

## **ON PURPOSE**

### **FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER**

## Senior Retreat Recap | Written September 12, 2024

Acts 22:15 - "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

I am a witness.

This past weekend is hard to put into words. Not because nothing happened, but because God's miraculous presence and calling were so evident that words don't seem to explain how impactful and Spirit-filled this weekend was. Even so, I will try.

The retreat was full of team games, pair shares, laughter, prayer, fun activities, worship, and conversations. These conversations centered around the senior class's leadership and the legacy they wanted to leave on Westside's campus and community this year. From the first night, our staff could tell that the Class of 2025 is not only eager to serve and lead but hungry for community in Christ. Throughout the weekend, walls came down amongst friend groups and cliques, and the seniors spent intentional time learning about one another and finding that they weren't all so different after all. Mr. Lindsley spoke on Saturday night about servant leadership and using one's power in Christ to serve. The seniors partnered up and washed one another's feet. This posture of service was incredibly uncomfortable for many, but as they reflected, the seniors were vulnerable and poured their hearts out. The word they used to describe one another was family.

This is where words don't feel like enough. On Sunday, after Dr. Torode spoke to the seniors about following and knowing God in a Spirit-led call, the seniors broke up into groups to pray for one another. During this time, Kate Forrester heard God's call to be baptized. As the class gathered around the bank of the Molalla River, Dr. Torode baptized Kate. But God wasn't done yet. As all of the seniors headed inside after a few minutes, shouts were heard that another baptism was happening. The Class of 2025 poured out of the building to witness Geddy Spencer's baptism. After Geddy, there were eight more baptisms: Grace Brownlee, Jojo Christiansen, Lily Murfitt, Benito Rinaldi, Kiernan Webb, Henry Myers, Riley Cleveland, and Birgitta Hust. In total, there were 10 spontaneous baptisms. Students were walking into the water full-clothed with socks on following God's voice. I have never seen anything like it.

As each student entered and exited the water, their classmates hugged them, rejoiced with them, prayed for them, and cried tears of joy. Hands were lifted and songs were sung. God's presence was palpable. There was no mistaking that this was His plan all along. These seniors' obedience to His voice and His call on their lives has made a lasting impact on not only their classmates but their teachers and administrators as well.



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On Wednesday, the seniors led the Senior Chapel and shared their experiences. Each of their testimonies preached to our community and touched all who had ears to listen. Chapel ran past the bell and into lunch as students and staff prayed over one another and lifted their voices in worship. At the end, the seniors took to the stage and sang, "I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God" with their arms wrapped around one another. That image is not one that I will quickly forget.



Senior Chapel



Seniors washing each other's feet



Kate Forrester's Baptism



Seniors rejoiced as their classmates came out of the water

As senior Alex Evers reminded us with her spoken word (see next page), we are witnesses.



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### Alex Evers's "I am a Witness"

"I am a witness

From the furthest edges of my memories to just a few days earlier, I have lived as a witness

I witnessed my class come together and stand on the beach to witness others Experience

I am a witness to the workings of the world, I am a witness to the language of the stars and earth below.

My mind works in logic, I search for the facts. Everything needs to have an explanation. But when I look into the facts, when I search into the fine print, no matter how small I go, no matter where I look: I see Him. His design is intelligent and intentional, not always the most logical. Through the lens of a scientist, the Lord solidifies Himself and reaches out to me.

I am a Witness

I Witnessed how Benito bore his soul, a low point for himself, to his peers. Not to the Family he was Given to, but the Family that Gave itself to him. I Witnessed Bri relinquish her fearful independence and insecurity, sacrificing upwards of \$200 box braids and personally financed clothing to submit herself to the Lord.

I Witnessed the instantaneous change in Henry when he was pulled above water. And I witnessed a group of people who were brought together by apparent chance welcome their brothers and sisters into their arms.

I stood back and photographed a family coming together, and Witnessed and felt their community. I bore witness to, for the first time, a smoke-covered sky was a soft blue, and the Lord's presence settled among us.

I am a witness

I was not baptized that day, when I do it will be by the hand of my Grandfather, a man who was there when I came into this world and who I want to bring me back into the world again, reborn.

One day I will Experience. One day someone else will bear witness for me, and I will submerge myself in His glory and rest my restless mind.

But for now

I am a Witness"

### Maddie Pringle

Director of Student Life
mpringle@wchsonline.org