



American History Visits a Stop on the Underground Railroad

On Tuesday, February 12, the 7th and 8th Grade American History class visited the Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, a stop on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War.

The church, which is located in Brooklyn Heights, was pastored by Henry Ward Beecher, a famous abolitionist, and the church became a stopping place for escaped slaves on their way to Canada.

The students were led on their tour by a volunteer at the church who told them the history of the church, then showed them the cellar where the slaves were kept on their way to freedom. The basement was kept almost totally dark at all times. They had to eat in the dark, visit in the dark, and keep their children quiet.

From the church, slaves were able to board ships in the Brooklyn harbor which were headed for Canada where they could be free, so Plymouth Church was a very popular "station" for a while.

Miss Detweiler, 7th and 8th Grade teacher, had high praise for their tour guide. She said that the guide really held the students' attention with lots of

stories about the people who passed through the church. The students were especially impressed with the story of Pinky, a slave child whose freedom was purchased by the congregation.

Mr. Gochnauer noted, "We live in a city with incredible historical and cultural opportunities. It's great when students can get out of the classroom to experience history first hand."

FJS Guys Lose Three in PA

FJS upper school boys went to Faith Mennonite High School in Lancaster County, PA to play in the annual basketball tournament. Qualifying for the team by passing all their subjects and receiving a good conduct recommendation were James Alvarez, Sammy Alvarez, Gene DeCamp, James Edwards, A. J. Gavin, Chris Gochnauer, Christian Guerrero, and Teo Tejada.

The guys played some very energetic basketball, but lost all three games they played. Better luck next year, guys!

Second Quarter Honor Roll

Principal's List (97%-100%)

Shianne Hartzler
Angel Vasquez, Jr.

A Honor Roll (93%-96%)

Dina Bu
Natan Bu
Ashly Gavin
Christopher Gochnauer
Emmeline Martinez
Sherilyn Streicher
Isaiah Vega
Jada Vick

B Honor Roll (85%-92%)

George Aviles
James Edwards
Sabrina Edwards
Christian Guerrero
Karina Guerrero
Aimee Hill
Kevin Phillips
Jayquan Stevenson



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Lois Rosebrooks was the guide for the Plymouth Church tour.

Photo courtesy: www.plymouthchurch.org

Box Tops Earn Over \$100

FJS has collected over 1000 Box Tops from General Foods products for a total reward of \$103. Each Box Top coupon is worth 10¢. Thanks to everyone who contributed toward this achievement.



If you are collecting Box Tops for us, send them to the school at the address in the box below. For a complete list of qualifying food items, go to www.boxtops4education.com and click on "All About Box Tops" and "Participating Products."

FJS is also collecting soda cans and bottles. Friends of the school can place qualifying cans and bottles in the designated trash cans on the middle and top floors. Can MUST list NY on the side where the states for recycling are listed.

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And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Tim. 2:2 (NIV)

FJS is a ministry of Followers of Jesus Mennonite Church.

Principal's Corner

by Dwight Nisly, Asst. Principal



What Matters Most?

Jesus' most challenging discourse is the "Sermon on the Mount." In it, he lays out the priorities which provide the best foundation for an abundant life.

He confronts our preoccupation with the American Dream when he talks about laying up earthly treasures, declaring, "You cannot serve both God and Money!" He challenged us not to worry about clothes and food, asking, "Who ... can add a single hour to his life?"

Jesus then offers two priorities as the highest values: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as

well." Following Jesus – seeking his kingdom and righteousness above all – opens the door for his incredible blessing!

Does His kingdom reflect our heart's greatest longing and desire? When our neighbors observe us – more importantly, when God observes us – is this what he sees in our hearts?

Some things have an uncanny way of revealing our true priorities – how we spend our money, our effort, our time.

The eternally significant question is, "Whose kingdom and whose righteousness are we seeking?" The answer to this question, according to Jesus, is the priority that matters most.

Students Celebrate Thanksgiving

by A. J. Vasquez, Jr.

On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving Day, the school had their annual Thanksgiving Feast. Students

school and help pay for our tuition. The 1st through 5th graders colored cards that already had pictures on them or colored their own cards. The 6th through 12th graders created their own cards using stamps and colored pencils.

Next, Mrs. Allert and Ms. Detweiler talked about how it feels to be born in another country.

The next activity was to make butter out of cream that was in small jars that had to be shaken to become butter. This is what was used for butter for the meal. While waiting for the meal to finish cooking, a game of Actionary was played. Students had to guess what someone from their team was acting out. The scores of this game determined the order the tables went for food.

My favorite part of the Thanksgiving Feast was the food! Parents brought many different kinds of food for our feast. After that, students were sent back to their classrooms for dismissal.



Shianne Hartzler and Jada Vick decorate "Thank You!" cards.

were allowed to wear Indian or Pilgrim costumes if they wished. The older ones didn't, but the younger ones enjoyed dressing up as Indians or Pilgrims.

At 10:30, the students were called to the basement for activities. The first activity we had was to write "Thank You" cards to those who support our

Quizzers Prep for Final Retreat

by Chris Gochnauer

This year, as every year, Followers of Jesus participated in Mid-Atlantic Christian Schools Association (MACSA) Bible Quizzing.

At the first meet, the two senior high teams did not do very well. The junior high team, on the other hand, made it into the playoffs but were quickly eliminated.

At the second meet at Woodlyn Baptist church, the FJS teams accomplished feats that were never before done in the quizzing history of the school.

In senior high quizzing, quizzers move to the top chair as they answer questions right. If all three team members hold the top three chairs, this is called a "position win." One of the senior high teams, the "Suspects," completed this on question number eight. Never before has any FJS team done this. This team consists of Christopher Gochnauer, Gene DeCamp, and Stephen Gavin. Larry Beiler is their coach.

This same day the junior high team, including Elliot Yoder, James Edwards, Nicole Vasquez, Edgar Phillips, and Mrs. Gochnauer as their coach, was again doing quite well. They had won most of their quizzes throughout the day and made it into

the playoffs. Even though this team was not expected to be the best of all the teams, they surprised everyone.

Their first quiz was close and they had a five question overtime at the end, which helped the two top players on the team quiz out with bonuses. To accomplish this, one must answer four questions right without getting any errors. Winning this quiz sent them into the finals. In the finals, they



Larry Beiler helps the "Suspects" plot strategy for winning their quiz. (from left) Gene DeCamp, Stephen Gavin, Larry Beiler – coach, Chris Gochnauer

were against two teams that were placed higher than them, but, once again, they surprised us all and came out with the first place trophy!

In the third meet at Black Rock Retreat, the junior high team once again made it into the playoffs, but, sadly, was eliminated in the first round. The second senior high team, the "Oreos," comprised of Shani Abrahams, Donovan Yoder, A. J. Gavin, and coached by Dave Graybill, had their first position win at this meet.

Doing so well throughout the year gave the junior high team a place in the "AA" division which is the top division. This is the best ever placement for any FJS team going into the final retreat. The senior high "Oreos" and "Suspects" didn't do as well and got spots in the "B" and "C" divisions respectively. Each team is hoping for a trophy and hopefully they can each come out with one!



The junior high team with their 1st Place trophy at the Woodlyn, PA meet. (from left) Ruthi Gochnauer – Coach, James Edwards, Nicole Vasquez, Edgar Phillips, and Elliot Yoder – Captain. Absent – Isaiah Pollard.

Planning for 2008-09 Term Underway

Even though the 3rd quarter is not yet complete, planning is already underway for the fall term.

A perennial question is, "How many students are we going to have and how many teachers can we afford?"

During the first ten years of the school, the enrollment grew every year; however, due to a number of discipline issues, and some tighter academic requirements at the high school level, enrollment declined this year for the first time. This has contributed to a number of challenges including less tuition received, fewer staff, and consolidation of several classes.

For the coming term we are praying for several significant things.

- 1) **An increase in student enrollment**, especially in the 1st and 2nd grades. We notice that the most successful students in the upper grades are the ones who have been with us for many years.
- 2) **More tuition partners**. As the economy tightens and the costs of the school increase, it becomes more difficult for parents to meet expenses.
- 3) **Wisdom in staffing**. If we get the enrollment increase that we hope for, we will need an additional staff member or so. If not, we will need wisdom in knowing how to allocate present staff effectively.

Please pray for the school board as they seek God's will in the months ahead. Pray also about how God would have you participate in bringing boys and girls to Jesus and raising young men and women to be Followers of Jesus in NYC.

Coming Events

March 11-13 – NYS Math testing for 8th graders.

March 12-14 – Bible Quiz Retreat at Black Rock Retreat in Lancaster County, PA.

March 21 – **NO SCHOOL.** Good Friday.

April 4 – End of 3rd Quarter.

April 10-11 – Parent-Teacher Conferences

April 15-18 – Achievement Testing, grades 1-11.

April 21-28 – **NO SCHOOL,** Spring Break, including **Monday, the 28th.**

April 24-28 – FJS Spring PR Tour to Ohio.



A small group of FJS students and faculty will be visiting churches in Ohio during spring break. If your church is interested in hosting the group for an evening program, please contact Mr. Gochnauer at 718-235-5493, or e-mail fjs@fjschool.org.

Students Perform “Best Christmas Pageant”

The student body of FJS performed “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” for their parents and friends at the 11th Annual Christmas Program on Tuesday evening, December 18.

Nicole Vasquez, playing the part of mother of one of the church youth, got the job of directing the church Christmas program when the usual director broke her leg. Mother gets a surprise when the Herdmans, a local community family, show up to participate in the play.

The result is a funny and challenging drama exploring what it means for God to love everyone.

Donna Edwards, a school parent, spent many hours directing the play.



The 9th-12th graders astounded Mr. Petre by planning their own party, baking some of their own food, and having a bountiful feast.

The teachers were grateful to Donna for giving of her time so they could have more time for their classes.

Before the play, the high school choir sang several Christmas anthems in 4-part harmony, including the

spiritual, “Here's a Pretty Little Baby” and “Come Running, You Shepherds.”

On Friday, each of the homerooms had their traditional Christmas parties. From Miss Graybill's candle lit lunch to the feast prepared by the high school students, each class ended the year with a joyous celebration.



Mr. Nisly's 3rd-5th graders enjoy their Christmas party with Mrs. Phillips, classroom aide.

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