



## Counting the Days

Countdowns. Let's talk about them. We use them all the time in life. "On your mark, get set, go!" is used to start a cross country or track race. I'll use "1, 2, 3, breath" to count my band students into the beginning of a song. We start at 10 and count down to the ball drop on December 31. Typically these countdowns lead up to the beginning of something. But with every beginning, there is an end to something else.

I've been counting down this school year in a much different way. With Baby Sugden's due date June 6th, the weeks of pregnancy have lined up almost exactly with the weeks of the school year. So that means, that as my life as a new mom begins, the 2020/2021 school year ends. These seniors graduate. The ensemble that I've been blessed to work with all year will never be the same. Even if I wanted it, life is going to change.

We're reminded in Ecclesiastes that there is a season for everything. If we're lucky, we can count these seasons in weeks/months/years and prepare ourselves for not just the exciting beginning of something, but the end of something else. But sometimes we don't get a countdown and life just changes. And that's okay too. Because, when all is said and done, we have a God that sees the big picture. A God who is bigger than our time, our space, our countdowns.

~Becca Sugden



## 2021 Michigan District High School Teacher of the Year: Doug Guenther

Photo courtesy of MI District

Valley teacher and coach **Doug Guenther** has been recognized by the Michigan District as the 2021 High School Teacher of the Year. As a 38-year veteran in Lutheran school classrooms, Guenther has left a lasting impression on thousands of students.

**Katie (Jones) Brewer** (VL '00) responded to the news of this honor, "Well-deserving and should come as no surprise. He's far more than just a teacher. I am grateful for his investment in my life."

That investment has not only been in teaching science and theology classes, but coaching both the boys and girls soccer teams, delivering chapel messages, leading a family group, and encouraging the whole Valley Lutheran family.

Mr. Guenther's colleagues are a part of that family and shared these sentiments in the nomination process:

*(Doug) continues to reinvent his classroom to be what students most need now... I so appreciate his willingness to try new things and to participate in professional development activities that are designed to benefit students.*

*When things get really tough (like 9/11 or the death of a student) Doug is the one we go to for a schoolwide chapel message as he has a true gift in being able to share God's peace and comfort with all of us.*

*He has devoted his life to sharing the Gospel and educating young minds and provides an important example for younger teachers.*

**Travis Grulke**, Superintendent of Schools for the Michigan District summarizes, "It is evident that Doug's ministry to the students, staff, and families at Valley is one that should be celebrated. He has blessed Valley's ministry for many years. We are thankful for his work both inside and outside of the classroom, and we look forward to hearing how Doug continues to have a powerful impact on those he has been called to serve!"

Join us via live stream for the  
**Valley Lutheran High School**  
**Class of 2021 Graduation Ceremony**  
**Sunday, June 13th, 2pm**  
[facebook.com/ValleyLutheran/Saginaw](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyLutheran/Saginaw)

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

### **In Memory of...**

Gitta Allmann  
MJ Bauer  
Paul Begick  
Millie Bender  
Rueben & Millie Bender  
Jerry Boehm  
Frank & Martha Boomhower  
Nancy Burk  
Greg Causley  
John Chapman  
Ken Claus  
William Michael Felten  
Leanne Frank  
Ren Frank  
Bill Gregor  
Jacqueline Hedrick

Wayne Hultz  
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Arnold Palmreuter  
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Harold & Arlene Puffpaff  
Wayne Reinbold  
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Lyn Strye  
Julianne Trautner  
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James VanPetten  
Mary Jane Vollbrecht  
Jane Wardin  
Marie Weishuhn  
Don Weiss  
Dale Wieck  
Tom Willard  
Hollyann Wuertz Green

### **In Honor of...**

Meredith Ackerman  
Kay Brechtelsbauer  
John Brandt  
John & Sue Brandt  
Earl Brechtelsbauer  
Earl & Nonie Brechtelsbauer  
Nonie Brechtelsbauer  
Scott & Heidi Brechtelsbauer  
Todd & Sandi Brechtelsbauer  
Joyce Gibbs  
John & Leah Herzog  
Rachel & Brian Strieter

## **Smith Named NHSSCA All-American Athlete**

VL senior **Scott Smith** has been recognized as a National High School Strength Coaches Association All-American Athlete for 2021. This annual award is given to a high school athlete who has demonstrated outstanding achievement on and off the field in regards to strength and conditioning, academics, athletic performance, and leadership.

Valley teacher and assistant football

coach **Christian Wilke** nominated Smith for the award: "It has been an absolute honor to coach Scott over the past four years, to see all the hard work he has put into the weight room pay off in a big way for him. This is an amazing honor to be recognized as one of the best in the nation. CUAA is getting an amazing football player but an even better man." Smith will play football for Concordia Ann Arbor in the fall.



## **VL Athletes Commit to Collegiate Programs**



Ten athletes in the Class of 2021 have committed to continuing their athletic careers at the collegiate level. From left to right: **Keaton Ringley**, Basketball at Adrian College; **Eli Frank**, Football at Concordia River Forest; **Sullivan Whalen**, Soccer at Finlandia University; **Scott Smith**, Football at Concordia Ann Arbor;

**Quinn Stefanski**, Track at Concordia Ann Arbor; **Drew Louchart**, PomPon at Michigan State University; **Sydney Krause**, Volleyball at St. Michael's College; **Kya Belill**, Rowing at Michigan State University; **Kaitlyn Hale**, Soccer at Delta College; and **Peyton Bartnikowski** Volleyball at Rochester College.

**SAVE THE DATE**

22<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
**VLHS**  
**GOLF OUTING**

IN SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF  
VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2021**  
Apple Mountain  
Golf Course

To register, visit  
[vlhs.com/golffouting](https://vlhs.com/golffouting)