



Annual Report

2025-2026

Our Mission:
Keeping God's **Truth** at the center of learning,
nurturing a desire to **Love** Christ,
and cultivating a mindset for **Service**.

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- Equip for Christian Living -



A letter from Dr. Deborah Samuelson

Head of School

Dear friends and families:

I am often asked, "Why Christian education? Why Faith Heritage School?" The answer is simple: changed lives.

As I reflect on the 2025–26 school year, my heart is filled with gratitude for God's faithfulness and provision. Psalm 127:1 reminds us, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." This truth has been the foundation of Faith Heritage School for more than fifty years. Every lesson taught, every relationship formed, and every step of growth in our students' lives reflects God's work among us. We are humbled and grateful to witness the transformation that only He can accomplish.

This year was marked by meaningful growth across our school community. We welcomed 35 new students and launched several initiatives that are already making a lasting impact. Our new Technology Lab and Makerspace provide hands-on opportunities in robotics, coding, 3D printing, and STEM through the lens of a biblical worldview. The WIN (What I Need) Center and AIS (Academic Instructional Support) Center provide personalized academic support to help students flourish, while the addition of Officer Brian Novitsky as our Safety Officer has strengthened our commitment to providing a secure, caring, and Christ-centered learning environment.

Throughout the year, students grew academically, socially, and spiritually. They embraced leadership opportunities, pursued excellence in the classroom, and deepened their faith through Bible classes, chapel, worship, service, and meaningful relationships. One of the year's greatest blessings came during our senior graduation testimonies, where students reflected on God's faithfulness and the lasting influence of teachers who invested in their lives. These moments remind us that Christian education is about far more than academic achievement—it is about shaping hearts and lives for Christ.

We also celebrated many accomplishments that reflect not only student achievement but a desire to honor Christ through excellence in every endeavor. None of this would be possible without the faithful service of our faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees. Their commitment to Christ, dedication to excellence, genuine love for students, and faithful stewardship make an eternal impact every day.





Looking ahead, we are encouraged as more families seek a Christ-centered education where children are known, loved, and nurtured. Through the Saints Fund, we continue to strengthen campus safety, expand opportunities in the arts, music, and athletics, develop student and teacher leaders, provide specialized learning resources, and increase access to Christian education through flexible tuition. We are also encouraged by the proposed Federal Scholarship Tax Credit program, which could create new opportunities for families to choose Christian education.

We are deeply grateful for every student, family, donor, volunteer, faculty member, and friend who partners with Faith Heritage School. Your trust, prayers, and generosity make this ministry possible. As we reflect on God's faithfulness, we look to the future with hope, trusting Him to continue His work through Faith Heritage School. Together, we remain committed to nurturing the next generation in Truth, Love, and Service. May we continue to seek His wisdom, follow His leading, and give Him all the glory for what He has done and all He will continue to do.

With gratitude and joy,

Dr. Deborah Samuelson





Dr. Scott Corbin FHS Bible Chaplain



Faith Heritage School was founded by families who recognized the need for an academically excellent, unapologetically Christian education in the Syracuse community. That legacy continues to shape every aspect of school life, especially through our chapel program.

This year's chapel theme, "Our Heritage of Faith," centered on Hebrews 11, reminding students that they are part of a rich legacy of God's faithfulness. Through worship, biblical teaching, and guest speakers, students were encouraged to grow in their faith and confidently live for Christ. It was especially encouraging to see several seniors lead chapel worship while a new generation of student leaders prepares to serve in the coming year.

Our fall and spring spiritual retreats provided students with meaningful opportunities for worship, biblical teaching, prayer, fellowship, and team-building. Although weather and travel disruptions forced the cancellation of our planned January retreat and unexpected changes to our spring retreat, these disappointments became reminders of God's faithfulness. With just 24 hours' notice, our faculty and staff came together to redesign the experience, and God graciously provided a day that strengthened our school community through worship, biblical instruction, prayer, and meaningful fellowship.

"There are always challenges as students are maturing and growing, asking questions and wondering what is true and what is not. We have a God-given opportunity to pour into the next generation, partnering with families and their churches to raise up young people who walk worthy of the call to live out the Truth of God, grow in their Love for Jesus, and stretch themselves in Service for others."



Looking ahead, our 2026–27 chapel theme, "Walking Worthy" (Ephesians 4:1–3), will build on the foundations of Truth, Love, and Service and this year's focus on Our Heritage of Faith. Through chapel, retreats, and discipleship opportunities, we will continue encouraging students to faithfully live out their faith while pointing them to the hope found in Jesus Christ.



Mrs. Rebekah MacDougall FHS Principal



As Elementary Principal, my role extends far beyond managing student behavior. It is about creating meaningful opportunities for students, supporting learners with diverse needs, and equipping teachers to grow together in a Christ-centered community.

One of the greatest joys of my role is creating memorable learning experiences that spark curiosity and build community. Whether through Farm Days, a traveling planetarium, or a variety of after-school activities, these opportunities enrich classroom learning and create lasting memories for our students.

In addition, I oversee student support services for grades K-12, working alongside families and teachers to provide the resources, guidance, and encouragement each student needs to thrive. From coordinating accommodations and individualized support plans to expanding initiatives such as our Mentor Program, our goal is to ensure each child is known, encouraged, and equipped to succeed academically, socially, and spiritually. Each student is created with distinct gifts and needs, and our team works collaboratively to provide support that reflects this. Every family can expect thoughtful communication and consistent care as we walk alongside them in their child's development.

“One of the greatest joys of my role is creating memorable learning experiences that spark curiosity and build community.”



Equally important is investing in our faculty. One of the greatest blessings of a smaller school community is the chance to work closely together. I value collaboration, and I believe strong relationships among staff create a stronger school culture. Whether meeting with elementary teachers each week, finding new ways to support our team, or creating moments for fellowship and encouragement, I love investing in the people who make Faith Heritage so special. Seeing a cohesive team that genuinely enjoys working together is its own reward and a true blessing.



Mr. Jason Awad MS/HS Principal & Athletic Director



As I conclude my first year as Middle School/High School Principal at Faith Heritage, it has been a blessing to return to the school I graduated from, with a new perspective on how uniquely special this place is. I have coached basketball here for over a decade and serve in my second year as Athletic Director, but working full time with this added responsibility has allowed me to fully invest in our teachers and students daily. My dual role includes ongoing teacher support, oversight of overall student well-being, and leadership of our athletic department.

Our teachers care deeply about every student and are invested in their whole well-being, including life after Faith Heritage. Their goal is not simply to teach a subject. They cultivate meaningful relationships and help students grow academically, socially, and spiritually, investing beyond the classroom, whether attending the musical, cheering on (and sometimes coaching) our teams, or talking about life over lunch. They take their ministry to heart and teach through a Biblical worldview that prepares students for the world beyond our walls.

One of the joys of this year has been walking the hallways and interacting with students daily, from PreK to our departing seniors. For more than 35 years, I have walked these hallways, sat in these classrooms, and played countless games in our gym - first as a student, then as a coach, and now Principal/Athletic Director. Our care for students goes well beyond academic success. We want to prepare them for whatever lies ahead, but more importantly, to graduate them spiritually mature and equipped to be disciples in the world.

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Athletics is part of a well-rounded experience. As a student-athlete here, I played three sports, and they taught me lessons I still carry: teamwork, commitment, sacrifice, and overcoming adversity. The experience goes well beyond the court, field, or track. It includes giving back to the next generation who will one day take their place on those teams. Our partnership with FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) grew even more this year, with 20+ high school students attending weekly lunch huddles to study God's word and live out their faith in every area of life. In March they led "FCA Day," a half-day retreat for our Elementary students with student-led Chapel, activities, and lunch fellowship across grade levels. Athletics at Faith Heritage is about more than wins or losses. It is students living out their faith and glorifying God with the abilities He has given them.



- Equip for Christian Living -

Fine Arts Department

The arts are an essential part of our mission to equip students for Christian living. Under the leadership of Mrs. Katie Albrecht, Fine Arts Department Head and Yearbook Advisor, students develop their God-given gifts through music, visual arts, photography, graphic design, and yearbook. Students are encouraged to develop their gifts while expressing truth, beauty, and faith with creativity and excellence.



This year marked an exciting milestone with the revitalization of our instrumental music program under the direction of Mr. David Frateschi, an accomplished music educator whose extensive experience has strengthened and expanded music instruction at Faith Heritage School. **After several years without a traditional band, more than 50 students now participate in band and instrumental lessons.** A winter showcase highlighted individual ensembles, followed by our first full spring concert featuring students in grades 6–12 performing together as one unified band. These performances reflected significant musical growth, student dedication, and a strong foundation for the future of instrumental music at Faith Heritage.



Under the direction of Mrs. Lindsey Burdick, our music program flourished across every grade level. From elementary music/choir classes to MS/HS Choir, students developed musical skills, confidence, and an appreciation for using their God-given gifts to glorify Him. **Choirs in grades K–2, 3–5, and 6–12 shared their talents through two outstanding concerts, while students also led worship in chapel throughout the year.** These experiences fostered creativity, collaboration, and joyful worship while supporting students' musical and spiritual growth.

A highlight of the year was our spring production of *The Music Man*, which brought together students from across grade levels in acting, music, set design, and technical production. More than an outstanding performance, the musical reflected the creativity, teamwork, and servant leadership that characterize our school community. Through every performance, students were encouraged to use their gifts to honor God and serve others, demonstrating the lasting impact of a Christ-centered arts education.



Pastor's Day

Pastor's Day was a meaningful highlight of the year as we welcomed local church leaders to our school for a time of encouragement, worship, and prayer. Students led a powerful time of worship, Pastor Aubrey shared a word of encouragement, and Dr. Samuelson shared an update on how God is working through the mission of Faith Heritage School. Pastors gathered to pray over our school, lifting up our students, staff, and families. A special part of the day included lunch, where pastors connected personally with students from their own congregations—reinforcing the vital partnership between Faith Heritage and the local church in nurturing the next generation for Christ.



Senior Trip



The Class of 2026 embarked on an unforgettable three-day adventure to our nation's capital. In Washington, D.C., students walked the grounds of the National Mall and reflected at powerful sites, including the Holocaust Museum and Arlington National Cemetery. They also explored several Smithsonian museums and enjoyed a Nationals baseball game under the lights. Throughout the trip, students saw history come to life and connected what they have learned in the classroom to the places where it happened. It was a memorable way for our seniors to spend time together in their final year.

Safety Updates

The safety and well-being of students remain a priority. This year, Faith Heritage School strengthened campus safety through **additional security measures, expanded emergency preparedness, and partnerships with local, state, and federal first responders.** In addition to helping maintain a secure campus, the Safety Officer serves as a mentor, educator, and role model for students. The school also invested in new handheld radios to improve communication and emergency response, and continues updating its Emergency Operations Plan to reflect current best practices.



AIS/WIN

Faith Heritage School has strengthened its student support services through two specialized programs: Academic Instructional Support (AIS) for MS/HS students and What I Need (WIN) for elementary students. **These programs provide individualized academic support in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and other core subjects, helping students build the skills and confidence needed to succeed.** Dedicated AIS and WIN centers, each led by a specialized teacher, offer welcoming learning environments where students with diverse learning needs, including those with IEPs and 504 Plans, receive personalized support while growing academically, socially, and spiritually.



Beyond the Classroom



This year, Faith Heritage students extended their learning far beyond the classroom through more than 15 educational field trips. From museums, historical sites, and cultural landmarks to nature centers, businesses, and community organizations, these experiences brought classroom concepts to life and provided meaningful opportunities for hands-on learning. Field trips encouraged curiosity, reinforced academic instruction, and helped students **connect their studies to the world around them through the lens of a biblical worldview.** By experiencing God's creation, history, and the work of people within our community firsthand, students gained a deeper appreciation for His truth and the many ways He is at work in the world.

National Honor Society

Faith Heritage School inducted six students into the National Honor Society this year: **Daniel Allen, Carter Bregou, Kennedy Burdick, Olivia Metelus, Andre Turo, and Nai'a Yarman.** Membership is based on the four pillars of the National Honor Society: **scholarship, leadership, service, and character.** Scholarship reflects a student's academic record, leadership is demonstrated through initiative and example, service reflects a consistent pattern of contribution to others, and character reflects integrity and consistency in conduct. Congratulations to each student on this honor.



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Career and Trades Fair

Faith Heritage School hosted a Career and Trades Fair that introduced students to a wide range of post-graduation pathways. **More than 20 professionals** represented careers in the skilled trades, business, public service, healthcare, and other industries, providing students with firsthand insight into vocational, technical, and professional opportunities. Through meaningful conversations and interactive exhibits, students explored how God can use their unique gifts in a variety of careers and callings. **The event reinforced our commitment to preparing students for life beyond graduation, recognizing that God equips individuals to serve and glorify Him in every vocation.**



Why Accreditation Matters

Faith Heritage School maintains dual accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Accreditation is an important mark of quality and accountability, assuring families that the school meets rigorous standards for academic excellence, governance, financial stewardship, student services, and continuous improvement. Through an extensive self-study and external peer review process, both accrediting organizations evaluate every aspect of school operations. **Middle States affirms institutional and educational excellence, while ACSI also evaluates the school's commitment to biblical integration and Christ-centered education.** This dual accreditation provides families with the confidence that a Faith Heritage education is both academically strong and firmly rooted in a biblical worldview.

Federal Education Freedom Tax Credit

One of the most promising developments for Christian education is the new Federal Education Freedom Tax Credit, scheduled to begin in 2027. Through the Children's Tuition Fund and other Scholarship Granting Organizations, eligible taxpayers will be able to redirect up to \$1,700 in federal income taxes they already owe to fund scholarships for qualifying K-12 students, expanding access to Christ-centered education through private contributions rather than government funding. As implementation continues, this initiative has the potential to make Christian education more accessible for families while strengthening the long-term sustainability of schools like Faith Heritage. We look forward to sharing additional information as the program becomes available.



Why I Teach at FHS

Mrs. Kim Hall

Middle School Bible and Social Studies

It is often said in the education world that September is our January. Fresh starts, new goals, and a blank planner ready to be filled with lesson plans, sports events, and musical productions. If that is true, then I would add that June is our New Year's Eve, a time to reflect on the previous year, to marvel at God's goodness and faithfulness. Perhaps that is why I have been so reflective lately, as I have considered why I teach at Faith Heritage School, or maybe it is because I have my first class of "graduating" 8th graders- students who I taught for five different classes during their middle school journey. I have the privilege of teaching 6th, 7th and 8th grade social studies, and 7th and 8th grade Bible. Regardless of what prompted the personal reflection, I am so grateful that God brought me to Faith Heritage School and that I get to spend my days cultivating a Christian worldview and discipling the next generation of world changers for His kingdom.

I love teaching at Faith Heritage School, where I am encouraged to keep truth at the center for learning. Within the middle school social studies curriculum, I have the opportunity to teach everything from Ancient Civilizations, to the settling of the Thirteen Colonies, to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Together, we read primary and secondary sources, learn the importance of point of view, and infer meaning from photographs and political cartoons. We celebrate accomplishments and innovations throughout history where God used people to achieve significant milestones. I am also honest about where history makers got it wrong- when the Imago Dei was not recognized or valued, and I encourage students to be difference makers for God's glory. It is a privilege to guide students in understanding that all truth is God's truth, all knowledge is God's knowledge, and all wisdom comes from Him alone. A "Christian education" at Faith Heritage is not relegated to chapel or Bible class alone— it is woven into every subject we teach.

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Additionally, I love my job because I have the opportunity to nurture a desire to love Christ. One of my favorite things about working with middle school students is that many of them are wrestling with the question, “What do I really believe about God versus what do I believe simply because my parents believe?” Throughout the year, I see students deciding to make faith their own and see evidence of this in class assignments, outward actions, and one-on-one conversations. It is a blessing to walk alongside adolescents as they realize the Bible is full of people who made mistakes but are changed by a holy and faithful God. And the God who was faithful to the Israelites and faithful to the disciples and early Church is the same God who will be faithful to them in the 21st Century too. I love having the opportunity to talk and pray with students as they grapple with middle school challenges and experience God's faithfulness.

Technology Lab/Makerspace

Faith Heritage School's Technology Lab and Makerspace have quickly become a hub of creativity, innovation, and hands-on learning. Serving students across all grade levels, the space supports STEM classes, classroom instruction, and activity period enrichment. **Students explore robotics and computer coding, design and print 3D creations, build engineering projects, conduct science investigations, and use technology to support learning across multiple subject areas.** Popular activities such as LEGO Club and hands-on maker projects encourage creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving while inspiring students to explore new interests.

More than rooms filled with resources, the Technology Lab and Makerspace cultivate critical thinking, innovation, and purposeful design. Through STEM coursework, classroom projects, and activity period experiences, students are challenged to ask questions, solve real-world problems, and bring ideas to life. **These authentic learning opportunities help prepare students for future college, career, and vocational pathways while reinforcing that creativity, innovation, and stewardship can be used to honor Christ and serve others.**



Spring It On!



Spring It On! once again brought our school community together for a day of joy, fellowship, and celebration. Students and teachers enjoyed foam parties, bubble stations, mini golf, karate demonstrations, bounce houses, a SWAT vehicle tour, flavored ice, and many other activities that created lasting memories.

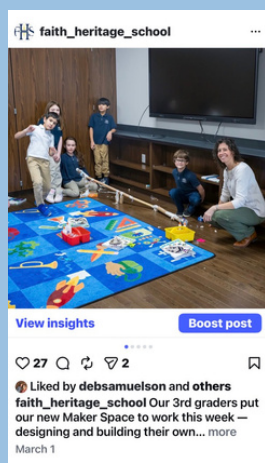
What began as a fundraiser **has become a celebration of God's provision and our shared commitment to the mission of Faith Heritage School.** Through the Annual Fund, every gift helps strengthen campus safety, expand academic, arts, and athletic opportunities, provide specialized learning resources, and increase access to Christ-centered education. We are grateful to our sponsors, volunteers, donors, and families whose generosity continues to invest in the lives of our students and the future of Faith Heritage School.

Survey Results . . . Thank you!

Faith Heritage School's 2026 Parent Net Promoter Score reached an **exceptional 78**, continuing a strong upward trend from 45 in 2024 and 49 in 2025. Of the 50 families who participated, **84% rated the school a 9 or 10**, reflecting remarkable parent satisfaction and loyalty. Families consistently highlighted the integration of biblical truth, caring and dedicated teachers, individualized attention through small class sizes, and the close-knit, family-centered community as the school's greatest strengths.

Parents also shared valuable suggestions for continued growth, including tuition affordability, expanded elementary clubs and activities, class sizes in select younger grades, and greater consistency in scheduling and field trips. We are grateful for their partnership and feedback as we continue to strengthen the Faith Heritage experience. If your family has been blessed by Faith Heritage School, we encourage you to share your story and invite others to discover the lasting impact of a Christ-centered education.

Social Media



Stay connected with all that's happening at Faith Heritage School by following us on Facebook and Instagram. From classroom moments to school-wide events, our social media gives a glimpse into student life and the many ways God is working in our community.

If you know a family considering Christian education, sharing our posts is an easy and meaningful way to introduce them to Faith Heritage School. Your support helps us reach new families and grow the impact of our school.

Financial Overview

Faith Heritage School is sustained through two essential partnerships: tuition from our families and the faithful generosity of those who share our mission. Together, these resources make Christ-centered education possible and have faithfully supported our ministry for more than 50 years. **During the 2025–26 school year, donors contributed \$282,000 to our annual Saints Fund and \$329,000 to capital projects** such as the new bleachers, paving, and general improvements to the building to advance the mission of Faith Heritage School. We are deeply grateful for their generous investment.

Tuition covers the majority of faculty and staff salaries and benefits, while charitable gifts and other revenue help support financial assistance, program enhancements, campus improvements, and other operating needs. Together, these resources enable Faith Heritage School to continue providing an academically excellent, Christ-centered education for every student.

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Class of 2038

Kindergarten Graduation



Class of 2033

5th Grade Promotion



Commencement 2026



Class of 2026

Congratulations Graduates



Donovan Turo
Workforce/Gap year
Valedictorian

"... take care in sharing the wisdom God has given you. Recite it faithfully to others and yourself. And, beyond that surround yourself with those who will do the same."



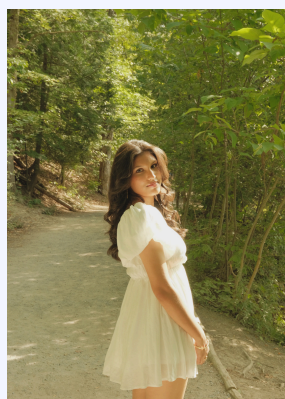
Landon Bregou
Onondaga Community
College



Brynna Burdick
Roberts Wesleyan
University



Taylor Godard
Onondaga Community
College



Meelakh Iftikhar
Le Moyne College



Carter Henderson
Cedarville University



Henry Jackson
Hobart and William Smith
College

Class of 2026

Congratulations Graduates



Esther Lahtaw
Le Moyne College



Weston Retzos
SUNY Morrisville



David Vargo
University of Albany

"I have been blessed to be part of this school. I have grown spiritually . . . being taught how to be a disciple and spread the Good Word."



Olivia Vitale
Hilbert College

"This year strengthened my faith in ways I never expected. I always believed in God, but attending Faith Heritage helped me build a more personal relationship with Him."



Shea Burns
Cedarville University
Salutatorian

"Class of 2026, do not make success your aim, but rather make faithfulness your aim. Success may impress the world for a moment, but faithfulness honors God for eternity."

"As you step into the next chapter, remember that your greatest accomplishment will never be found in a degree, a career, or a title. It will be found in faithfully following Christ wherever He leads."

Dr. Samuelson's Commencement Charge

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