

## “Pressing On” in the Pause

With the number of COVID cases on the rise, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services mandated a halt to in-person learning for all high schools starting November 18th. Despite not being able to gather together, the Valley Lutheran faculty, staff, students, and families continued “pressing on” during the pause in many different ways:

- **Worship**-daily chapel messages, videos, and songs were emailed to students every school day.
- **Learning**-VL students connected with each of their teachers and classmates during weekly Google Meets. Art 1 students submitted pictures of their hand turkeys,

and Biology students demonstrated content knowledge with Flipgrid videos. These are just a few ways VL teachers creatively engaged students remotely.

- **Serving**-The Operation Christmas Child shoebox collection and Key Club packing of boxes for the homeless still happened!
- **Valuable Experiences**-Read the article below about the virtual honor band.
- **Fundraising**-343 boxes were sold through the annual Booster Club fruit sale. Thank you!  
Valley Lutheran will continue to “Press On” into 2021 with an expected return to in-person learning on Jan. 4th!



Key Club members came in during the pause to assemble 32 care boxes for Saginaw’s homeless men, a project that Key Club has done for several years. The money to purchase self-care items was raised by the Key Club with their Spookygram fundraiser.



Packing Operation Christmas Child boxes has become a Valley Lutheran Family Group yearly tradition. Even though students were forced to switch to remote learning three days before the scheduled packing parties, Valley Lutheran families followed through with their commitment and brought their boxes to school by the Fri., Nov. 20th deadline. Just over 150 boxes from Valley Lutheran were shipped to children all over the world!

## Musicians Attend Virtual Honor Band

On Tuesday, December 8th, three Symphonic Band clarinetists, **Ashley Hoffman**, **McKenna Roberts**, and **Elizabeth Appold** (pictured 1 to 3 below) were invited to attend a virtual honor band hosted by the University of Michigan Flint Music Department. The event was broken into three parts: a virtual meet and greet with Emmy award winning composer **Julie Giroux**, a sectional with the clarinet teacher at U of M Flint, and a personal recording of Ms. Giroux’s music that will be compiled into a full band piece and sent out to the

participants.

**Roberts**, clarinet section leader, was intrigued by **Giroux’s** love of video games: “Her background on the zoom call was a room in one of the video games, and she writes a lot of music that is related to the games.” All of the VL musicians loved hearing Giroux’s stories about her connections to a long list of celebrities and professional musicians. In addition to enjoying the clarinet teacher’s sense of humor, they deemed the entire virtual event a valuable and worthwhile educational experience.



# My Friend, Violet



This is my friend, Violet. When you're at home all day, you learn to appreciate all the friends you can find.

This is actually her picture in spring of 2017. She hadn't produced blooms in over a year, and I found it fitting that she decided to flower at Easter time. I had been giving her water, but she wasn't thriving as I had hoped. My mom kept telling me

to give her fertilizer. I didn't. Plants need water and sun. I had it covered.

Fast forward a few years - Violet wasn't doing well. My mom was still telling me to give her fertilizer. I found some in the shed and figured, why not? Would you believe that my mother was right? Violet grew big and strong and blossomed all over the place.

This is Violet today. (I placed my ruler in the picture for dramatic effect.)

Morals of this story:  
Listen to your mother.  
She's most likely right. In

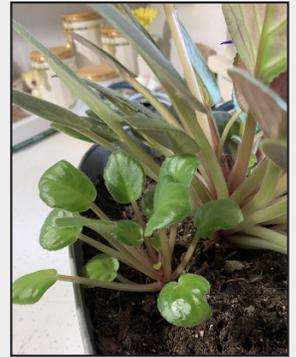


this pandemic, we keep hearing about self-care. Go for a walk, connect with friends, breathe, work on a puzzle, etc. These are good things. However, they're kind of like the water for Violet. It's enough to keep her going, but not enough for her to flourish.

John 15:5-8 says, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."* We need to spend time with God and in His word. It's like our fertilizer - accomplishing in us what we cannot do for ourselves.

If we stay rooted in our relationship with God, we are able to not only thrive, but think outside ourselves and be disciples to those around us. By the grace of God and through the work of His Spirit, we may even inspire growth in others. Look! Violet is doing so well, she grew another friend to fertilize! I'm thinking about calling her Petunia...

~Barb Doyle



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