



Students Julia, Joyce and Goldie with their hand-delivered movie treats.

No Passport Required Families “travel” to a foreign land

Luther Memorial school families are encouraged to travel this summer—to Narnia, that is, the land of talking animals and mythical creatures—through an all-school read of the C.S. Lewis novel, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

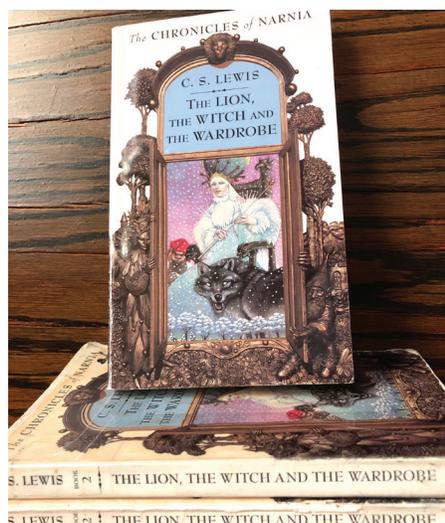
To make things a bit more interesting, each teacher video recorded two chapters of the book. Executive Director Mrs. Nicole Levy then put the recordings together and made them available online. Students can “listen only” or follow along with their own download or hard copy.

For each chapter teachers read, they suggest an activity to go along with it, like building a castle; making a map of Narnia; or drawing one of the characters and taking a selfie with the drawing.

The book is the first published and best known of the seven novels in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. Families were also encouraged to watch the Disney-produced movie. Teachers made a

surprise visit to their students’ homes to deliver a box of movie-viewing treats.

“We hope this is a fun activity for our families. It’s a classic with strong Christian themes,” says Mrs. Levy. “While the world has slowed down, it seemed like a perfect time to spend in Narnia.”



LMS Distributes Meals Through the Shutdown

Luther Memorial was one of the meal distribution sites in Cleveland making sure children did not go hungry during the state-wide school shutdown due to Covid-19.

Luther Memorial estimates 7,000 free, pre-packaged lunches and breakfasts were handed out from mid-March through early June. Distribution will continue through the summer.



Principal Mr. Marty Beckman helps load a car with meals.

Families did not come inside the buildings but were met outside by a rotating group of teachers and staff on the two pickup days each week. Meals included fresh fruit and vegetables and sandwiches.

“Our parents expressed gratitude that we were a convenient and familiar place for them to come for meals,” says Mrs. Levy. “It was a great way to see our families and stay in touch with them.”

Not all of the families served were Luther Memorial students. Some were from the neighborhood who saw our advertisement on Facebook with days and times for pickup.

An added benefit—the school picked up a few new families who have enrolled their children for the fall.

Bright Beginning; Abrupt Ending

LMS says goodbye to class of 2020

Last August, Middle School teacher Mr. Dave Gaglione remembers thinking that the year held great promise because of an exceptionally strong 8th grade class—8 students at West Campus and 12 at Main Campus.

And up through mid-March, the year did not disappoint. The class was the first to learn classical guitar with an instructor from the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society. The once-a-week lesson proved popular with the kids and they were preparing for the all-school Spring Concert just as Ohio ordered schools to close.

Several 8th graders played on the girls volleyball team, the first such team for the school since the rebuild in 2002. Boys basketball and the cheerleading squad had a good season, making a second appearance in the All Ohio Lutheran tournament—not bad for only their second season. Mr. Joe King, former Lutheran West teacher and coach, and Mr. Gaglione

worked hard assembling a Shorthorn track team of athletes from local Lutheran schools and they were looking forward to a great track season this spring—all cancelled because of the shut-down.

Academically, the students were progressing well. Twelve of the 20 graduates have decided to attend Lutheran West in the fall. One student each will attend Cleveland School of the Arts; St. Ignatius, St. Edwards and St. Martin dePorres. The other four will attend a public high school.

A Promotion service is planned for West Campus families on July 25. The Main Campus 8th graders will have a socially distant picnic at the end of July.

“May is traditionally the best month of the year,” says Mr. Gaglione. “I have an empty feeling this year. I missed spending time with them, giving them one more piece of advice while they were still in my classroom.”



LMS continues to build strong basketball program.



Renowned classical guitarist Pablo Garibay from Mexico City performed at LMS in November.

Excelling in the Classroom

“They blew away my expectations.”

That is how Mr. Marty Beckman, 7th/8th grade teacher and principal at the West Campus describes his 8th grade students’ academic achievements.

His students had some of the highest admission test scores at Lutheran West among other Lutheran applicants. “I am so proud of their accomplishments,” he says.

Mr. Beckman knows these students well, as he has taught most of them for the last four years.

“Teaching the same children for more than one school year really allows you to build deeper relationships. And the deeper the trust and respect, the harder they’ll work for you,” explains Mr. Beckman.

Spending multiple years with the same children also affords more time to figure out the learning style of each. “Every child learns differently,” he says.

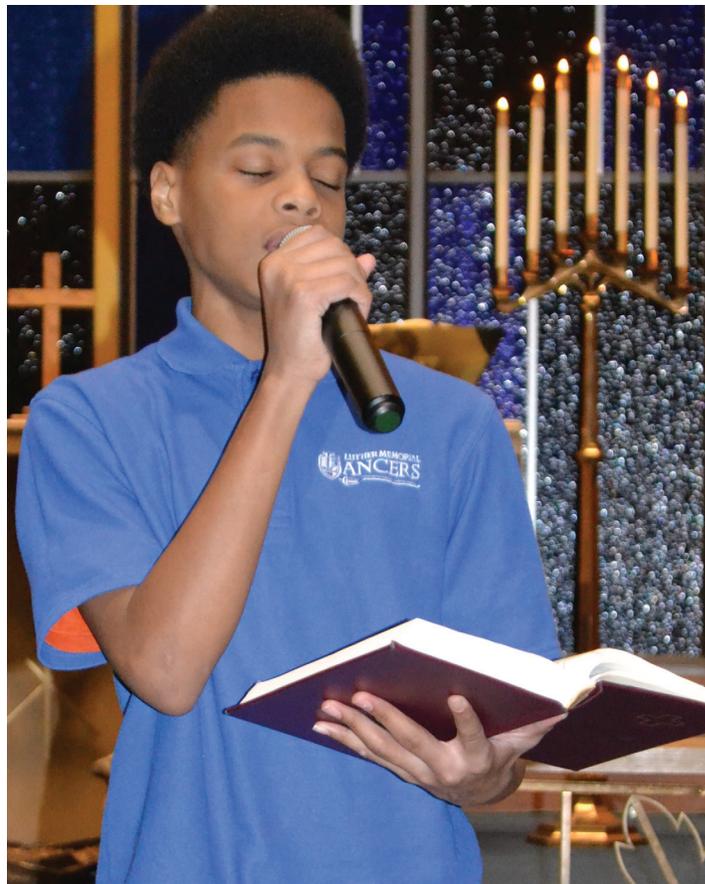
Perhaps most impressive of the class has been its work ethic. “They’re a group willing to work hard and make education a



Scalpel in hand: middle schoolers confront pig heart.

priority.” A field trip to the Great Lakes Science Center a week before schools were closed was a case in point. “The kids were so excited about participating in a pig heart dissection workshop. They were genuinely interested in learning and taking part.”

Six of his 8th graders will attend Lutheran West in the fall. Dasean Hunter won a spot at Cleveland School for the Arts after auditioning earlier in the year. His solos were always a highpoint of the LMS Christmas and Spring concerts.



Dasean Hunter will head to Cleveland School for the Arts in the fall.



Mary Snider's retirement plans include volunteering at the VA and City Mission

Retirement in the Time of Pandemic

Long-time kindergarten teacher ends 27-year career

Mrs. Mary Snider knows how to end a school year. She's done it 26 times before—managing emotions; staying focused; cleaning out desks; keeping track of her flock on the end-of-year Zoo field trip.

Then came 2020 and her 27th “end-of-the-year” got turned on its head.

“This is not how I would have chosen to end my career,” laments Mrs. Snider. “So many things left unfinished. And I didn't get to end the year with the kids.”

For Mrs. Snider, it was always about the kids and building relationships with the families of her students.

She encouraged parents to establish routines early on and educated them on how best to support their child's academic growth. In her weekly newsletter home, she would give

parents tips for making everyday experiences teaching opportunities at home.

“I’d share some of the things I did with my own children when they were growing up,” she says. Things like reading road signs in the car or making a trip to the grocery store a chance to practice numbers.

With the focus more on academics and early reading skills, there isn’t time to teach the practical in the classroom anymore, says Mrs. Snider.

“Parents sometimes need a little push to make sure they’re helping their kids learn the practical skills too, like being able to tie a shoe,” she says.

After teaching at a small Christian elementary school in Lakewood, Mrs. Snider came to LMS in 2005, just a couple years after the school was re-organized. In the early years, she remembers feeling like a “missionary” as so many of the school families claimed no church home. “It was a humble beginning,” she says. “But I really felt like I was needed. I looked at Luther Memorial as a calling from God, not just a job.”

In retirement, Mrs. Snider hopes to volunteer at the Cleveland VA Medical Center. Jimmie, her husband of 32 years and a Vietnam veteran, died last summer. “I’d like to be there for the men who have no one to visit them,” she says.

Recently, Mrs. Snider was busy organizing her empty classroom for the new teacher who will take her place in August. As she took down posters and projects from the walls, she remembered something else left unfinished from the year.

“We didn’t get to finish our tree project,” she said. In each season, she would have her students look out the window and notice how the trees had changed.

This year, the students were gone before they got to see the spring buds.

A Few Minutes with Mrs. Levy

Executive Director Mrs. Nicole Levy, like school administrators everywhere, spent ten weeks doing the seemingly impossible—keeping a school functioning while its teachers and students were physically elsewhere. While LMS has extensive plans and procedures to respond to every possible emergency—from active shooter to tornado—pandemic is not in the playbook. Here she reflects on the last few months and preparations for the future.

Q: How did you keep your teachers and staff encouraged during this time?

A: Thanks to wonderful technology that lets people meet face-to-face, even while physically far apart, we were able to meet together for devotions every morning. It allowed us to check in with each other—providing support, encouragement, and plenty of laughter!

Q: What was the most challenging part of your job over the last few months?

A: For me, the hardest part of all of this is not seeing our kids. I think about what they are doing, who is watching them, if they have enough food, if they are making good choices with their time, and so much more. We have invested so much in all of our students and it is hard to be distanced from them.

Q: What do you feel Luther Memorial did best during this time? **A:** Luther Memorial’s greatest

strength during this time, was in the existing relationships we had with our school families. Our first goal was to make sure that our families knew they were supported and that we were here for them. Initial contacts with parents sought not only to inform them on how we were moving forward, but to ask for prayer requests. In a time that was full of unknowns and fears, we were able to offer the hope that only comes from knowing God holds everything in His hands.

Q: What is LMS’s greatest opportunity going forward?

A: Our mission hasn’t changed and no matter what the future holds I have no doubt that we will be about the business of helping our students and families grow in faith and opportunity. While it seems counterintuitive, these past difficult months have actually enabled us to build stronger, more trusting relationships with our school parents. I am looking forward to seeing what God brings to fruition through this time.

Q: What do you think school will look like in the fall?

A: My answer to this seems to change every week. The reality is we don’t know anything for sure yet. For the emotional and social health of our students, we hope to make school as normal for them as we are safely able to. Thankfully, we have a dedicated staff who have proven that they are able to adapt and excel in new circumstances!

