not because I flooded my parent's basement and ruined the entirety of it, but I remember this day because my mother taught me about grace. I had walked away from filling the sink to speak to my mother for what felt like a brief moment. Soon after, my brother came running in, informing my mother that she was going to be very upset with me. My mother and father had a tendency throughout my childhood to look at items as being replaceable. This was not the first time I had ruined something. I remember clearly my mother and father not giving me one harsh word, nor one glance of disappointment, but only their grace. They saw that my heart was in the right spot, but my memory was a little bit off. I

often think about this so much when dealing with second graders; we all sometimes just need that little bit of extra grace.

After moving many more places, seeing many more things, and going on numerous historical drives (thanks, Daddy), by tenth grade we moved to Maryland for the second time. During these high school years I joined my school's national jazz choir and traveled all around the east coast for performances. During these two and half years of performing I made a few great friends. One of them is still my very best friend, my husband, Perry Sorensen.

Three years after I graduated from high school, I was blessed with being able to walk down the aisle to this amazing man. We have grown so much together with God as our Rock keeping us firm. In September of 2007, we welcomed with nervous hands, our precious daughter, Justice. In September of 2008, we were blessed to welcome Emerson, our son, into our lives.

Perry and I have moved four times in our marriage. We moved to Idaho from Maryland when Emerson was just three days old. During Perry's deployment to Kirkuk, Iraq, I found myself as a stay-at-home mommy that needed to find something to keep myself busy. I started to attend a group on our Air Force base called Protestant Women of the Chapel and quickly became greatly involved. I was on the board as a Retreat Coordinator. With Perry deployed, I was able to devote a huge amount of time to this group. God used every bit of it! I began to study Scripture more in-depth. A few months after Perry returned from Iraq, my aunt gave me a call. She told me about the little classical Christian school in Roseburg. She also informed me that they were looking for a first and second grade teacher. That leads me into the current chapter of my life.

I pray someday my story will simply read, "A woman of faith who walked with God."•

- ***Mrs. Aleanna Sorensen, Geneva teacher and mother of 2 Geneva student***

Geneva Upcoming Events for January-February 2015:

- Jan. 12 – Re-enrollment for current families begins! Be sure to guarantee your child’s place in class! Re-enroll by Feb. 20.
- Jan. 19 – REGULAR SCHOOL DAY (School is in session on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day).
- Jan. 23 – End of 2nd Quarter, End of Reading Challenge (K5, Grades 1- 2).
- Jan. 30 – Reading Challenge Reward Field Trips for Grades 1-2.
- Feb. 6-May 8 – Reading Challenge begins (K5, Grades 1-2).
- Feb. 6 – Douglas County Father Daughter Dance (www.dcfatherdaughterdance.com).
- Feb. 16 – Washington’s Birthday – NO SCHOOL.
- Feb. 17 – Silent Auction solicitations due. Deliver to Brad Kitchens’ office.
- Feb. 17 – Class Baskets deadline: K5-1st grade “Gift Cards for All Occasions”; 2nd grade “Wine Lovers Basket”; 3rd-4th grades “Family Game Night Basket”; 5th-12th grades “Gardening Basket”. Please contact your Home Room Mothers for details.
- Feb. 19 – Contact the office to request childcare for Mandatory Parent Education on Feb 20th.
- Feb 20 – 6:30 pm. Part 2 Mandatory Parent Education: “*Where is this education going? How to stay a few steps ahead of your children*”.
- Feb 28 – Geneva Academy Fundraising Auction.

Attention Parents of younger Grammar Students – please remember to bring a car/booster seat for your child’s field trip. Oregon Law requires that **children must use a booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4’9”**. Safety is very important! Most 2nd graders and younger must use booster seats.

School and Teachers’ Wish Lists:

- School is in need of 2 Digital Projectors.
- Miss Pam Harrison wishes for a TI-84 graphing calculator(s).
- Second Grade needs the following books - The Magic Tree house, Encyclopedia Brown, The Boxcar Children.
- Miss Laura Rowe wishes for a cabinet.
- Mrs. Annette Sarkissian needs a flat teaching podium.
- Mr. Turner needs easy-cut linoleum blocks.

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Business Ads:

Many of our fellow school families own businesses that provide superior goods and services and that support the school. We'd like to feature a few every month. Please let us know about your business, and we'll put it in our journal!

This month, we'd like to introduce you to Captivating Photography & Design Co. by **Kellie Trenkle** and **Hannah Spagnola**



www.kellietrenkle.com

~ Mrs. Kellie Trenkle, Geneva mother of 4 students



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~ Mrs. Hannah Spagnola, Geneva mother of 1 student