

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

SONS OF ISSACHAR

By Pastor Brian De Jong

During the days of King David, there were many mighty men in the land – men of renown, men of courage, men not afraid to fight with and for their lord. Of all of those great warriors, none were more distinguished than the sons of Issachar. Issachar had always been one of the more obscure tribes in Israel. But those men in that generation stood head-and-shoulders above their fellows.

We read of them in 1 Chronicles 12:32 *“Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their kinsmen were at their command.”*

The first thing we notice about these men is that they “understood the times.” They observed all that went on around them, and they considered it well. They analyzed what was going on, and what it all meant. These sons of Issachar were perceptive.

Certainly they were aware of the many enemies surrounding Israel – the Philistines, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites and others. They also saw their King for all that he was – mighty David, the Lord’s anointed, a man after God’s own heart. And as they viewed the days in which they lived, they had the capacity to “connect the dots” – to put the pieces of the puzzle together to form a coherent picture of their moment in history.

Second, these men from Issachar had knowledge of what Israel should do.

This was not Israelite pragmatism, but rather a principled understanding of what God required. Because they meditated upon the law of the Lord, they were wiser than their contemporaries. They sought to apply God’s truth to their lives and the life

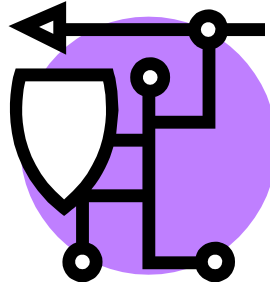
of their nation – this is what man should do!

As these men mulled over the situation they faced, they had the capacity for bringing together their understanding of the times with their knowledge of what Israel should do. They could synthesize the data – applying God’s truth to

everyday life. This is much of the secret of their greatness – a willingness to put God’s truth into practice in their own era.

Another point we can admire is their organization – they had two hundred chiefs. These two hundred were wise leaders – men of experience who held positions of prominence. If leaders do not know how to lead, a battle will quickly turn into a rout with the “good guys” running for their lives. Foot soldiers need wise officers to guide the flow of the battle, if an army would win the day.

Then also you can see their cooperation – “and all their kinsmen at their command.” The rank and file were under orders, and know how to respectfully follow the commands of their chiefs. There was no jockeying for position – no wrestling for control, no democratic anarchy and autonomy. Just kinsmen who respected and followed their chiefs, obeying the orders given.



Volume 9, Issue 3

March 2014

Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor’s Article</i>	1
<i>Wandering Thoughts by Richard Steele</i>	2-4
<i>SCCHS Announcements</i>	5
<i>Thoughts on Giving by Rev. De Master</i>	5
<i>March Birthday</i>	6
<i>Influencing Children</i>	6
<i>March Calendar</i>	7
<i>Save the Date!</i>	9
	9
<i>Men’s Retreat</i>	10
<i>Book Reviews by Carla De Master</i>	11
<i>Which Disturbs You More?</i>	11
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	11
<i>Fellowship Meal</i>	12
<i>Spurgeon Corner</i>	12

Mnemonics...

- *Daylight Savings Time, 9th*
- *Fellowship Meal, 9th*

Continued on Page 10

A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 9, Sections 1-5

by Richard Steele

Encouragement under the burden of distractions.

SECTION I

Distractions are consistent with grace.

But lest any honest Christian should by his frequent distractions be discouraged from his duties, or in his duties; I shall, in the ninth place endeavour to prevent such a temptation by laying down some encouragements for those that groan under the burden of distractions. And I here assert two things.

1. That these distractions should not drive you from your duties. You have been thinking, perhaps, it were better my service were undone, than done so confusedly; and our false hearts are secretly prone to accept any occasion to lay down our work; but believe not the devil's false divinity; he takes on him to be tender, lest God's name be taken in vain, but this is to ensnare you the more; but in this sense obedience is better than sacrifice; thy obedience to his command is more pleasing to him than thy torn sacrifice. And then it is a known case, that the omission of a duty will never fit one for a duty better. Luther's saying herein was. The more I neglect, the more unfit I am. Indeed, some ground will mend by lying still, but that is better ground than is in fallen man's heart. Ours is the ground that must be stirred, and manured, and quickened, and then some fruit will come. As one sin fits the heart for another, so one duty fits the soul for another. However, it is better to serve thy master with a trembling hand than not at all; and our Father takes well a well-intended work, though it be unwillingly marred in the making.

2. These distractions should not wholly discourage you in the performance of your duties. Displease you they must, discourage you they must not. Our good master would not have us draw heavily in his service. It is prophesied, "they shall sing in the ways of the Lord." Psalm 138:5. This is a sweet hearing. God's work goes on best, when we sing at it. All the infirmities of a Christian laid together should not discourage him in his duty. And for your support, I lay down these encouragements.

1. Distractions are consistent with grace. Grace may live with them, but not be lively long with them. They are like the blue and yellow weeds, that grow with the best corn that is. Grace may live with them, though it can never agree with them; and therefore conclude not against thyself. Oh! I have no grace, I am so pestered with these things; surely no child of God hath such a heart. For this is an epidemic distemper; wherever the hand of God hath sown good seed, the enemy hath scattered these tares amongst it. Indeed there is no sin so crimson, that is absolutely inconsistent with grace, abate but that most awful one, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Let no profane heart make use hereof to encourage them in their sins: a profane heart, I say, for a gracious heart is of another temper. Alas! the worst of sins do sometimes peep into the best men's hearts, yea, may creep into them and lodge in them for a season. How much more may a sudden thought break in, which, like lightning, springs into the heart, without any warning? Do not therefore cry out, when this or any other corruption steals into your hearts, I am a lost man; this cannot consist with grace; but this should not consist with grace. The former conclusion being made, dejects the spirits; but the latter whets the spirit to amendment. It was foolishly done of Dinah "to rove about to see the daughters of the land," Gen. 34:1; it was not done like Jacob's daughter; but this was no argument for her to conclude, O, I am not Jacob's daughter. So thou hast a heart like Dinah, of a gadding temper, that runs abroad and comes defiled home; this is not done like a sanctified heart, but it were an unwise conclusion to draw hence. Certainly I am no child of God I have no true grace at all. For, alas! the sweetest rose hath its prickles; the greatest wits have a spice of madness, and the sincerest heart hath some vanity in it.

SECTION II

Encouragement, your case is not singular.

The second encouragement is, that your case is not singular. Though the commonness of a

Steele Continued...

plague make it not the better, or less mortal, yet it shows that I am not alone miserable: so, although this consideration make not the sin less heinous, yea it makes the affliction more tolerable. Poor soul! thou art alone in thy complaints. Go to all the saints in an assembly, and they will each conclude, there is none hath a more giddy heart than he; and there are few at the end of an ordinance would be pleased that the rest should know the particulars of their wandering. Though charity binds us in particular to hope better of every one than of ourselves, yet both God's word, and common experience tell us in general, that the imaginations of the thoughts of men are evil continually. And there are none think themselves so bad, but there are found others that would be glad to change hearts with them; some indeed are nearer the cure of this disease, and do watch more narrowly, and so have obtained more freedom than others, but yet all are tainted with this infirmity; and every man being convicted by his own conscience, will go out of the congregation one by one, and there will not be a sinless man to cast a stone at thee.

SECTION III

Encouragement, from the uninterrupted intercession of Christ.

The third encouragement is, that Christ's intercession for thee is without distraction. There was fire always on the altar, though the sacrifices were intermitted. His intercession is continual, ours is interrupted. What unspeakable comfort may a poor, weak Christian take in this, that Christ Jesus is every moment, I say, every moment, presenting to the Father the unanswerable argument of his passion, for obtaining pardon, and grace to help him in time of need? Heb. 4:15, 16; 6:20. Poor sinner! thou art sometimes so dead, that thou canst not pray to purpose so guilty thou darest hardly pray, and often so distracted, thou thinkest thy prayers stand for nothing; yet be not discouraged, thy Mediator is sick of none of these diseases. The holy

psalmist was sometimes "so troubled that he could not speak," Psalm 77:4; yet then had he one to speak for him. The sight of that precious glorified Son of God doth infinitely please and prevail with his Father for us, when we can hardly speak good sense for ourselves.

Object. But how can I tell that he intercedes for me?

Answer. 1. Hast thou a good word to speak for him to men? then hath he a good word to speak for thee to God.

Answer. 2. Dost thou sigh, and groan, and speak for thyself as well as thou canst? his intercession is to help our weakness, not to excuse our laziness. If some ignorant poor man, that cannot tell his errand, but is often out in his business, has a cordial friend, that has the grace of speaking, and the favour to be heard, undertakes his business, he need not be discouraged; so, though you have much ado, and be often imperfect in your best resolved duties, yet you have a friend in court, that has the ait of it, and the King's ear beside, who ever liveth to make intercession for you; and therefore do your best, and never be discouraged.

"...distracted duties may keep you humble, whereas your perfect performances might make you proud."

SECTION IV.

Distractions may make us humble.

The fourth encouragement is, that distracted duties may keep you humble, whereas your perfect performances might make you proud. It is written of Knox, that on his death-bed, after he had received many blows from Satan about his sins, he was at last assaulted by him with this temptation, That surely God owed him a kindness for his upright and industrious labours, until that was strongly imprinted on him, "What hast thou which thou hast not received?" 1 Cor. 4:7. Perhaps the Lord foresaw that thy heart was ready to be inflated with pride, when thou doest well, and therefore he suffers these distractions, like vultures to gnaw upon thy heart, to

Steele Concluded...

keep thee humble. Far be it from you to draw from hence an occasion to rest more securely in these sins. That Knight was surnamed Forlunaie, because, being on a time on the deck of a ship, a great wave came and took him off into the sea, and another wave took him and set him on the deck of another ship; yet no man, I imagine, would, to obtain such a name, be content that a wave should so hazard him; even so, though God do sometimes make use of our infirmities to do us good, yet let no man venture therefore to sin, that grace may abound. Because the physician can so temper poison, that it may do thee good, wilt thou therefore venture to drink poison? It is miraculous wisdom in God to do thee good hereby, and it were miraculous folly in thee, therefore, to venture upon evil. And with this caution to proceed, and observe, that it is a very hard thing to hear, or pray exactly without some tinge of spiritual pride after it; and to prevent this, God permits us to wander and lose ourselves, lest we should be lost; he sees that it is safer for a man to fall into a lesser evil, when he can turn it to a greater good, than to attain a lesser good, and hazard to fall into a greater evil. O when a man sees so much impurity in his very best duties, such constant disappointments, such foolish impertinencies in his heart, yea, such wicked contrivancies in the very presence of God, then what a wretched man am I! Surely I am more brutish than any man, I am not worthy to come to thee, nor think I myself worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, no such sinner on earth as I; my best is very bad, etc.¹ Thus the soul is thoroughly humbled, and brought to sit among the chief of sinners, and spiritual pride rebuked.

SECTION V.

Encouragement from God's gracious acceptance of our services.

The fifth encouragement is, that our God can gather some sense out of a distracted duty, and do us some good by it. "He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." Rom. 8:27; it is true of our spirit as well as of God's. The great searcher of hearts knows what you came desirous of, what you

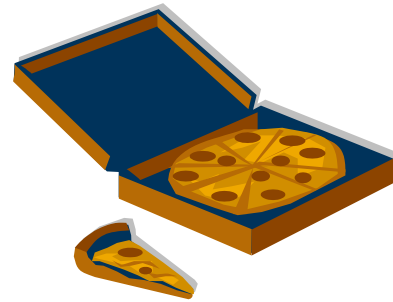
meant, though you missed it in the deliver. He can tell you what was written in the letter, though it did miscarry, and will answer your holy meaning, and overlook your unwilling failing. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord." Psalm 103:13. Why, the child comes sometimes full of a suit to the father, After he is quite out in his tale, has forgotten what he would have; but the father knows what he wants, and what he would have said, and grants the whole. And so, provided thou be a child, and art heartily sensible of thy wants, and comest panting to the throne of grace, thy heavenly Father will accept thy meaning, and grant thy petition, though thy heart did unwillingly give thee the slip, while thou mournest for it, and resolvest to mend it the next time.² The industrious school comes sometimes full and clear in his lesson, but when he is delivering it, he is confused. Now, if his master knows that he had it perfect before he came, he pities and helps him, and concludes that fear or care made him miss it, and that his want is only in utterance, strokes him on the head, and bids him labour to do better next time. So the serious Christian is deeply sensible of his spiritual wants, and knows and feels well what he must ask, and down he kneels; but yet when he comes to open his case, alas! he is drawn away utterly against his mind, and his heart runs at random. Why now, your heavenly Master knows your preparation, your intention, your endeavour, your grief, your resolution; he will not turn off such a scholar. He is a father, and will make the best of his child's faults, especially seeing him falling out with himself for them.

¹ *The worst prayers we make, to our sense, speed ever best, and then we pray most happily, when we rise most humbled. ~ Dr. Harris.*

² *A man that hath the palsy, his hand shakes, but we cannot say, he shakes his hand: so we may say, it is not they but sin in them, as it is not he, but the palsy distemper in him that shakes his hand. ~ Whilt.*

SCCHS Announcements

Sheboygan County Christian High School is seeking coaches for JV girls' volleyball and JV girls' basketball beginning with the 2014-15 season. Please send resumes and/or questions of



.... The Spanish II Class at SCCHS is planning a field trip to Chicago. To help defray the costs, the students are holding a fund raiser on March 3rd at the Oostburg Pizza Ranch between 4:00-9:00 p.m. Tips from the night will go to the Spanish II Class. Please come to enjoy great food and support the students too!

Thoughts on Giving

by Rev. Ivan De Master

The matter of the church and money is a problem to many people. The complaint is that the church is always asking for money.

One reason for such a complaint is that it is hard for us to understand the principle of Christian giving. We tend to think of our giving as giving to the church instead of giving to God. The money we put in the offering plate is seen as supporting the church budget or the building fund. But consider what a difference it makes when we understand that we are giving to the living God who made us and redeemed us.

The gifts we bring are not an entrance fee to the worship service or a membership fee to the church club, or the price of spiritual benefits, or even a gift for a worthy cause. We bring gifts of

faith, of worship, of thanksgiving and praise to God. Our worship service is a meeting with the living God and our monies are an offering to him. We do so together as his people, his church.

When we are urged to give, it is not for ourselves, but that we might do right by God. If our giving is simply to the church, it will always be a problem and a burden. But if our giving is out of devotion to God, it will be a blessing and a joy.

The Psalmist wrote, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come into his courts." The Apostle Paul urges gifts be made "ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given."

March Birthdays

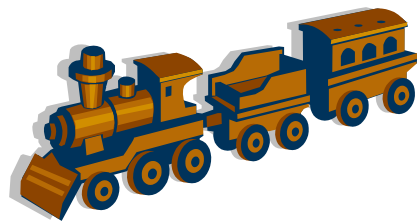


Influencing Children

from Rev. Ivan De Master

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove – but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

~ George W. Barte

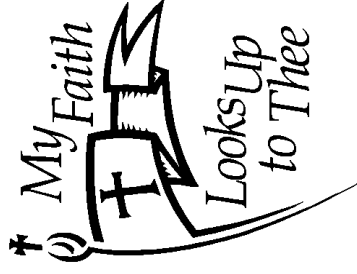




Grace OPC

March 2014

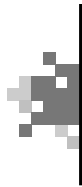
Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website:
graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	4	5 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	6	7	8
9 Missions Sunday Fellowship Lunch (a.m.)	10 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	11	12 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	13	14	15
16	17 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	18 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	19 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	20	21 Presbytery at New Lenox, IL	22
23	24 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	25	26 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	27	28	29
30 Lord's Supper, a.m.	31					



submitted by Carla De Master

Save the date!

Women's Conference at
New Hope OPC, Green Bay
April 25 & 26, 2014
(Friday evening & Saturday)

Speaker will be Kathleen Nielson,
author of the *Living Word* Bible Studies.
for more information, check at www.nhopc.org

Men's Conference

by Pastor Brian De Jong

On Friday, February 20, a good contingent of men from Grace Church joined with other brothers from around our Presbytery for an excellent men's retreat. In our group were Steve Boss, Johnny Arndt, Tim Voskuil, Howard Voskuil, Pastor Ivan, Elijah De Jong, Cameron De Jong and me.

There were 115 men total that came together for good teaching, excellent fellowship, encouraging discussion and some rugged basketball. The setting was the beautiful Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin. This is also the place where Camp Westminster is held every summer.

Our speaker was Dr. Craig Troxel, the pastor of Bethel OPC in Wheaton, Illinois. His subject was "The Heart" and he gave four talks on that theme. His first talk, on Friday evening, introduced the subject and connected the heart to the mind. We should not pit the mind against the heart, but see that the heart think, meditates, remembers, hears and believes. Jesus Christ is the prophet of your mind, working through His word and Spirit to give you a renewed mind and recreated heart. He helps us to not forget His promises or the Spirit's assurance.

After the talk, we broke up into small groups for discussion. Each group had 8 members and they talked over what they had heard, and how it applied to their lives. Afterwards was a time for refreshments, basketball, fellowship and sleep.

Saturday morning we enjoyed breakfast in the cafeteria before hearing the second talk. Dr. Troxel

focused on the desires of your heart – the things we love. He showed how iniquity is a perversion of love – desiring those things which are twisted and idolatrous. He finished with a focus on Christ as the priest of our desires, renewing and purifying them for himself. After this time we had another small group discussion. We finished the morning with the third talk. This one focused on the will – the choices we make. There is an inseparable connection between our hearts and our choices. Transgression is rebellion – choices to proudly reject God's call. Submission to our King is the answer – saying yes to God and no to sin, the world, rebellion and disobedience.

Hearing our stomach's grumbling, we went down to the cafeteria for lunch. The early afternoon was free time for exercise, games, fellowship or napping. The final small group time convened around 3, and the last talk from Dr. Troxel was at 4. He finished with an exhortation to guard our hearts – preserving and keeping them.

Christ is the Lord Protector of our hearts!

In addition to the excellent teaching, we had some very good singing and lots of time to rub shoulders with our brothers from the other churches. We met new friends, and were reacquainted with old friends. I would strongly encourage all of our men to come to next year's retreat. It was a spiritual

"shot in the arm" for me and my sons. There is no other time to have this type of fellowship with other OPC men, and I highly recommend it.



Book Reviews

by Carla De Master

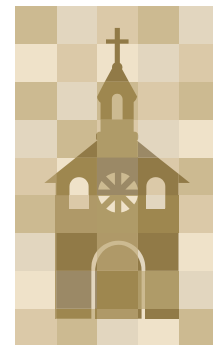
Drive By Church History The title of this set of 11 cds, is unique, giving an indication of the author, Todd Friel and his style of teaching. He was involved in stand up comedy before he became a Christian, and after becoming a Christian he went into pastoral training and media skills, hosting Wretched Radio and TV, as a result. With this style, he teaches, using a dialogue approach with 3 other theologians, including a WTS graduate and a writer/speaker for Ligonier ministries. In 47 short lectures, the listener is taken through 21 centuries of church history. Lively approach, interesting sense of humor, good for students of 4th grade through adulthood. I appreciated the lecture on the growth of the Muslim faith in the seventh century. It is a clear teaching on the beliefs and advancement of that religion and helps to understand it in today's setting too.

The Church in History, by B.K. Kuiper, is a standard survey of the Christian church from 33AD to "modern times" (published in 1964). It has been used as a textbook in Christian high schools for many years. The last chapter deals with the beginning of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Christian Reformed Church. There are around 300 maps, photos, and timelines to help in the understanding. Adults and high school students would enjoy this survey. It is good to know the basics of the formation of the church.

Each of these books is available in the church library and helps in understanding the lessons in the Adult Sunday School class. What better thing to do in all this cold weather but to read or hear these books.

FRONT PAGE CONCLUDED

...How the church today needs men like this – men who understand the times and know what to do. Men who will lead, and men who will follow. Would that God would bless Grace Church with many sons of Issachar in the years ahead! Let us pray to that end!



Oreo Cookie Torte



- ★ 1 pkg. Oreo cookies
- ★ 1 stick butter
- ★ 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- ★ 1 cup powdered sugar
- ★ 16 oz. cool whip
- ★ 1 lg. box instant chocolate pudding
- ★ 3 cups milk

Crush Oreos (save 1/2 cup for top). Melt butter and mix with Oreo crumbs. Press into 9x13 pan. Cream the cream cheese and add powdered sugar. Mix well. Mix in 1/2 of Cool Whip and spread over crust. Combine milk and pudding mix. Let it thicken a little and pour over cream cheese layer. Let it set a few more minutes. Spread remaining Cool Whip over pudding and sprinkle reserved crumbs on top.

Wendy Froh

“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”

WHICH DISTURBS YOU MOST?

from Rev. Ivan De Master

Your missing the worship service – or missing a day’s work?

A sermon 10 minutes too long- or lunch a half hour late?

Your Bible unopened – or you newspaper unread?

The church work neglected – or housework neglected?



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net



CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

*“Let us not sleep, as do others.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:6)*

There are many ways of promoting Christian wakefulness. Among the rest, let me strongly advise Christians to converse together concerning the ways of the Lord.

Christian and Hopeful, as they journeyed towards the Celestial City, said to themselves, “To prevent drowsiness in this place, let us fall into good discourse.” Christian enquired, “Brother, where shall we begin?” And Hopeful answered, “Where God began with us.” Then Christian sang this song—

“When saints do sleepy grow, let them come hither,
And hear how these two pilgrims talk together;
Yea, let them learn of them, in any wise,
Thus to keep open their drowsy slumb’ring eyes.
Saints’ fellowship, if it be managed well,
Keeps them awake, and that in spite of hell.”

Christians who isolate themselves and walk alone, are very liable to grow drowsy. Hold Christian company, and you will be kept wakeful by it, and refreshed and encouraged to make quicker progress in the road to heaven. But as you thus take “sweet counsel” with others in the ways of God, take care that the theme of your converse is the Lord Jesus. Let the eye of faith be constantly looking unto him; let your heart be full of him; let your lips speak of his worth. Friend, live near to the cross, and thou wilt not sleep. *Labour to impress thyself with a deep sense of the value of the place to which thou art going.* If thou rememberest that thou art going to heaven, thou wilt not sleep on the road. If thou thinkest that hell is behind thee, and the devil pursuing thee, thou wilt not loiter. Would the manslayer sleep with the avenger of blood behind him, and the city of refuge before him? Christian, wilt thou sleep whilst the pearly gates are open—the songs of angels waiting for thee to join them—a crown of gold ready for thy brow? Ah! no; in holy fellowship continue to watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Morning, March 5, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Fellowship Meal

Everyone’s invited to a fellowship meal on Sunday, March 9th after the morning worship and Sunday School classes. A sign up sheet is located on the bulletin board in the hallway. Come for some delicious food!!

