

2022

Valley Lutheran HIGH SCHOOL



# FAMILY & FRIENDS

*A Year in Review: Ministry in Action*

Preparing students for life with Christ as our foundation!

A PUBLICATION OF VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

# Welcome from our Interim Executive Director



**Dear Charger Nation,**

Greetings from Valley Lutheran High School!

You are holding a copy of the Family & Friends: 2022 Year in Review. We are excited to be able to share some of the many achievements, updates, and blessings over the last year. In addition, we hope you will be able to see a theme of Ministry in Action woven throughout this publication. There has been a strong “ministry mindset” at Valley from our very inception, but it has been a joy to see how that has grown and evolved here over the last 45 years – and it is especially inspiring to watch how God grows that mindset in the lives of alumni long after they walk these hallways.

**Kyle DeWees**  
*Interim Executive Director*

On a personal note, it is quite an honor to be able to address the broader “Valley Family” in this manner. This year I was asked to step into the role of Interim Executive Director, to help the important ministry of VLHS to continue, while providing time for the Call Process to identify the next person that God has in mind to lead this school. I am humbled to work to that end, alongside the outstanding team here.

This school has been incredibly blessed by faithful men and women who have followed God’s calling in their life to serve here. Each and every role in this school: from faculty to staff, coach to ticket-taker, volunteer to administrator. Each one has brought a unique set of gifts and talents and a desire to serve our Lord in this place. For that I give thanks!

I am reminded of Paul’s words in his letter to the Corinthians:

***“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”***

**I Corinthians 4:1-2**

Valley Lutheran High School continues to be blessed in many ways. And we are called to be servants of Christ and good stewards of all that God has provided. Rest assured that we remain committed to being faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted: from every gift given, to every family partnership, and every student entrusted to us during the four years of high school. We remain steadfast in the pursuit of our mission: **Preparing students for life with Christ as our foundation!**

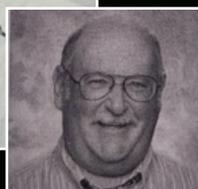
At the writing of this letter, the Call process has already begun. Members of the VLHS Board of Directors and VL Foundation Board are serving as the Call Committee and are dedicated to the process of identifying and calling the person to lead our school next. I would ask you to please keep all involved in the process in your prayers.

I hope you can sense the excitement and energy that exists around Valley Lutheran. Thank you for being a valued member of the Valley Family and thank you for supporting this important ministry.

**God bless and GO CHARGERS!**

**Kyle DeWees**  
*Interim Executive Director*

## Remembering Mr. Steve Zill



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## Supporting the Ministry



The Valley family was surprised and saddened to hear of the passing of our beloved friend, teacher, and coworker Steve Zill on October 6, 2022. As members of the greater Valley family, many of you have identified and shared your favorite Zill memory: the first time you heard his contagious laugh echo down the hall, the “Interactive Devotion” or science activity that didn’t go the way you (or he!) thought it might, the message he sent every year on your birthday, his unwavering love for his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...and so many more.

We give thanks to God for Mr. Zill and his many years of ministry at Valley and beyond and we are grateful to have shared a piece of this life with him.



# Ministry: Alive & Well in the Lives of *Students*

Service and ministry opportunities are woven into the student experience at Valley Lutheran. Over this past year, students not only participated in our regular projects but also branched out in new ways to serve and care for others.



## Service Days Remain

Service Days remain a trademark of the Valley Lutheran experience. Twice each year students spread out across the Great Lakes Bay Region in their family groups to serve in a variety of ways; from painting to weeding, cleaning to reading, hauling to sorting, our students do it all!



## Student-Initiated Project Serves Kitchen



2021-2022 School Year: After a field trip to Midland landfill, students in Valley Lutheran's Sustainability class were challenged to discover a waste stream around Valley and make a plan to mitigate it. The kitchen had switched to using single-use serving dishes because they were short-staffed and unable to both serve students and wash dishes. The class's answer became clear - address the amount of trash produced in the kitchen by creating a student volunteer dish-washing program. For the full story on this student-initiated ministry read here:

[www.vlhs.com/sustainability](http://www.vlhs.com/sustainability).



## Global Awareness Club Reaches Outside the Walls of VL

Valley's Global Awareness Club provides students hands-on ministry opportunities that benefit those outside Valley's walls. Two standing projects include cutting out patterns for denim teddy bears for Wellspring's Camp Hope (a summer grief camp for kids and teenagers) and making tie blankets to be donated to local homeless shelters.





## New 'Animal Club' Promotes & Supports Care for Shelter Animals



Under the guidance of Dr. Lisa Meyers, a new student group is partnering with local animal shelters to advocate for and support the animals in their care. Students have brainstormed a number of ways to get involved: volunteering at local shelters, participating in a cat and kitten supply drive, assembling adoption bags, and more. In March 2022, students organized an alternate March Madness: Shelter Style bracket to raise funds for animal care and adoptions. To read more about this project go to: [www.vlhs.com/shelterstyle](http://www.vlhs.com/shelterstyle).



## Students Active in Operation Christmas Child Collection

Every year Valley students participate in the national Operation Christmas Child collection, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse that seeks to provide Christmas gifts and a message of hope to children around the world. In November, Valley students packed 234 shoeboxes to donate.



## Art Department Partners with Saginaw Land Bank to Beautify Saginaw

Valley Lutheran Art students have found an authentic way to serve their community through an ongoing partnership with the Saginaw County Land Bank. The Land Bank works to protect and secure vacant properties, often utilizing large pieces of particle board. Valley Art students paint these boards to add a bright and engaging impact. It's a perfect match - using our artists' time, talents, and skills to take care of our community and provide security in an aesthetic way! These festive boards were on display at the corner of Washington and Genesee in Saginaw during the holiday season.



# VL Alumni: Returning to Serve

Get to know these current Valley Lutheran faculty & staff members who are also proud Valley alumni!



## Caleb Abraham

**Class of 2005**

**Family:** Married to Emily. Dad to Noah, Joel, Levi, and Adam.

**VL Role:** 6th year at Valley teaching Algebra,

Geometry and AP Calculus. Assistant Coach for girls and boys soccer and Math Field Day team advisor.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Ms. Meyers (now Dr.). She made classes fun, engaging, and challenging.



## Heidi (Fischer) Behnke

**Class of 1990**

**Family:** Married to Tim. Mom to Danielle (VL '18), Eliana (VL '20), and Noah (VL '23).



**VL Role:** 9th year at Valley starting as the Academic Secretary and now in the Advancement Associate role. Member of the Parent Organization.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Pastor Mac, who was instrumental in faith foundation, Mr. Schlesselman, who was a morning math mentor, and Miss Feldkamp, who helped her learn deadlines through Yearbook.



## Missy (Waldie) Cruz

**Class of 2003**

**Family:** Married to Danny. Stepmom to Elias and Jeremiah. Mom to Isaac.

**VL Role:** 1st year at Valley teaching Algebra 1,

Intermediate Algebra 2, and Pre Calculus.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Mr. Wolf and Mr. Zill.



## Barb (Stoll) Doyle

**Class of 1991**

**Family:** Married to Paul.

**VL Role:** 24th year at Valley, currently teaching Advanced Algebra 2, Algebra 1A, Statistics and



Advanced Applications in Mathematics. Director of the Glorify Handbell Choir and currently a Class Advisor. Has previously taught Geometry and worked with National Honors Society.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Mr. Schlesselman: "A good math teacher and a good human."



## Matthew Laux

**Class of 1994**

**Family:** Married to Carol (Bickel, VL '94), Dad to Mikayla (VL '22), and Kelly (VL '24)

**VL Role:** 5th year at Valley, working in Maintenance and Grounds.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Mr. David Britton, who encouraged me and drew me out. His care cultivated a lifelong appreciation of instrumental and classical music, along with a desire to present the love of Christ in all things, and the work required to do so.





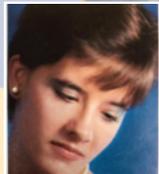
## Beth (Schultz) Prochnow

**Class of 1987**

**Family:** Married to Pete. Mom to Natalie (VL '26).

**VL Role:** 1st year at Valley serving in Admissions Department.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Frau Vaul who made the German language come alive for her students while sharing her faith in the process.



## Jessica (Wardin) Schwarz

**Class of 1994**

**Family:** Married to Peter. Mom to Jack (VL '21) and Bryan (VL '23).

**VL Role:** 13th year at Valley teaching Chemistry. Student Council Advisor and Varsity Track and Field Coach.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Mr. Guenther and Mr. Zill, thus her love of science. Also Mr. Roekle.



## Kevin Streeter

**Class of 1990**

**Family:** Married to Brandi. Stepdad to Arianah (VL '17) and Kaleb (VL '20).



**VL Role:** 9th year at Valley teaching Computer Science. Class Advisor, Freshman Lock-In Coordinator, and Advisor of C4 (Creative Computing and Chess Club).

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Mr. Guenther - a respected teacher and coach.



## Cris (Survant) Urbytes

**Class of 1987**

**Family:** Married to Darrin (VL '87). Mom to Alec (VL '18), Elliott (VL '21), and Reagan (VL '26).

**VL Role:** 10th year at Valley teaching French 1, 2, 3 & AP. Class Advisor, French Club, and Protect Life Advisor.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Ms. Flora, who inspired her to become a French teacher.



## Andra (Theiss) Warren

**Class of 1996**

**Family:** Married to Jeremy (VL '97). Mom to Nathan (VL '14), Chloe (and son-in-law Riley) Ringley (VL '18) and Isabel (VL '21).



**VL Role:** 3rd year at Valley serving in the RC, and previously in the kitchen.

**Most Influential VL Teacher?** Miss Feldkamp, who "worked you hard and expected a lot from you, but still made class fun and really cared about all the students."

# Alumni

## Serving Beyond VL

### What is your most favorite or most memorable story from high school that you still share to this day?

I don't know that I could nail down one single story. My time at VLHS was filled with great friends and lots of memories. I loved playing soccer for Mr. Zill. I loved my time on the volleyball team. I was an aide for Mr. Guenther and I loved that time too. Choir and band tour was something I had never experienced before my time at Valley and that was a blast.

### Who influenced you the most during your time at VLHS?

Mr. Guenther. He taught science and I love science. He taught Jesus in science, included humor, was relatable and approachable.



**Katie (Provenzano) Engelhardt (VL '97)**

## To Now

### Please catch us up on your life since graduation.

After graduation from Valley I went to Michigan State University where I graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Nursing. I worked as a bedside nurse in a variety of areas. For the last 8 years I've worked in the Neonatal ICU at Covenant. In January 2022 I took a leadership position in the Neonatal ICU.

I've been married to Matt Engelhardt (VL '94) since 2002 and we have two kids at Valley, a senior and sophomore. My mind is blown when I see my kids inside the walls of VLHS. I swear, I was just inside them myself as a student.

### What "bits" of your time at VLHS still exist in your life today?

Valley solidified my personal relationship with Jesus. That relationship still exists and my time at Valley contributed to that. I still have friendships from high school and sharing common beliefs has only deepened those friendships. When I went to MSU, I had to choose to keep Jesus part of my life. He wasn't in my daily classes, there wasn't a daily required chapel. Valley, in part, provided me with the foundation to choose Jesus.

## For Fun

### Where do you live?

We live in Saginaw.

### What is your favorite color?

Blue

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Running and reading.

### What do you always order when you see it on the menu?

I'm not picky! That's why I run!

## Your Life of Ministry

### What does 'ministry' mean to you?

Ministry for me looks like kindness and support to those around me. My family first and then maybe it's a friend in need, maybe it's a baby at work who is up against the odds. Maybe it's my co-workers going through a hard time.

### How do you see God carrying out ministry in your life?

I've been very blessed in my life with a healthy family, my own health, and a multitude of other blessings. I know it's God's grace and mercy and that foundation started, first at home by my parents, and then through the years with Christ centered education.

### Who or what impacted you the most in your ministry's path?

Surrounding myself with a support system that has a personal relationship with Christ has been hugely impactful. For me there is no doubt that sharing a common belief in Jesus has deepened my relationships with family and friends alike.



*Katie began a new area of ministry this summer when she was elected to the Board of Directors of the Michigan District as a regional layperson.*



## What is your most favorite or most memorable story from high school that you still share to this day?

During a “mock rock” competition my Senior year, I was recruited by a group of Senior girls to come out at the end of their lip sync to C'est la vie by B\*Witched and dance like Michael Flatley. The crowd voted us into the finals, which was a 90's song mash-up. When it was played, I realized I was the only person who knew the words to Don't Look Back In Anger by Oasis. I enthusiastically lip synced my heart out, Mr. Frank (one of the MCs that night) yelled “Take it off,” so I ripped my shirt off, threw it into the crowd, and we were declared the winners. It was a great Senior year moment.

## Who influenced you the most during your time at VLHS?

Tom Roekle was a terrific mentor to me on the Cross Country course and in the classroom. I wasn't a naturally gifted runner, but his daily encouragement allowed me to push myself to improve year by year. I wasn't a math whiz, but his teaching made Pre-Calc fun each day. I credit a good amount of my teaching demeanor to the way that Mr. Roekle ran his classroom.

## To Now

### Please catch us up on your life since graduation.

After graduating from Valley I pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Concordia University - Ann Arbor (Go Cards!). From there I attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO, graduating with Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees. While at Seminary I was selected to study abroad at Westfield House (a Lutheran Seminary) in Cambridge, England, which included studying at the University of Cambridge.

My first call was to St. Peter Lutheran Church & School in Arlington Heights, IL where I served for 4.5 years. I then accepted a Call to St. Paul Lutheran Church and School in Ann Arbor, MI where I've joyfully served as Associate Pastor for the past 7 years. For the last four years I've also enjoyed teaching at Concordia University - Ann Arbor as an adjunct professor. I teach a class literally called “The Bible” where we cover the entire Bible in a semester- a whirlwind for sure!

### What “bits” of your time at VLHS still exist in your life today?

Valley was where I first considered entering into church work. Steve Zill would joke with me regularly and say, “Roggow, when are you gonna graduate so that you can take my job?” He (and many other teachers at Valley) saw gifts in me that I couldn't see in myself, and his continual encouragement helped me to consider pursuing a degree in Secondary Education. Even though I eventually switched to Pre-Seminary studies, the seeds Mr. Zill planted were essential to my consideration of church work, and his words still help me recognize that God is at work through the gifts He's given me.

## For Fun

### Where do you live?

Superior Township, MI, just outside of Ann Arbor.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I occasionally run, or golf with some guys from church. Family road trips with our kids to see friends, family, and some National Parks is probably what I spend most of my free time planning and enjoying.

## Your Life of Ministry

### What does ‘ministry’ mean to you?

For me, ministry is a life of daily picking up my cross and following Jesus. (Luke 9:23) His death and resurrection that gives forgiveness and life is the good news that I need to hear and that I get to share everyday. It's not easy, and it means dying to self, desires, and pride, but then it leads to a richer life of service, community, and love for others, with Jesus Christ at the center of all things. As Jesus says, “daily” I fix my eyes on Him, remember my baptismal identity in Him, and then pray that the Holy Spirit will guide my thoughts, words and actions to and among His people. Ministry is never perfect and ministry is rarely easy, but it is a daily joy because everything is about Jesus.

### How do you see God carrying out ministry in your life?

Even before I leave the house, I get to be a husband and a father. Mandy and our four boys are the primary people that God has placed in my life to minister to and who minister to me. I also get to serve at St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, which means that I regularly get to share the love of Jesus with all ages - from preschoolers in the classroom, to middle schoolers with their great faith questions, to 90-year-olds who express the sure hope of being with Jesus. As I minister to the people around me, I unfailingly receive encouragement in return, and the overflow of God's goodness in the whole process is beautiful to experience.

### The mission of VLHS is: *Preparing students for life with Christ as our foundation!* How have you seen this mission played out in your own life?

It's easy to try to build your life on something other than Christ. One that I tried while at Valley was my own righteousness. I was the “good kid” who was never tardy and obeyed the rules. That wasn't a bad thing, but I laid it as my identity and foundation for many years. When that failed and I couldn't live up to my own expectations, I realized that I was trying to find the reason God loved me in my own actions instead of looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of my faith (Hebrews 12:2). Building life on him - His Word and work for me - has given me a truly solid foundation. He has never and will never fail me.

### What is your favorite color?

Back at Valley, my favorite color was clear. It remains to this day.

### What do you always order when you see it on the menu?

Definitely pizza. I'll eat any, though Chicago Deep Dish is probably at the top of the list.

### What is your most favorite or most memorable story from high school that you still share to this day?

My friends and I still talk and laugh about the spring concert when the fire alarms went off during a very loud band piece and we all thought the flashing was a bunch of cameras. It took us quite a bit to figure out what was going on.

### Who influenced you the most during your time at VLHS?

Bev Felkamp and Barry Wittig. These two teachers pushed me to be the best I could be at everything I did and inspired me to follow in their footsteps and get my teaching degree. Mr. Wittig helped me grow my love for musicals and history. Miss Feldkamp helped me truly learn to "Love God and Love People." That's why my friends and I started the Global Awareness Club at Valley.



## To Now

### Please catch us up on your life since graduation.

I graduated from Concordia College New York in 2020, with my Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and a Lutheran Teacher's Diploma. I started off my professional career as the first grade teacher at St. Michael's Lutheran School in Richville, MI. After one year of teaching, I felt God call me to step up and fill in a different position - Director of the Early Childcare Center and Preschool Programs. I continued my education and am now certified in Child Care Administration.

This past June I married Brendan Krueger (VL '18). We are loving life and have recently found out that we will be welcoming a little bundle of joy in March.

### What professional organizations are you a part of?

I am a member of Kappa Delta Pi (The International Honor Society in Education), NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children), and NICCA (The National Indian Child Care Association).

### What "bits" of your time at VLHS still exist in your life today?

I am married to my high school sweetheart! And we are the godparents to the beautiful children of Zachary and Hunter Mueller, two of our VLHS friends.

## For Fun

### Where do you live?

In Frankenmuth, Michigan.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I love to read, spend time outdoors, and be with my family.

## Your Life of Ministry

### What does 'ministry' mean to you?

Ministry to me is sharing the love of Christ to everyone you meet by being kind and building relationships. Once relationships have been built, we are able to talk about difficult topics and share the good news of Jesus.

### How do you see God carrying out ministry in your life?

I see this in my life everyday. I get to come to work and share God's love with each family, student, and coworker I interact with. I get to provide a safe place for children to grow and learn about Christ's love for them.

### Who or what impacted you the most in your ministry's path?

I truly believe my family has impacted me the most. My parents made a lot of sacrifices so I could attend VLHS. VLHS set me up for success, and my family has continued to support me through each of life's seasons. This past year I lost my grandmother, who was my best friend. She pushed me to love Christ above all else in this world and to always remember to be kind. Her legacy is one of love, sacrifice, and joy. I strive to live everyday to be a woman she would be proud of. I pray that my ministry is a continuation of what she and the other saints before me started.

### The mission of VLHS is:

***Preparing students for life with Christ as our foundation!***

### How have you seen this mission played out in your own life?

I have built all that I have and all that I am on Christ. I strive to be the daughter, friend, wife, and soon to be mom that He intends me to be. VLHS prepared me to face challenges head on with Christ as my shield. These past years have been filled with many uncertainties, but my faith keeps me strong.

This is the same faith that was solidified through my time at VLHS.

### What is your favorite color?

Blue

### What do you always order when you see it on the menu?

I don't go out to eat often, but I enjoy the gluten free french dip from PROST! in Frankenmuth and I get it everytime we go there.

# Growing Our Ministry Partnerships

Valley Lutheran High School exists within a greater network of ministries of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the greater Christian church, and the world. This year Valley has been blessed to grow our relationships with a number of ministry partners - for the benefit of our students and to the glory of God!

## Partnership Focus: Churchwork

Valley Lutheran maintains many intentional academic partnerships that provide students numerous opportunities to enhance their high school experiences. Key partnerships include our local career & technical centers, the Saginaw ISD, Delta College and others previously highlighted here: <https://www.vlhs.com/academicpartners>. Through the strategic plan the Board of Directors encourages growing one area of academic partnership per school year. This year the chosen focus was churchwork.

As a result, a number of exciting things have happened:

- Valley teachers are now more intentional about talking to and encouraging students who they believe would be a good fit for a churchwork career.
- Dr. Lisa Meyers, Academic Dean, has worked closely with Concordia University in Ann Arbor to learn and provide next steps for interested church work students including a meet & greet held at Valley, workshops held at Concordia, Ann Arbor's campus, and a newly developed college course on vocation that will be available to Valley students in the fall of 2023.
- Valley teachers Mr. Patrick Winningham and Miss Jeanette Weilnau led a group of almost 40 students to a Visit Day at Concordia this fall.

We look forward to seeing how this new partnership benefits students and the church for years to come!



## New Ministry Partnership: Orphan Grain Train

Valley Lutheran High School is now an official drop-off location for Orphan Grain Train, the Christian volunteer network that collects and ships needed items to people around the country and globe. Donations brought to Valley are taken to the Michigan branch in Sebawaing and then distributed where needed. (Have items to donate? The collection barrel is located inside the main entrance at VLHS.)



### Christina Smith - Senior

#### Possible Future Lutheran Elementary School Teacher

"I'm considering churchwork because I grew up with church worker parents and grandparents! I am most looking forward to getting to teach children about Jesus and helping build their faith foundation."



### Nikolas Nisidis - Senior

#### Possible Future Pastor

"I simply love studying the Bible and connecting issues in our culture to what God's Word says. All are called to serve God in their respective vocations, but I do believe churchwork is what I am called to do given my allegiances, interests, and skillset. I have an allegiance to the truth, and therefore God and his Word, so I pray I can help turn the tide in our culture of people turning away from church."



### Ezekiel Pearson - Senior

#### Possible Future Lutheran Secondary School Teacher

"I began considering church work as a career because of my mother, but also, many teachers at Valley have encouraged me because 'they saw something in me.' I am excited to become a secondary Lutheran teacher so I can be a positive Christian example to students, helping them through their walks with Christ and leading and developing the Christian leaders of tomorrow. I am also looking forward to being able to teach in a Christ-centered environment, allowing me to share my faith with students much like the teachers at Valley have done for me."

## New Church Partnership

The Valley Lutheran High School Association celebrates and is excited to welcome a new congregation to the association: Messiah Lutheran Church, Clio. Messiah Lutheran becomes the 16th congregation to join the association of congregations that supports the excellent Christian-education opportunity at VLHS and serves as our school's official governing body. Rev. Erik Cloeter is the Senior Pastor at Messiah and is serving as the congregation's first delegate to the VLHS Board of Directors.

"The ministry of VLHS is certainly strengthened by this addition to the Association," reflects Interim Executive Director Kyle DeWees. "Messiah's membership also reinforces the fact that Valley Lutheran is truly a regional school: serving students and families from throughout Mid-Michigan."

Each member association congregation selects one individual to serve on the board. In addition, one pastor of an association member congregation and one teacher from an association member school are selected by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors sets the school's long-term direction through strategic planning and addressing issues that impact the school's future.

Learn more about Messiah Lutheran by visiting [www.messiahclio.org](http://www.messiahclio.org) and you can learn more about the VLHS Board of Directors by visiting: [www.vlhs.com/board](http://www.vlhs.com/board).

# HOMECOMING 2022

## In Pictures!



### 2022 Homecoming Court

Ladies L-R: Claire Katenhus, Addison Smith, Nora Strieter, Anna Keup, Riley Karas.  
Gentlemen: Andrew Keysor, Ronald Slone, Zeke Pearson, Aiden McNally, Max Behmlander.



### King & Queen

Congratulations to the 2022 Valley Lutheran King and Queen, Ron Slone and Addi Smith!



### Tailgate

One of the joys of Homecoming is the welcoming home and celebration of the Valley family. The Grand Tailgate was once again a great 'reunion' of different ages, families, schools, and congregations celebrating together.



### Dress Up Days

Fun dress-up days always add to the spirit and excitement of the week!



### Parade

This year's parade featured two 'firsts' - one, a Charger (horse) thanks to Valley's new Equestrian Club, and two, dogs available for adoption walking with members of the Valley's Animal Club. The Parade also highlighted members of the Homecoming court and individual class floats.



# Graduation



On June 12, 2022 the 72 members of the VL Class of 2022 celebrated their graduation, the completion of their time at Valley and the commencement of their futures!

Commencement speaker and (our then) VL Director of Advancement Kyle DeWees spoke to the class of the theme verse they had chosen for the year.

“Amidst a global pandemic, and following extremely challenging years - especially in the world of education - you [Graduating Class of 2022] chose to remind us of a God of hope. You chose to remind us to be filled with all the joy. You reminded us to have peace. You chose to cast your senior year in the light of an exhilarating benediction - a call to action - found in Romans 15:13 - *Now may the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by power of the Holy Spirit.*”

May these words guide the Class of 2022, and all of us, for all of our days. Congratulations graduates and blessings in your next endeavors!



**Grace Appold**  
Valedictorian



**Emma VanTol**  
Valedictorian



**Allison Sowatsky**  
Salutatorian



Some VL Class of 1994 parents pose with their VL Class of 2022 daughters. Carol (Bickel) Laux said, “We were friends ‘back then’ and now our girls are friends!! God is good!” (Do you have a ‘cool VL connection’ picture to share? We’d love to see it! Send it to us at [communications@vlhs.com](mailto:communications@vlhs.com) for possible future publication.)

## 2022 2nd Generation VLHS Graduates

- Dylan Appold.....Brian Appold ‘82
- Grace Appold.....Bruce Appold ‘84
- Jack Barber.....Wendi (Armstrong) Barber ‘97
- Cody Britton.....David Britton ‘85
- Lindsay Burk.....Steve Burk ‘85
- Mason Ehlert.....Kathy (Rose) Ehlert ‘90
- Evan Engelhardt.....Brian Engelhardt ‘92
- Trenton Hagenbach.....Jodi (Gremel) Hagenbach ‘92
- Benjamin Herzberger...Jon & Lynn (Finke) Herzberger ‘98
- Jacob Jurmanovich....Joe Jurmanovich II ‘89
- Elijah Kaul.....Al & Beth (Lambert) Kaul ‘87

- Mikayla Laux.....Matt & Carol (Bickel) Laux ‘94
- Brody Livingston.....Melanie (Rodammer) Livingston ‘91
- Christian Mouch.....Kimberly (Waldie) Shorkey ‘00
- Alayna O’Laughlin.....Lynne (Lutenske) O’Laughlin ‘96
- Cal Shaw.....Kelly (Sendtko) Shaw ‘92
- Allison Sowatsky.....Eric Sowatsky ‘92
- Emma VanTol.....Jeremy & Rebecca (Reed) VanTol ‘94
- Garrett Webb.....Josh Webb ‘92
- Cade Wilson.....Lori (Smith) Wilson ‘90
- Jared Zeilinger.....Brandon Zeilinger ‘92

# Student Accomplishments



## Poms Team Brings Home First Place State Finish

In February, the Valley Lutheran Poms Team were named State Champions! Their coach is Marissa Lacy (VL '16).

## Horney and Ayotte Attend Disney Cook Around the World Competition

Saginaw Career Complex culinary students Chloe Horney (VL '23) and Danielle Ayotte (VL '22) attended the Cook Around the World competition at Epcot with their SCC culinary class.

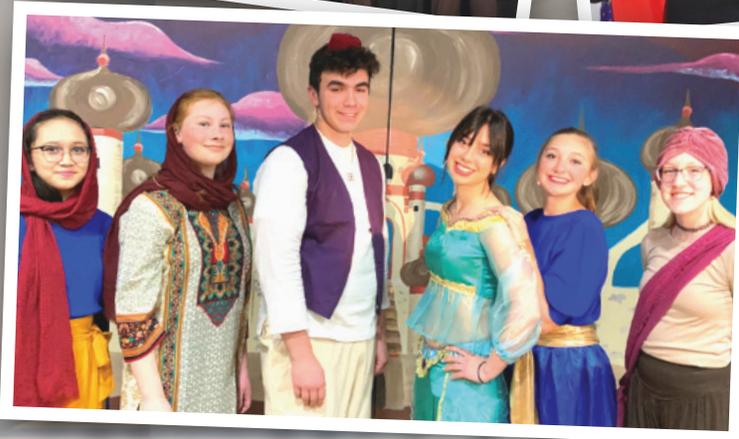


## Harding Earns First in State Commercial Baking Competition

In the spring Danielle Harding (VL '23) competed at the SkillsUSA state conference and earned 1st place in Commercial Baking. She advanced to the SkillsUSA national competition over the summer and placed 5th in the nation!

## Girls Soccer: District Champions

The 2021-2022 Girls Varsity Soccer team achieved the title of District Champions.



## VL Hosts GLBR Musical: Aladdin, Jr.

The fourth Great Lakes Bay Region Lutheran Schools Musical was a great success! Aladdin, Jr, under the direction of Mr. Mark Brenner (VL '88) brought together talented actors from area grade schools as well as Valley Lutheran. In addition to three nights of shows, the cast put on a special matinee performance which was attended by over 500 grade school students.



## Golfers Qualify for State Competition

The Boys Golf team with members Owen Bender (VL '22), Noah Behnke (VL '23), Aiden McNally (VL '23), David Weiss (VL '23), and Jacob Parker (VL '25) qualified for the state tournament in June. Their coach is John Mueller (VL '95).



## Trap Team Sees Continued Success at State and National Tournament

In June members of the VL Trap Team competed in the Michigan State High School Clay Target League tournament. Ben Tomandl (VL '23) was named 'High Gun' (1st place!) in the varsity division while the team of Cal Shaw (VL '22), Cody Britton (VL '22), Collin Engelhardt (VL '23), Ben, and Rylee Ross (VL '23) finished 4th in the state.

These team members elected to attend the national tournament in July and placed 37th (out of 230 qualifying teams) in the team finals. Additionally Ben and Cal advanced to the individual finals finishing 97th and 199th in the nation respectively out of the 1717 qualifying individual competitors in attendance.

## VL Track Team Members Place at State Tournament

The following VL Track Team members qualified to compete at the State Meet in June:

Their coach is Jessica Schwarz (VL '94).

### Girls State Qualifiers

200m – Claire Neumann (VL '24)

400m – Claire Neumann

4x200 Relay – Emma Britton (VL '23), Ashlyn Martin (VL '22), Sarah Mills (VL '23), Claire Neumann

### Boys State Qualifiers

100m – Garrett Webb (VL '22), Preston Kelsey (VL '24)

100h – Hans Ross (VL '22)

400m – Dylan Appold (VL '22)

Discuss – Levi Belill (VL '22)

High Jump – Hans Ross (VL '22)

4x400m Relay – Dylan Appold, Hans Ross, Garrett Webb, Preston Kelsey (see photo)

### And those seeing State Finishes:

Mens 4x400m Relay Team – 6th

Claire Neumann – 6th in the 400m

Dylan Appold – 7th in the 400m

## Volleyball: District Champions

The 2022-2023 varsity volleyball team earned a District Championship! Their coach is Jon Frank (VL '88).



## Neumann Qualifies for State Cross Country Meet

In the fall Claire Neumann (VL '24) ran a personal best of 19:50 at the regional cross country meet to earn a spot at the state cross country championships.





# Debt Free. Once Again!

*Dr. Dwight McNally addresses the crowd sharing reflections from the campaign and the positive impacts it has had on VL students now and for years to come. Dwight and Brenda McNally served as Co-Chairs of the GROWING Campaign.*

Thanks be to God, Valley Lutheran is once again debt free!

On October 12, 2022 a mortgage “burning” celebration was held. The evening’s celebration featured fellowship, delicious food, great speakers, some light-hearted fun, and wonderful music courtesy of the VL Brass Ensemble. The event also provided the opportunity to recognize dedicated volunteers who served on special committees during the campaign: the Campaign Cabinet and the Building Committee. Recognition was also given to those who serve on each of Valley’s ongoing Boards: the Association Board of Directors and the VL Foundation Board.

The aggressive debt pay-down was made possible by God’s continued provision and through the generosity of the 1,780 GROWING Campaign supporters. VL was able to “pay cash” as the \$6.5 million dollar capital expansion was being built. This is a testament to faithful giving and pledge fulfillment. The remaining cost after construction was completed (\$880,000) was rolled into a mortgage in July of 2021. That amount was paid down dollar-for-dollar as pledge payments were received, until the final amount was able to be paid off with previously saved GROWING Campaign receipts. We remain confident that the remaining pledge commitments will be fulfilled, helping to keep VLHS in a strong financial position.

Every priority of the GROWING Campaign worked together to achieve one primary goal: to better equip Valley Lutheran to effectively pursue our mission: **Preparing students for life with Christ as our foundation!** VL Senior Chloe Horney spoke during the celebration, sharing her first-person student perspective as the building additions were completed and the full impact of the GROWING Campaign is being realized.

Thank you to all who came together to make this possible. To God be the glory!



## Mortgage disposed how!?!

We didn’t actually burn the mortgage. Instead, we utilized three creative methods to dispose of the debt, representing each of the three building addition areas: the arts, science, and athletics. Tuba players Zeke (Senior, left) and Jake (Junior, right) blew the mortgage into confetti. VL Senior Aiden tore the document into shreds with the strength he developed in the weight room. And Chemistry teacher Mrs. Jessica Schwarz (VL ‘94) used a chemical solution to turn the organic paper into black carbon and then carbon dioxide.

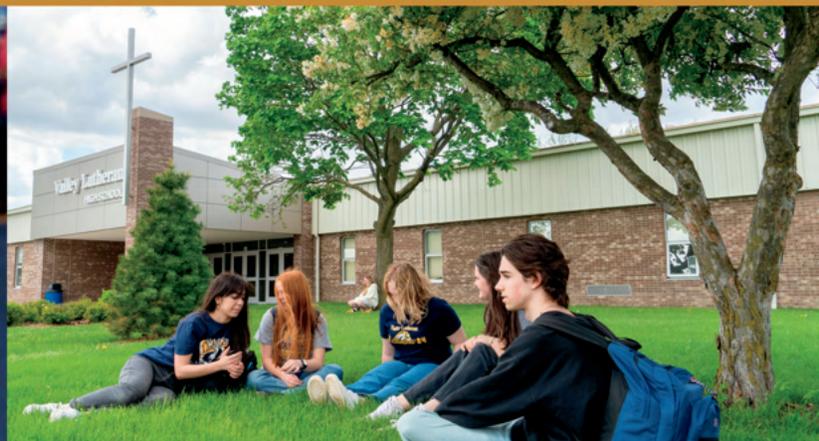
And a special shout out to one of our favorite emcees, alum and Varsity Girls Basketball Coach, Mr. Matt Princing (VL ‘85). Matt was a wonderful emcee, despite trying to build a bonfire in his eagerness to burn the mortgage!



## Did you know?

The original mortgage for Valley Lutheran High School was burned on May 29, 2015. Then exactly 7 years, 4 months, and 13 days later, we did it again! On that date, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis and Nancy Princing and Mr. and Mrs. David and Donna Sting had the honors of actually burning the 30 year mortgage.

# PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE, WITH CHRIST AS OUR FOUNDATION – FOR 45 YEARS!



A Valley Lutheran education is made possible through the financial support and generosity of **many** people collectively giving as they are able.

The students who benefit from this ministry thank you for your support.

If you have never given a gift to VLHS, will you prayerfully consider supporting?

Consider a first time gift of \$45 in celebration of 45 years of ministry.

**GIVE ONLINE**

[WWW.VLHS.COM/GIVE](http://WWW.VLHS.COM/GIVE)

**OR SCAN HERE**



# Alumni News



**Heather Wuobio (VL '05) & Andrew Guenther (VL '04)** got married in Frankenmuth, Michigan on October 15, 2022. Although they barely knew each other in high school, they reconnected in 2020 at another Valley graduate's wedding (**Tracy (Fitzsimons) Schiefer, VL '05**). Heather was living in Colorado at that time, but moved back to Michigan in 2021 just before she and Andrew got engaged. They now live in Wyoming, Michigan, just outside of Grand Rapids.



**Nathan (VL '08) & Amy Engelhard** are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Madeline Ruth Engelhard. Madeline was born on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 3:54 a.m. at Covenant Medical Center in Saginaw. She weighed 7 pounds 7 ounces and was 19.5 inches long. Madeline is the granddaughter of Ronald and Ruth Miller of Blissfield and Cindy Engelhard of Unionville. Madeline was welcomed home by big brother, Lawson and big sister, Jordana. The family resides in Unionville.

**Joshua & Emily (Aven) Muehlfeld (both VL '10)** were married August 9, 2019 and welcomed Milo on August 22, 2022. Joshua graduated from Saginaw Valley State University with a Bachelors in Professional Accountancy. Both Joshua and Emily work for Frankenmuth Insurance and they currently reside in Saginaw.



**Maureen (Yurgens) Bialek (VL '11) & husband Christian** welcomed baby boy Hayes in September of 2022. They currently reside in Hudsonville, Michigan.



**Zach & Kaelin (Martlock) Seder (both VL '13)** welcomed Cade Martin Seder on July 10th, 2022 at 8lb 2oz. Although they are in upstate NY, Cade is staying true to his roots (Go Blue)!



**Evan (VL '13) & Olivia Howard** welcomed their second child Lorelei 'Rori' Gretchen Howard on January 6, 2022. Big brother Calvin is absolutely in love.

Bethany (Daenzer, VL '16) and Brendan Krueger (VL' 18) were married on June 10, 2022. See their photo and hear from Bethany on page 10.



**Charlea (Mossner) Ford (VL '15)** recently completed her Master of Science in Cancer Biology. Charlea and her husband Lucas live in Bay City.



**Sarah Giglio (VL '17)** was one of 6 in her class to receive her certificate for diversity and inclusion in veterinary medicine last year. She is in her second year of vet school at Purdue University, College of Veterinary Medicine. She and **Corbin Stefanski (VL '18)** were married on October 22, 2022. Corbin is in his first semester in the Physical Therapy Program at University of Indianapolis.



**Zachary (VL '17) & Hannah (Iliff) (VL '18) Peil** were united in marriage on May 21, 2022. Zach is employed by Michigan Sugar and Hannah is working at Holy Cross as a teacher's assistant.

**Brianna (Sting) & Mateo Vargas (both VL '18)**

were married July 23, 2022. Brianna graduated from SVSU in May 2022 with a bachelors in chemistry. She is currently working for Dow as a full-time lab technician.

Mateo is employed by JSS Safety and Rescue providing standby rescue services inside OSHA defined confined spaces from Saginaw to Colorado. Together they enjoy worshipping together at their church, enjoying the outdoors, watching Survivor and relaxing.



**Elizabeth (Irish) & Tyler Morse (both VL '18)**

were married by Mr. Zill on July 30, 2022. After high school they continued to pursue the Lord, each other, and their futures. Today, Tyler is a State Trooper and Elizabeth is a Medical Aesthetician. They live in Boyne City with their eight chickens! Elizabeth states "Mr. Zill remained a consistent light for Jesus in our lives. As Mr. Zill coined, "MARRIAGE IS AWESOME!"



**Do you have Alumni News to share?  
Please send to:  
communications@vlhs.com.**

**Address change, name change, or  
other contact information update?  
Please send to: hbehnke@vlhs.com.**



# Valley Lutheran HIGH SCHOOL

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*Save the Date!*

## VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

*20th Annual  
Benefit Dinner & Auction*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2023

*at the DoubleTree Hotel  
on the Bay City Riverfront*

[www.vlhsauction.com](http://www.vlhsauction.com)



Attend ★ Donate an item ★ Bid from anywhere ★ Give a gift

**Save the Date**

**Music Department Lenten Tour**  
March 16-19, 2023  
Time & Location: TBD

**Spring Music Concert**  
May 23, 2023  
Time & Location: TBD

**Graduation**  
June 11, 2023  
2 p.m. at VLHS