

Advance

Issue 54-2 | February 2024



Seniors Forge Bright Futures with College Courses and Scholarships

As the 2024 Nebraska Christian senior class eagerly approaches graduation in May, they are diligently preparing for their futures by taking on college courses and actively pursuing various scholarships to alleviate the costs of higher education. In the pursuit of their dreams, many seniors planning to attend college next year have been meticulously tracking deadlines and submitting applications for scholarships throughout the course of this year. Having completed the initial phase of college-specific scholarship applications, students are now channeling their efforts into other scholarship and sponsorship opportunities that can contribute to their educational journey.

One significant scholarship that has proven to be a blessing in past years is the Merrick Foundation Scholarship. This invaluable opportunity is available to high school seniors graduating in 2024 with a permanent address in Merrick County. The Merrick Foundation plays a crucial role in supporting the community, investing in youth, and contributing to local organizations.

Mrs. Shilo Birnie, the NC Counselor, expresses her excitement about the opportunities ahead for these students. "I love supporting students in whatever their plans may be after high school," she said. "If they are planning to continue any

formal education, I want to make sure they have access to scholarship opportunities."

While the application process can sometimes be daunting, seniors like Graci Boersen emphasize the importance of persevering through the challenges. "Filling out [scholarship applications] isn't too bad," she noted. "Getting all of the extra things and uploading them is the stressful part."



Mrs. Birnie instructs the senior class on how to properly and effectively apply for scholarships

Senior Julie Sidak, who has completed at least seven scholarship applications already this year, plans to submit twenty before she's done. Many seniors share her enthusiasm for applying to scholarships and are making it a priority alongside their college credit courses. Taking college credit courses during high school has become a strategic move for these seniors to alleviate the financial burden of future courses. According to Julie Sidak, "Taking early college [courses] has helped so much. It's a huge benefit because now you're not paying for housing and admissions."

Additionally, some seniors have explored sponsorship opportunities. Drew Bailey, sponsored by Friesen Ford, plans to work at the dealership while pursuing his college education. Drew's story exemplifies the importance of exposure to different career paths, as he discovered his passion during an NC field trip to the annual Southeast Community College Career Day.

Mrs. Birnie is delighted to witness the high level of excitement from this senior class in their pursuit of scholarships and sponsorships. She encourages students to remember that God is faithful and sufficient for each day, providing a reassuring message that relieves stress from future planning.

As Nebraska Christian seniors navigate the complex landscape of higher education, their proactive approach to scholarship applications and strategic pursuit of sponsorships are paving the way for promising and fulfilling futures. The commitment and enthusiasm displayed by this class reflect the school's dedication to nurturing well-rounded individuals prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



Seniors Hope Seip and Ali Bruning pose with their college pendants

SERVICE Awards



Secondary Student Service Award Recipients: Addie, Katie, and Devin

In a heartwarming celebration of character and commitment to service, Nebraska Christian School proudly recognizes three outstanding students for their vibrant dispositions. Addie, Katie, and Devin have been bestowed with the January Service Award, embodying qualities that exemplify a commitment to fostering positivity, embracing relationships, and radiating joy within the school community.

Addie's tenacity and grace in the face of adversity have not gone unnoticed. She consistently works hard, maintaining a

Continued on page 3

Fifth Graders Dive into Trout Adventure

Excitement abounds in the elementary building at Nebraska Christian School as fifth and sixth-grade students embark on a unique and educational journey raising rainbow trout, thanks to a wonderful opportunity provided by the State of Nebraska Game and Parks Department. The trout eggs, which arrived on campus on Thursday, January 25th, are now being attentively cared for by the eager students.

The project was made possible through a grant secured by the NC fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Edson, covering the cost of the tank and all necessary accessories. The fifth and sixth graders have been actively involved in preparing the perfect environment for the trout eggs, testing the water quality and dutifully watching so it stays at the optimal temperature.

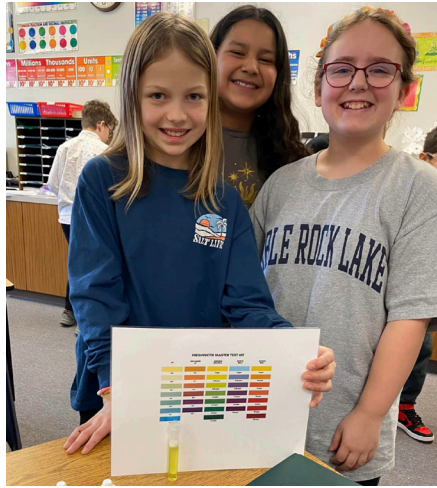


Stetson Stuhmer carefully gathers a water sample from the trout tank.

Mrs. Edson shared her enthusiasm for this project, stating, "The kids and I are so excited. We've been testing the water to make sure our tank is optimal for the trout eggs. Our chiller is hard at work keeping the water around 52 degrees."

The class received 200 eggs from the Nebraska Game and Parks Department, and within the first few days of having the eggs in the class tank, as of February 1st, approximately 50 have already hatched. The students are actively engaged in the various stages of the trout's life cycle, gaining valuable insights into the complexities of nature and God's perfect and fascinating design of these unique creatures.

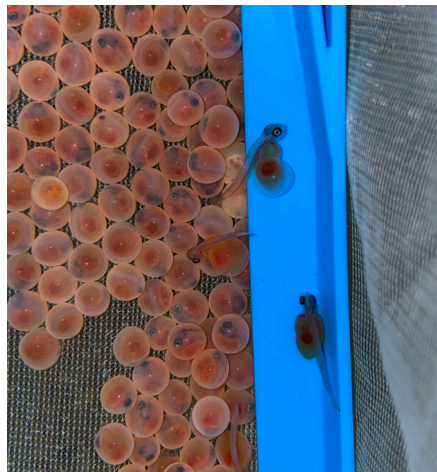
Speaking with the fifth-grade students, their excitement was contagious. They



Lillian Paschke, Bethzabella Ramirez, and Charlotte Hale show off their water sample alongside the corresponding water-quality color chart

expressed their joy and eagerness to share their experiences and responsibilities in caring for the fish. The students have come to realize this project, initially focused on science, has expanded to encompass lessons in several different topics. Some of these topics include, how to be responsible along with other "classroom" lessons including math, and even art as they check the water's levels of nitrites, nitrates, and pH, among other factors with a color-coded chart. The students affectionately refer to it as "trout class."

Learning how to be good stewards of the earth is an integral aspect of the project and a key factor that Christians should actively pursue. The students take turns testing the water quality in the tank, a task they find enjoyable and educational. One student remarked, "It's fun to check the water and look at the colors of the pH levels," highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of their newfound responsibilities. But, beyond the scientific aspects, the students have been busy absorbing information about trout life cycles and interesting facts about the species. They've discovered



The trout eggs are hatching one-by-one.

that trout eggs, in these early stages, need darkness for optimal growth, replicating their natural habitat under rocks in freshwater lakes or streams.

The students are diligently ensuring that the tank conditions remain prime for rainbow trout survival. With precise ratios of oxygen and a carefully regulated water temperature of 52 degrees, the fifth and sixth graders are fostering an environment where the trout can both survive and thrive. As the adventure unfolds, the students are eagerly anticipating the release of the young trout into a local Nebraska body of water in April or May of this year. Although they won't witness their fish grow to maturity, the students will have the opportunity to dissect a full-grown rainbow trout and gain further insights into their development later this spring, also thanks to the Nebraska Game and Parks.



Ezra Eckstrom and Makalister Flynn carefully observe the trout eggs.

Currently, the few young trout that have hatched are just under an inch long, and the students have already begun naming them, sparking friendly debates over names like Deacon or Eagle. Mrs. Edson shares in her students' excitement, expressing, "I think it's so cool to see God's intricate design with these fragile little eggs that will turn into large trout."

Each morning, the students eagerly check on their trout eggs, with Mrs. Edson noting, "This warms my heart." This hands-on project not only educates the young students about rainbow trout, their life cycle, and their environment but also instills a sense of wonder and responsibility as they play an active role in the life cycle of these fascinating creatures.

Students Shine at the 2024 UNK Honor Band and Choral Clinic

Nebraska Christian School is proud to congratulate eleven high school students who were selected for the prestigious 2024 UNK Honor Band and Choral Clinic, held on Monday, January 29, 2024. Amanda Needham, Julia Merchant, Adam Carlson, Noah Fischer, Izzy Brumbaugh, Alyssa Springer, Kylie Merchant, Rachel Hale, Caitlin Chiles, Iven Cheng, and Brodey Flynn represented Nebraska Christian with musical excellence at this remarkable event.

The UNK Honor Band and Choral Clinic brought together a total of 606 high school music students from 95 Nebraska high schools. Hosted by the University of Nebraska at Kearney's Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance, the event offered a unique opportunity for students to work with UNK faculty and guest instructors before showcasing their talents in two public concerts at UNK's Health and Sports Center. The 5:30 p.m. performance featured the UNK Wind Ensemble alongside the festival and honor bands, while the 7 p.m. concert showcased the UNK Choraleers along with the treble, festival, and honor choirs. The event not only highlighted the musical prowess of all of the students but also served as a platform for them to collaborate with other students from across the state.

The UNK Honor Band and Choral Clinic, with its diverse program and esteemed clinicians, provided an enriching experience for the participants. Clinicians and conductors for the event included Richard Mayne, Duane Bierman, Jessie LaBrie, Clayton Moyer, and Christian Yost, each bringing their expertise to guide the students toward musical excellence.

The Nebraska Christian students shared their reflections on the event, providing insight into their experiences:



Front to Back, Left to Right: Adam Carlson, Kylie Merchant, Caitlin Chiles, Rachel Hale, Isabelle Brumbaugh, Noah Fischer, Iven Cheng, Brodey Flynn, & Alyssa Springer pose after the concert

Adam Carlson, a senior in the choir, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, "The whole day was fun." He highlighted the impact of the Festival Choir's director, Christian Yost. His engaging teaching style left a lasting impression on the students, making the day truly memorable. "With the exception of our choir and band

teacher, Mr. Flynn, I feel like [Yost] was the best director I've ever been under."

Caitlin Chiles, also a senior in the choir, appreciated the opportunity to sing with students from across the state, fostering connections and camaraderie. Despite the exhausting nature of the day, she thoroughly enjoyed the experience. "I had a blast", Chiles stated. "I am very sad this was my last time." A sentiment many of the NC seniors agreed with.

Junior choir member Iven Cheng shared his detailed account of the day, including the rigorous practice sessions, interactions with fellow students, and the joy of performing in the Honor Choir.



Hastings High School Choir Conductor Christian Yost leads the Festival Choir in rehearsals

Isabelle Brumbaugh, a junior choir member attending the event for the first time, expressed her delight in singing with students from different schools and emphasized the impact of using their collective gifts to create a beautiful musical experience. "Just being able to hear all of those voices together and get to use the gifts God had given us to sing together with people from all over the state is what made my experience so impactful," said Brumbaugh. "It was most definitely an experience I won't forget, and I wish I would have taken up the opportunity sooner."

Senior Kylie Merchant, attending the event for the second time, highlighted the importance of building relationships within the choir to enhance the overall sound. "Throughout the day, my choir director encouraged us to get to know the people sitting around us," said Merchant. "He made sure to let us know that relationships are highly important in a choir because the better we got to know each other, the better the group as a whole sounded." Her favorite part was the concert itself, where the well-prepared choir, under the guidance of their director, delivered an outstanding performance.

Fellow senior class member Rachel Hale also participated in this event. Returning for her second year, Rachel appreciated the rehearsal opportunities that were made available and for all of the time to rehearse with her choir at the event itself. She enjoyed her time there, especially when they had the chance to perform 'Sing Out Your Joy', her favorite song.

The 2024 UNK Honor Band and Choral Clinic not only showcased the musical talent

of Nebraska Christian students but also provided a platform for personal growth, collaboration, and the joy of creating beautiful music together. Congratulations to all the students for their outstanding achievement!



Richard Mayne leads the Honor Band in rehearsals

SERVICE Awards | Continued from page 1

positive and upbeat demeanor that uplifts her peers and contributes to a culture of positivity within the student body. Addie's unwavering smile and resilience make her a true asset to the Nebraska Christian community.

Katie, with her infectious energy and genuine affection for others, brings a vibrant disposition to the forefront every day. In the classroom, she starts each morning by offering high fives to all and warm hugs to her friends. This simple yet impactful gesture embodies the essence of a vibrant disposition. Katie's constant smile and words of encouragement create an environment where the love for the Lord and others is palpable.

Devin, though initially perceived as reserved, shines brightly when engaged. His pleasant demeanor and willingness to have meaningful conversations showcase his commitment to building relationships. A hard worker and a valuable team player, Devin's contribution extends beyond his individual efforts, leaving a positive mark on any collaborative endeavor.

The January Service Award for Vibrant Disposition not only highlights the exemplary qualities of Addie, Katie, and Devin but also underscores the importance of nurturing a positive and uplifting atmosphere within the Nebraska Christian School community. As these students continue to embody the SERVICE values – Service Minded, Exalting Christ, Relationally Focused, Vibrant Disposition, Innovative Practices, Collaborative Approach, and Excellence – they serve as inspirations to their peers and a testament to the vibrant spirit that defines the Nebraska Christian experience.

Congratulations to Addie, Katie, and Devin for their well-deserved recognition, and may their vibrant dispositions continue to shine brightly in the months and years ahead.

Welcome to the Team!

In the past month, Nebraska Christian (NC) has been delighted to welcome two outstanding individuals to our school community, each bringing a unique set of skills and a passion for Christian education. Kyle Babb and Daniel Schwarz, the newest additions to the NC team, are excited to contribute their talents to propel the school forward.

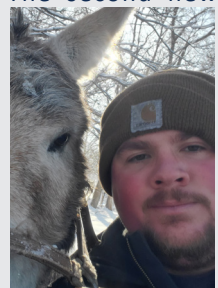
Kyle Babb, who joins as both a technology support specialist and a substitute teacher, is married to Shari Babb, the new 3rd and 4th grade teacher at NC. Originally from Greenville, South Carolina, Kyle brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to Christian education. He holds a Bachelor's degree in History and Music with a Saxophone emphasis from Presbyterian College and earned his Master's degree in Music with an emphasis in Musicology from Baylor University in 2007. Kyle is dually certified as a K-12 Music teacher and Secondary History teacher.



After completing his education, Kyle taught in the South Carolina Public Schools before discovering his true passion for sharing his faith through Christian education. Reflecting on his calling, Kyle expressed, "Christian Education is my career, and more importantly, my passion. I want to see children taught the whole truth in a manner that points them to Christ as the only true source of freedom and eternal peace and joy."

Kyle and Shari have been happily married for fifteen years and have a daughter named Charlotte. Their journey in Christian education began in 2011, leading to various opportunities in Christian ministry, including missionary teaching in Singapore, Russia, and Guatemala. Kyle shared, "We are happy to have returned to the United States and to be serving at Nebraska Christian."

The second new face on campus, Daniel Schwarz, has taken on the role of Maintenance Support. Married to Chelsey Schwarz, the NC Front Office Lead, Daniel has lived in this area his entire life and graduated from Central City High School. His life has been marked by spiritual growth and reliance on God's provision since his baptism at the age of 8.



Daniel brings valuable experience as a service technician, graduating from the Southeast Community College Ag Diesel

Service Technician program in 2013. His professional journey includes roles at local businesses such as Greenline Equipment (AKRS) and Firehouse Repair. Since 2016, Daniel has been a self-employed farmer, working independently on equipment for farmers and customers in the area.

When asked about joining the NC team, Daniel expressed his desire to "use my abilities to help ensure Nebraska Christian Schools can continue to offer Christ-centered education to children." With a family of his own, including three children, Maesyn (6), Levi (4), and Beau (2), Daniel understands the importance of fostering a nurturing educational environment.

The Nebraska Christian community eagerly welcomes Kyle Babb and Daniel Schwarz, recognizing their valuable contributions to the school's mission of providing Christ-centered education and maintaining a campus that reflects the beauty of God's creation. As NC continues its journey forward, we look forward to the positive impact these two extraordinary individuals will have on our school community.

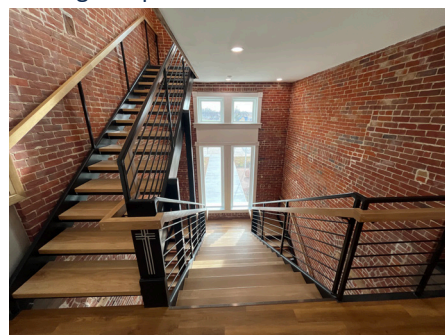
NC Foundation



Jody Heuermann
Foundation Director

As we reflect on the past year and the incredible journey since the inception of Nebraska Christian Schools Foundation

extends its deepest gratitude for the unwavering support, prayers, and kind words that have enriched our mission. With your invaluable contributions, we are thrilled to share that several monumental projects are successfully nearing completion.



One significant achievement is the conclusion of the beloved Administration Building project, which saw the seamless transition of the Front Office and other departments into their new spaces in January. However, as one chapter concludes, another exciting phase begins — the focus shifts to our most pressing need, a new kitchen and dining hall.

The NC Foundation's Next 50 Years Capital Campaign - Phase 2A - New Kitchen and

Dining Hall is now the primary focus. After decades of service and only minor updates, our kitchen and dining facilities are ready for a transformative upgrade. The time has come to propel our beloved school into the future by expanding and modernizing this crucial space, equipping it with state-of-the-art technology and essential amenities that will benefit our community for decades to come.

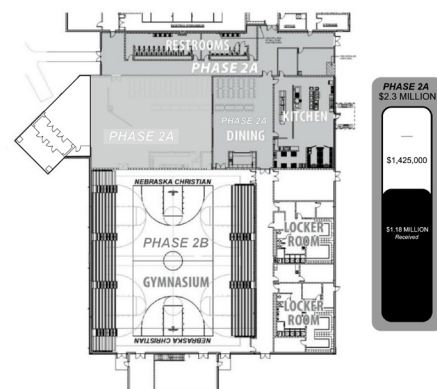
Our current facilities have served us well, but the need for improvement is evident. By enlarging the space and incorporating cutting-edge equipment, we aim to create a modern culinary hub that aligns with the evolving needs of our students and staff. This endeavor is not just about constructing a physical space; it's about investing in the students and the future of Christian education.

The NC Foundation calls upon you to join us in making the Next 50 Years Capital Campaign - Phase 2A a resounding success. Your support is instrumental in realizing this vision, ensuring that our school remains at the forefront of Christian education. Every gift, no matter the size, is a blessing that propels us forward on our mission to assist families and churches by providing a Christ-centered education and fostering a love relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

With these essential improvements coming to fruition, we are not just upgrading our facilities; we are shaping the future of our school and campus. Your involvement in this deeply necessary campaign will have a lasting impact, allowing us to continue moving towards excellence in Christian education.



The time is now to be a part of something truly transformative. Join us in this crucial campaign, and let's build a future where our students thrive in an environment that reflects our commitment to Christ-centered education.



Alumni Flashback | Class of 2007

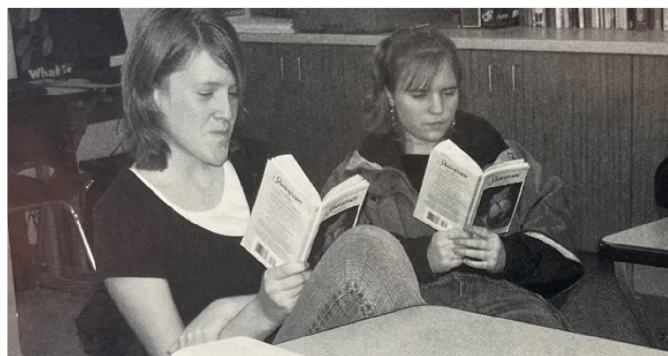
(Text and photos taken from the 2006-2007 Yearbook)

Seniors Look Ahead | Changes lead to the future

Change. The senior year was characterized by last moments of familiar experiences and looking ahead to inevitable changes to come. There was no way to avoid those changes.

Seniors had many opinions on the subject of change. Samuel Stuhmer said, "I take it as it goes." That was the philosophy of many of Stuhmer's classmates. Stacey Krieger said, "I try to deal with change the best I can, although it can be very tough at times." When leaving everything that is known, some seniors felt a bit overwhelmed. Megan Bordenkircher said, "I am going to miss being around a familiar place and being with familiar people."

With homework, studying, college applications, and trying to relax, seniors were excited about what was to come. "I just want to get my diploma," Brittany Epp said. Many of the seniors agreed with that. Alysia Brethouwer summed up the thoughts of most of the class when she said, "I am looking forward to seeing how everything turns out."



Top photo of the senior class of 2007 - Left to right, front to back; Row 1: Rose Fansler, Ali Galloway, Samuel Stuhmer, Luke Faeh, Drew Hanke, Kirk Rose Row 2: Samuel Hwang, Micah Unruh, Ho Wai Ng, Megan Bordenkircher, Alli Griess, Amanda Liegl, Alysia Brethouwer, Stacey Krieger, Brittany Epp, Jamie Li, Kristen Mott, Matt Ryan, Wai Wong, David Trinh, Truman Faeh, Trevor Nunnenkamp, Tyler Nunnenkamp, Ram Lee, Brice Necker, Daniel Jang (not pictured: Amon (Rusty) Vanderlinden, Shan Yu)

Bottom Left photo - Truman Faeh takes advantage of study time during Economics to review for his Bible verse test. Students often used the study time allotted during one class to prepare for their next class.

Bottom Middle photo - Megan Bordenkircher and Brittany Epp read Hamlet in English IV. Although Hamlet was hard to understand, reading through it in groups made it fun.

Bottom Right photo - Waiting to sign the senior poster, David Trinh, Brice Necker, Drew Hanke, and Trevor Nunnenkamp try to figure out where and how to sign the poster. Decorating was just one of the many activities that went on during Homecoming week.

Memorial Gifts

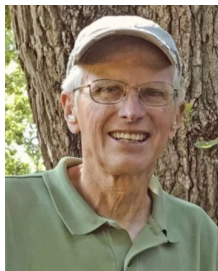
- For:** Curt Carlson
From: Jerry & Sharyn Reiger
- For:** Sandra Ellefson
From: Jerry & Sharyn Reiger
- For:** Ruth Rowse
From: Ron & Marie Adams
- For:** Liela Frantz
From: Ed & Marilynn Ritta
- For:** Gordon Foley
From: Ed & Marilynn Ritta
- For:** Lorainne Vollers
From: Ed & Marilynn Ritta
- For:** Scott Johnson
From: Ed & Marilynn Ritta
Harold & Dorothy Cook
David & Ruth Ferris
Sara Musgrave
Scott & Patty Welk
Marilyn Heins
Travis & Nicole Powell
Kathleen Ann Luther
John & Sarah Swanson
Leonard & Deone Anderson
Norm & Sue Krug
Kim & Diana Ross
Carl & Tonya Ostrand
Mike Brill
Ann Gannon
Mary Jane Winqwest
Richard & Lynn Sundquist
Andrew & Lori Faeh
Richard & Ramona Jacques
David Johnson
Dan & Amy Bailey
Max & Janice Kirby
Anonymous
Dorothy Glad
Dora Cunningham
- For:** Elton Flodman
From: Leona Sharman

Impact 2023

The 2023 Nebraska Christian Schools Impact has been published and landed in mailboxes last month. Did you get one? If not, would you like to be on our mailing list for next year? If so, let us know! Scan the code or go to <https://t.ly/jLPgS> to sign up today!



Memorials | Scott Johnson



Scott Johnson, 76, of Central City, died peacefully at his home on Friday, January 19, 2024. His life and death were deeply rooted in peace, joy, and contentment that came from his relationship with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Celebration of Life services will be held on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. at the Heartland Evangelical Free Church in Central City with Rev. Zeke Pipher officiating. Visitation will be held at the church on Tuesday, January 23rd from 5-7 p.m. Burial of ashes will be held at a later date.

Memorials are suggested to the Heartland Evangelical Free Church or to Nebraska Christian Schools. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.solt-wagnerfuneral.com.

Scott was the oldest born to Keith Oliver (Tweeter) and Jessie Belle (JB) Johnson on May 7, 1947. He enjoyed his childhood in Holdrege, NE and graduated from Holdrege Public School. He then graduated from Trinity University in San Antonio, TX and went on to receive his Master's at Miami of Ohio. He married Marsha (Burkitt) Johnson on July 19, 1980. The couple were soon the happy parents of 6 kids; Melody, Robert, Rebecca, Micah, Kayla, and Kristi.

Scott taught and coached at Lincoln Christian School

and Nebraska Christian School for many years. Later in life, he was a pastor at Heartland Evangelical Free Church in Central City, NE.

Scott celebrated his spiritual birthday on January 12th. This year he celebrated 49 years of walking with his Savior. Scott's life verse was Psalm 27:4 - "One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in his temple." Scott's dearest hope has become reality; he is in the presence of Jesus beholding his beauty right now.

Scott spent his life prioritizing the Word of God and people. Drawing from the deep well of time spent in Scripture, he encouraged and discipled all he met. Some of his favorite activities were walks with Marsha, playing games and eating chocolate with his grandkids, and watching all kinds of sports. He loved running and coaching cross country and track. Scott eagerly spent time with people and intentionally encouraged them in the Lord.

Those left to cherish his memory are his wife; Marsha of Central City, his children; Melody (Caleb) Merchant of Polk, Rob (Christina) Johnson of Thailand, Rebecca Johnson of Central City, Micah (Allison) Johnson of Cullman, AL, Kayla (Joshua) Merchant of Polk, and Kristina (Kenny) Denham of Spokane, WA, his siblings; Dave Johnson of Harvard and Lynn (Johnson) Sundquist of Holdrege, 21 grandchildren, and countless brothers and sisters in Christ.

He was preceded in death by his parents and younger sister; Laurie Johnson.

Upcoming Dates

February 13

- Varsity Girls Basketball Sub-Districts vs. Osceola @ Centura High School

February 14

- Chapel

February 15

- Varsity Girls Basketball Sub-Districts TBD

February 16

- NO SCHOOL
- JV Boys Basketball @ Omaha Christian Academy
- Varsity Boys Basketball @ Omaha Christian Academy

February 17

- Speech @ Grand Island Northwest

February 19

- NC Book Fair Begins!
- 8th Grade College & Career Visit

February 21

- Chapel
- Speech @ Elba High School

February 22

- HALF DAY OF SCHOOL
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- NC Book Fair Ends

February 23

- NO SCHOOL
- Varsity Girls Sub-District Finals TBD

February 24

- Youth Wrestling Tournament @ NC

February 28

- Chapel

March 1

- HALF DAY OF SCHOOL
- End of Quarter 3
- Elementary Musical @ PAC

March 4

- MAP Testing Begins

March 6

- Senior Trip Begins
- Chapel

March 7

- Preschool Preview & Kindergarten Round-Up

March 8

- NO SCHOOL

March 10

- Seniors Return

March 11

- Speech @ Twin River

March 13

- Chapel

March 15

- 10:00 START
- Varsity Girls Track Invite @ Concordia U.
- Varsity Boys Track Invite @ Concordia U.