

the talon

Volume VI, Issue XV



TENNESSEE CHRISTIAN
December 9, 2025

from the Head

Many traditions are upheld in the Tilley household leading up to Christmas. First and foremost, o' tannenbaum does not receive ornaments, nor the nutcrackers grace the shelves until Thanksgiving Day. After the turkey dinner, all is fair in terms of Christmas decor as long as it is done to the soundtrack of Nat King Cole's Christmas album. One tradition that has been an annual enjoyment is watching a small group of Christmas movies, including White Christmas, Home Alone, and, my favorite, George C. Scott's A Christmas Carol.

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, whether read on the page or seen on screen, expresses the true meaning of Christmas by deepening our understanding of Christ's gift to the world. His coming more than two thousand years ago offered renewal and revealed the boundless love He extends to humanity. There is a part of Dickens' Christmas Carol that exemplifies this symbolic element.

As the Spirit of Christmas Present is departing from Ebenezer Scrooge's presence, he reveals one more important lesson. Two children are revealed from underneath the coat of the Spirit. They are "yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish" and void of happiness. The Spirit proclaims that the children belong to all men and their names are Ignorance and Want.

Too often, we give in to the forces of Ignorance and Want. We crave more than we need and turn away from those unlike ourselves. Christ's coming, and His gift of renewal, stands in direct opposition to this idea of Want and Ignorance. Christ came to show us another way, one marked by wholeness and love. This Christmas season, may we seek a deeper understanding and commit ourselves to serving others as Christ did.

In Christ,



Jared D. Tilley

FUTURE focus

From the quiet farmland of Pikeville, Tennessee, to the depths of the world's oceans, Chief of the Boat Robert Danielson has lived a life few can imagine. Growing up on a poor farm, Danielson dreamed of something bigger, at one point even aspiring to become an astronaut. His determination to find a meaningful career was so strong that, as he humorously recalls, he once "ran a recruiter off the road" just to talk to him about joining the Navy.

That determination eventually led him to one of the most elite communities in the U.S. military: the United States Submarine Force. Only about 1% of Americans join the Navy, and an even smaller group, roughly 0.01%, serve in nuclear positions on submarines. Danielson became part of that small, highly trained group aboard nuclear-powered vessels.



Danielson served on submarines classified as SS (Submersible Ship) and SSBN (Submersible Ship Ballistic Nuclear), the latter forming one of the largest nuclear deterrent forces in the world. Submarines, he explained, are like underwater transformers, complex machines capable of astonishing power. Some internal systems can reach temperatures of over 1300°F, and the Ships Control Panel (SCP) handles everything from depth to direction with extreme precision. He emphasized the importance of the SUBSAFE Program, in which three separate people must check and sign off on key systems, because on a submarine, every detail matters. Despite their quiet reputation, submarines are capable of long-range power, with missiles that can track and engage targets from up to 60 miles away.

During his career, Danielson traveled the globe, often without ever seeing the sky. His journeys took him to places like Misqada, the North Pole, several remote islands, Africa, and even up the River Jordan. He says he has been to every country at least once. He explained submariners are like modern-day pirates and would proudly fly the Jolly Roger, a long-standing naval tradition, after successful missions. One of the most astonishing parts of his service was spending 138 days underwater, part of the longest continuous submerged patrol he ever completed.

Although he could have retired after 20 years, Danielson chose to stay in the Navy for 27 years, continuing to serve as a leader and eventually earning the respected title Chief of the Boat, the senior enlisted advisor on a submarine. From a small Tennessee farm to the deep ocean, Rob Danielson's journey is a story of ambition, endurance, and dedication.

His life shows that the Navy isn't just a career, it's an opportunity to see the world, gain skills found nowhere else, and become part of something bigger than yourself. For students looking for adventure, purpose, or a path that opens doors far beyond the classroom, Danielson's story is a reminder that the Navy can be a powerful place to start.

-Laura Ratcliff, 11th Grade



HAWK HIGHLIGHTS

The High School Varsity Hawks continued their strong start to the season, improving to 5-1 overall and 2-1 in SCAA play with two impressive conference victories. The week opened with a thrilling 43-40 down-to-the-wire win over Rhea Academy, highlighted by a standout performance from Thomas Nicolaus (23 points). Ben Slocumb added a crucial 11 points and 8 rebounds, while Eli Ahlers contributed 7 points and 11 rebounds in the gritty team win.

The Hawks followed that effort with a dominant 67-27 victory over Cleveland Christian, showcasing contributions from every player on the roster. Eli Ahlers (19 points, 12 rebounds), Caleb Cigliano (15 points), and Thomas Nicolaus (12 points) led the scoring, while Aaron Roberts provided a strong spark off the bench with 8 points. The team also celebrated the return of junior Joey Meir after an early-season injury - his presence was a welcome boost.

The Middle School Boys Hawks continued their upward momentum as well, improving to 3-1 with a solid 33-19 win over Rhea Academy. Elliott Tilley paced the team with 14 points, and Kai Ahlers added 8 in the balanced effort.

Both the High School and Middle School boys teams are back in action this week as they face Christ Legacy on Tuesday at Tennessee Wesleyan University before traveling to Mt. Pisgah on Friday. We encourage our TCPS community to show up strong - your support makes a difference!

The Fourth/Fifth Grade Hawks also took the court Saturday, falling 29-17 at Oakwood Christian. Ben Locklear continued his consistent play, leading the way once again. The team sits at 2-2 and looks ahead to two important matchups this week against St. Jude and Grace Baptist Academy.

It was another exciting week for Hawks Athletics - our student-athletes continue to compete with heart, energy, and character. Thank you TCPS community, for your ongoing support. Let's keep the momentum going!



A pixel art illustration of the Nativity scene. In the center, Mary in a blue robe and Joseph in a purple robe stand under a wooden manger, holding the baby Jesus who is lying in a wooden manger. The background features a blue sky with white clouds, a bright yellow star, and green hills. The foreground is a green field with red flowers.

IZZY JONES

and the Seekers of
The Lost Christmas Treasure

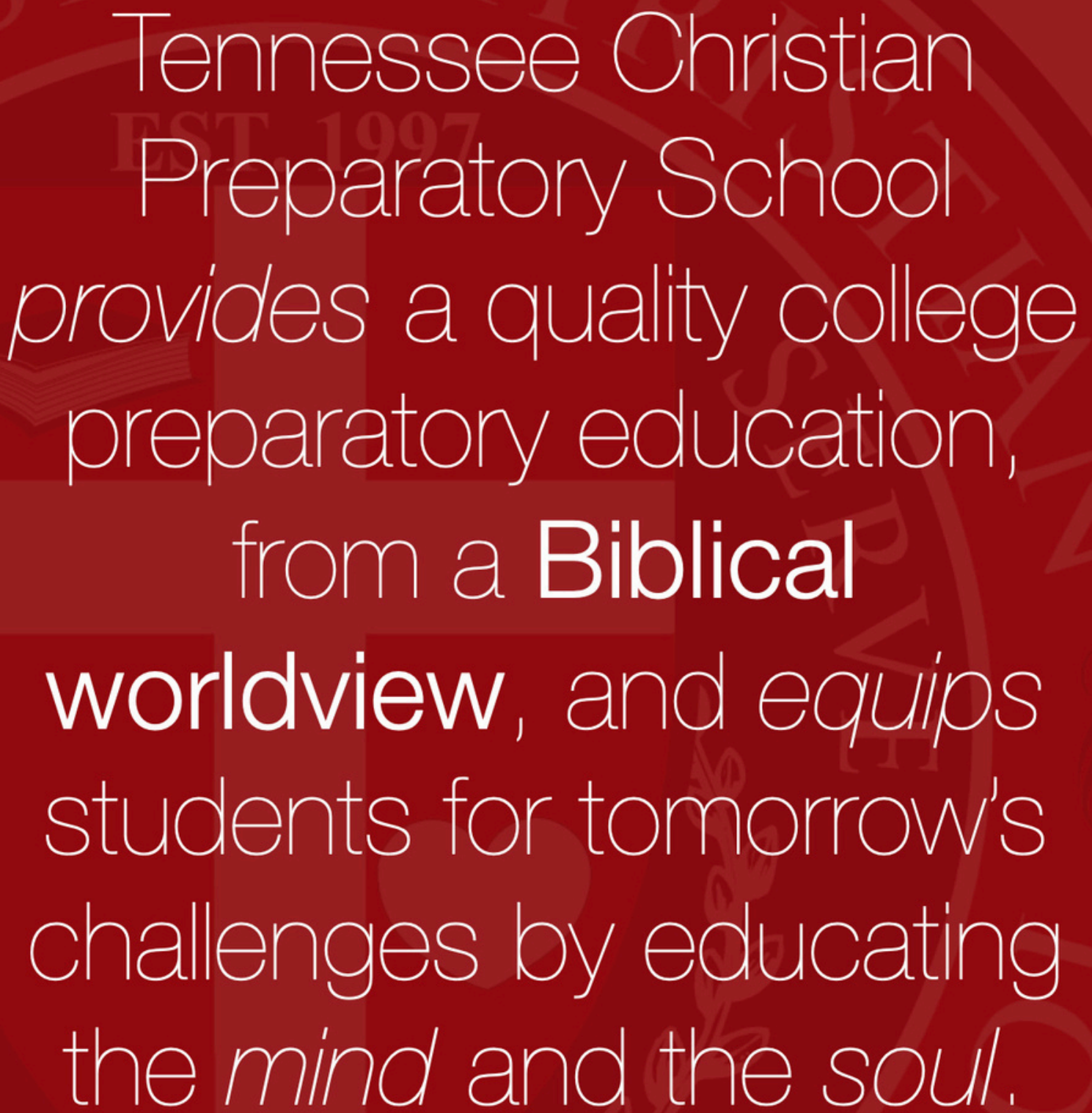
DECEMBER 9
6:30 PM

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students for tomorrow's
challenges by educating
the *mind* and the *soul*.*