

## Dr. John Brandt Receives Concordia-Ann Arbor's *Christus Primus* Award

On May 9, Dr. John Brandt, executive director and principal of Valley Lutheran High School, was awarded Concordia University Ann Arbor's Christus Primus award for the 2008-09 academic year. He was honored during the university's spring commencement ceremony, and he was asked to deliver the commencement address, as well.

The Rev. Thomas R. Ahlersmeyer, Ph.D., president of CUAU, noted: "John Brandt has received widespread acclaim as a gifted and innovative leader in Lutheran education. His vision for integrating technology into all aspects of learning has positioned Valley Lutheran High School to be on the frontlines of secondary education. He exemplifies the motto of Concordia University, 'That in all things Christ might have the preeminence' (Colossians 1:18), through his servant leadership regionally and nationally."

Dr. Brandt said that receiving the Christus Primus award was "very humbling. It's obviously a very high honor to receive such an award, an award based on Christ being pre-eminent. Certainly, this is something I would like to happen, but I know I fail on a very regular basis." In his acceptance speech, he recognized those individuals who helped in shaping his ministry at Valley Lutheran, and should share in the honor, such as his first principal, Marty Jungkuntz, former VLHS teacher David Schlesselman, the thousands of students he's known over the years, as well as the "35 people I work with each day and my board of directors, willing to be Christ-like in an unChrist-like world."



Courtesy of CUAU

Dr. John Brandt with the Rev. Thomas R. Ahlersmeyer, Ph.D., president of Concordia University Ann Arbor.

Dr. Brandt noted that five Valley alumns were graduated at CUAU this year (Kaleb Abraham, Josh Britton, Mike Haiderer, Elizabeth Buchhahn and Liz Hurst), two Valley alum serve on CUAU's faculty, with former VLHS band director Matt Wolf directed the University's band.

Dr. Brandt has served at Valley Lutheran High School for the past 30 years, and as principal and executive director for the past 14 years. He received his doctorate from Central Michigan University in Educational Leadership in 2002.

## *Throwing Away Other gods to Serve the Lord*

**"But as for me and my household,  
we will serve the Lord."**

**Joshua 24:15**

Context often reveals some interesting facets of familiar verses. Joshua's famous declaration of faith, follows his admonition to "throw away the gods of your forefathers." At first glance, it seems incredible that he would find this admonition necessary for the Israelites. The parents and grandparents of the assembled crowd

had seen such things as the 10 plagues in Egypt, the crossing the Red Sea, and the fire on Mt. Sinai. They ate manna and followed a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night! Yet, they had other gods.

Then I remembered how often Christians today need this same sort of admonishment – to throw away other gods. The gods are not "graven images," but they take on more subtle shapes like prestige, power, money, influence, self-sufficiency, or any one of a whole list of

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## VLHS' Law Day Team Awarded "Best Performance"

The following VLHS students participated in Law Day on April 30: Portraying attorneys: **Bo Anderson, Abigail DeHart** and **Elizabeth Wittig**. As witnesses: **Rebecca Wittig, Sarah Askew, Keven Washburn** and **Nick Butcher**. Jurors were **Jenna Wittig, Jocelyn Lance** and **Chris Washburn**. The team defeated a team from Merrill and was granted a "Best Performance" award for their duties. The faculty advisor for Law Day is **Mr. Barry Wittig**, and he was assisted by Saginaw Attorney and VLHS alum **Darrell Zolton**.

### Golden Voice Choir, Paul Eschmann Praised For Performance at Good Friday Service

Following the performance by Valley's Golden Voice at the Good Friday worship service in April at Horizon's Conference Center, choir director Paul Eschmann received a letter from Rev. Kenneth R. Klaus of The Lutheran Hour, who gave the message at the service. In the letter, Rev. Klaus said that he and his wife agreed that "there have been very few times when we have felt so blessed and moved as we did when we heard your choir sing."

He continued, "The music which you selected was not easy. Still, it was spot on for the day, and the performance was outstanding. The Savior's passion and death were the focus of the worship, but what He did was honored by your young people. Well done!"

"In the course of my wanderings, I get to hear many groups. While each has its strengths and weaknesses, I am hard to recall any high school choir that can compare in quality of presentation to what I heard. Indeed, I have taken the stage with some nationally known college choirs, and your group can more than hold its own."

### Throwing away other gods — Continued from front page

every day "gods" that although we can't see them, still wield a tremendous influence on our lives.

Our sin does need to be admonished! By God's good grace, made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus, we are able to "throw away the gods" and like Joshua say, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

*John Brandt, Ed.D.  
Executive Director/Principal*

## Upcoming Events

June 7 VLHS graduation, 2 p.m.  
(doors open at 1 p.m.)



**Service Day:** Members of Bev Feldkamp's family group play with kindergarteners from Westdale Elementary.

### Third-Quarter Meijer Dignity & Respect Awards

**Tim Holden** (Senior): "Tim has a servant's heart when it comes to helping out with just about anything...He's willing to speak up, even if his message is not popular."

**Nick Butcher** (Junior): "Nick is always willing to help with any task... He's an excellent family group member... He assumes leadership roles in his family group."

**Chelsey Bess** (Junior): "Chelsey is always helpful with teacher-related tasks...She always has a smile on her face"

**Amelia Bickel** (Freshman): "She is friendly and positively affects those around her...She's very helpful in a lot of ways."

### In Memory Of...

*Gifts to VLHS help provide an education with Christ as the foundation. During this past year, gifts were made to VLHS in memory of:*

Verna Appold  
Erwin & Ellen Breternitz  
Vlasta Emerick Booth  
James Dodson  
Edgar Duclos  
Ethyl Erlenbeck  
Norma Fuller

Eleanor Furlow  
Harold J. Gatz Sr  
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Bill Hutter  
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Helen Klaus  
Robert Kleinschmidt  
Edward and Florence  
Kunding  
Patricia Lehmann  
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Julianne Trautner  
James Treiber  
James Vogel  
Harold Wakeman  
Lorna Ziegler  
John Zwerk

### In Honor Of...

*Gifts also were given to VLHS in honor of:*

John Brandt  
John and Sue Brandt  
Donald and Frances Bruns  
Tuney Morgrette Duclos  
Donald and Mildred Nuechterlein  
Ed and Corrine Opel  
Tom Roekle  
Jim and Marian Sorgatz  
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