

The Griffin Gazette

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4720 Classical Way, MT 59718 • www.petraacademy.com • 406.582.8165

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Petra's Debt to Bethlehem

by Todd Hicks

I hesitate to write on a theme as grand as Christmas. I am not a pastor and Petra is not a church. I am confident—and hopeful—that most of you will hear much better “sermons” at your churches this Christmas!

But I can't help but reflect on the relevance of Christmas to who we are and what we seek at Petra. Everything good and worthwhile in a school like this was born in Bethlehem where a young Jewish woman, named Mary, gave birth to a baby boy, named Jesus, probably between 4 and 6 B.C.

I write those beautifully “mundane” names, “common” nouns, adjectives and dates with intentional delight, because the glory of Christmas cannot be seen until we appreciate its scandal. God, the eternal God, the “very God of very God,” became a very real, “in the flesh” baby! With the two-thousand year-old Christian community, we believe that all of history takes meaning and purpose in that “scandal,” called by theologians “the incarnation”: God become man.

At Petra, we affirm what many others have affirmed—before and beside us—that the incarnation of Jesus Christ changes everything. There's no sense in talking, as people often do, that religion is one thing and “the real world” something else. The ultimate “religious” truth, Jesus, *is* the ultimate “real world” truth.

Little wonder that Jesus taught about “the kingdom of God” using parables about caught fish, lost coins, dirty dishes and big trees. “Integration of

faith and learning” was not invented by us but is the fruit of the Word who became flesh. The academic disciplines themselves find unity (synthesis) and purpose in the One who created them and entered into the creation that He created. How can we view history as “mundane” (“worldly, as distinguished from heavenly, spiritual, etc.”) when God entered it! How can we depreciate the human body, in “life” or art, when God wore it! Even the stories of literature suddenly resonate with themes of *the Story*. In short, all that we study becomes holy.

This Christmas, we give thanks to God for the gift of His Son as we confess again that everything good that we aim for at Petra can be traced to Bethlehem.



Thank you, Laura, Tacoma & Jennifer for hosting a wonderful Staff Christmas Dinner!

Business Challenge

Petra had a team of four: Justin Barac, Rachel Gianforte, Holden Sieler, and Rebecca Mayville coached by Susan Gianforte, participating in the Fall 2011 High School Business Challenge (HSBC).

This is a statewide computer simulated economic competition where you run a Blue-Ray DVD business for eight quarters. Each quarter actually is conducted in one week with about 200 teams participating in ten industry groups. The students learn to understand and use an income statement and balance sheet as they make decisions about spending on plant capacity, advertising, product quality and development, salespeople as well as determining production and the need for loans.

They also make other decision about employee benefits and community relations. The winner is determined by stock price which is driven primarily by net profit. Petra finished a close second in our industry and in the top 10% overall. A very strong showing for a new team!



Thank you to Shannon U. for providing a Christmas Pizza party for the students and to all the parents who volunteered to help in so many ways!



Recitation & Christmas Program

Our elementary recitation (K-6th grade) will be presented on Thursday, December 16, at 8:30 AM in the cafeteria. Parents, grandparents, and friends are invited to come to see and hear a holiday sample of what our students are learning in the grammar stage of the *Trivium*, as they lay the groundwork of their subsequent education in the logic and rhetoric stages.

The secondary choir will also perform a few special numbers.

Christmas Break

School will be dismissed at 3:30 PM on Friday, December 16, and will resume on Monday, January 2, 2012.

Wedding Wishes

Congratulations to secondary teacher Kyle DeVerna as he and Alyssa Jackson will be married on Thursday, December 22, in Billings.

Library Builders

Please continue to remember to ask for Library Builder stickers to donate to Petra whenever you shop at Family Christian Stores

Volunteer(s) Needed for Soccer

The athletic committee has proposed that Petra begin an athletic development program for elementary students beginning in 2012.

Because we will soon have access to the new gymnasium, we would like to take advantage of the indoor facilities by offering after school soccer skills sessions for elementary students. We are asking for qualified parent volunteer trainers/coaches to lead these skills sessions.

If you would be interested in teaching our young athletes the skills of soccer, please contact Jeff Knapp at 570-8690 or jeffknapp@msn.com.

Petra Dancers in Local Productions

Fifth grader Maya Moody will be dancing in the Dance Center's "Nutcracker in a Nutshell", on Friday, December 16, 6:30 PM and Saturday, December 17, at 11 AM and 2 PM.

Tickets for Nutshell can be purchased at Chalet Sports. Nutcracker in a Nutshell is a shortened version of the nutcracker with delightful choreography and costumes.



NUTCRACKER BALLET
Frances Cole & Michaela Giesecke



M-Bar-T Moonlight Basin

M-Bar-T Aspiration Reward Team season ski passes are now available. We sent a list of eligible students in 6th-8th grade having a GPA of 3.0-4.0. Visit their website for information and application: <http://www.moonlightbasin.com/site/M-BAR-T.html>

Mid-Term Grades Posted

Parents, remember you have daily access to your child's grades and daily assignments through your "InformationNow" home portal. Teachers have posted mid-quarter grades with comments. Also, be sure to look at the home page of the home portal for school activity information.

If you have not been able to access this or have any questions, please call the office.

Secondary Logo Jackets



Due to the challenges of heating such a large building uniformly and the differences in each individual's comfort level for warmth, the Board has approved the following jacket from Land's End for use in the classrooms. The jacket must be Classic Navy and it must have the school logo monogrammed on it for it to be allowed in the classroom.

The jacket ranges from \$34.50-\$39.50 (depending on size) plus a logo fee of \$5.50 and shipping. The following information will help you order it.

Kid's Sizes: Both Genders:

http://www.landsend.com/pp/FleeceJacket~171338_7.html?bcc=

Women's:

http://www.landsend.com/pp/FleeceJacket~171582_1.html?bcc=y&action=order_more&sku_0::CLN&CM_MERCH=IDX_SchoolUniforms--Women--Outerwear

Men's:

http://www.landsend.com/pp/FleeceJacket~171583_1.html?bcc=y&action=order_more&sku_0::BLA&CM_MERCH=IDX_SchoolUniforms--Men&origin=index

Choose Classic Navy (This is the only approved color of this jacket for Petra). Choose the appropriate size.

Click the box that says preferred school. Enter our school number 900145129. Choose "School Name with Graphic /\$5.50."

Add to bag and check out.

Please mark your child's name in the jacket as it will be hard to tell ownership once several of these start showing up at school.

Many thanks to Hope for exploring this option and making the necessary arrangements with Land's End! Just in time for Christmas!



Elementary Christmas Ornament Exchange



Petra Parents in Prayer

Please join Mr. Hicks and other Petra parents for prayer every Wednesday from 3:00-3:30 PM in the conference room at Petra.

School Weather Closure

If school will be cancelled due to weather conditions, Mr. Hicks will inform the following radio stations by 6:30 AM.

KGWV – 640 AM, KCMW – 99.1

KBOZ radio stations

99.9 FM, 93.7 FM and 1090 AM

DJ's will announce school closures at intervals or during the newscasts on the ½ hour.



Kindergarten
& First Grade
Thanksgiving
Feast

There continues to be lots of construction activity at the school. The gym has gypsum wall board and acoustic wall panels installed. The ceiling and wall surfaces have been painted. The atrium has gypsum wall board installed and is being painted. Tile work in the atrium restrooms is just beginning. Rough framing is underway in the performance hall. Fabrication of the casework for the library is nearing completion with the first deliveries to the school set for December 14.

Over the Christmas break the academic wing will be abuzz with activity. In addition to working on the library, the crews will be focusing on the punch list and completing many of those items.

The remainder of the construction and subsequent occupancy revolves around the installation of the Modern Fold wall system. This is the large moveable wall system that divides the atrium space from the performance hall. Shipment of the wall is scheduled for December 30th with installation beginning on January 9. This will allow the atrium and gym to be occupied on January 16. The performance hall will be ready for occupancy on February 20.

As stated in last month's letter, upon initial occupancy the gym will have a concrete floor. The wood floor will be installed after fundraising efforts have raised the money for the purchase and installation of the basketball hoops. This is being done to protect the wood floor from damage during the installation of the baskets. Locker rooms and training room will not be completed until funding for these spaces is secured as well.

The exterior of the building is complete other than punch list items. The completion of these items is dependent upon weather and may be completed in the spring.

Thank you for your continued prayers. May you have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Winter Sports



Cougar High School Girls & Boys Basketball:

Come and cheer on the Cougars, Rochelle DeGroot and Rachel Gianforte.

Friday, December 16, 5:00 PM against Helena Homeschool at Heritage Christian School.

Friday, January 6, 6:30 PM against Great Falls Homeschool at Anderson School.



Saturday, January 7, 10 AM against Great Falls' Foothills Community Christian School at Manhattan Christian School in Churchill.

5th-8th Grade Boys' Basketball Mandatory Parents' Meeting Monday, December 19, 6:30-8:30 PM at Grace Bible Church, rooms 102-103. Please attend if you would like your child to play on the Gallatin Valley Christian Homeschool team. Visit <http://gvcougars.com> for a schedule.

Kindergarteners Learn About Money and Manners



Hot Chocolate, Anyone?



The First Grade & Sixth Grade Classes Enjoyed Service with a Smile!



Wish List & Thank You

Since the last published list (October, 2011), Petra has been the glad recipient of gifts that have helped us purchase ten laptop computers and 100 chairs. In addition to this, we have been gifted two new microwaves (three more coming) a barbeque and office chairs. The gift budget for operating expenses that began at \$25,400 has nearly closed the gap with just under \$3,000 remaining to meet our budget. We have been truly blessed by the outpouring of care for Petra! Thank you!

While it feels a bit ungrateful to continue asking for more,

we still have a long way to go to get the building completely furnished. This month, we are highlighting the need for a fence to go around the playground. The elementary teachers have expressed their desire to have this installed as soon as possible.

We have three estimates with an average \$25,000 cost. Unmarked funds gifted to Petra will first be applied to the remaining \$3,000 and then to the fence. As always, if you have a particular desire for the use of your monetary gift, please let us know. Again, thank you so much to every parent, grand-parent, and friend of Petra who has invested in this wonderful ministry!

LOCATION	ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL	RAISED	REMAINING
AAA	Operating Fund	1	\$25,400.00	\$25,400.00	\$22,484.00	\$2,916.00
Academic	Headphones for Test	16	\$30.00	\$480.00		
Academic	Laptop computers	6	\$500.00	\$3,000.00		
Academic	Projectors	6	\$600.00	\$3,600.00		
Academic	Lectern - Flex	1	\$1,280.00	\$1,280.00		
Athletic	Outdoor Basketball hoop	2	\$500.00	\$1,000.00		
Athletic	Soccer Goals	2	\$3,000.00	\$6,000.00		
Athletic	Gym - Basketball Hoops	6	\$6,404.00	\$38,424.00		
Athletic	Gym - Scoreboards	2	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00		
Athletic	Gym - Bleachers	2	\$11,480.00	\$22,960.00		
Athletic	Gym - Locker Rooms	1	\$22,951.00	\$22,951.00		
Athletic	Gym - Dividing Curtain	1	\$9,225.00	\$9,225.00		
Athletic	Gym - Mats	24	\$72.55	\$1,741.20		
Athletic	Gym - Volleyball Equipment	1	\$2,169.00	\$2,169.00		
Athletic	Freight	1	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00		
Cafeteria	Commercial Refrigerator	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00		
Conference	Wood Table - Conference	1	\$733.00	\$733.00		
Elementary	Elementary Chairs	100	\$48.00	\$4,800.00		
Elementary	Elementary Desks	100	\$48.00	\$4,800.00		
Elementary	6 Rectangular Tables	4	\$61.00	\$244.00		
Elementary	Kidney Tables	3	\$195.00	\$585.00		
Elementary	Freight for Desks/Chairs	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00		
Janitorial	Vacuum chariot 24" path	1	\$9,965.00	\$9,965.00		
Library	Wood Table - Library	2	\$573.00	\$1,146.00		
Library	More Library Books	1	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00		
Playground	Playground total of all items listed below			\$11,371.00		
Playground	PG Single Pod Upright	9	\$111.00	\$999.00		
Playground	PG (Playground) Equipment - Post w/ cap	4	\$192.00	\$768.00		
Playground	PG Motion Beam	1	\$447.00	\$447.00		
Playground	PG Step Up Pods	1	\$449.00	\$449.00		
Playground	PG Three Level Chinning Bar	1	\$525.00	\$525.00		
Playground	PG Climber	1	\$979.00	\$979.00		
Playground	PG Wigglepod Challenge	1	\$1,657.00	\$1,657.00		
Playground	Freight for PG	1	\$1,800.00	\$1,800.00		
Playground	PG Rocky Mtn Climber	1	\$5,907.00	\$5,907.00		
Playground	Fence	1	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00		
Reception	Coffee Table - Displayable	1	\$500.00	\$500.00		
Reception	Couch - 2 Arm Chairs	1	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00		
Display	Art			\$2,000.00		
Science	Lab Equipment	1	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00		
Secondary	Chairs	100	\$50.00	\$5,000.00		
Secondary	Lockers	46	\$131.00	\$6,026.00		
Secondary	Classroom Podiums	6	\$143.00	\$858.00		
Secondary	6 Foot Rounds for flex	4	\$440.00	\$1,760.00		
Secondary	Secondary Tables for Classrooms	20	\$235.00	\$4,700.00		



Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!